



*The Reformation*  
**Messenger**

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 4 , APRIL 2015

**“The heavens declare the glory  
of God; and the firmament  
showeth His handiwork.”**

**Psalm 19:1**

**Work for the Night is Coming**

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**The Hour of Destiny of King Solomon**

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**WE BELIEVE:** The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and

gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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**Part 1**

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**Inside Cover:**  
Ruaa Kheder, Iraq



which the Lord has prepared for us because we do not ask in faith. If we would exercise faith in the word of the living God, we should have the richest blessings. We dishonor God by our lack of faith; therefore we can not impart life to others unless we ourselves bear a living, uplifting testimony. We cannot give that which we do not possess. If we will walk humbly with God, if we will walk in the spirit of Christ, none of us will carry heavy burdens. We shall lay them on the great burden-bearer. Then we may expect triumphs in the presence of God, in the communion of His love. Every campmeeting may be a love feast from the beginning to the end because God's presence is with His people. All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand are commissioned ministers to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. Have we not reason to be thankful every moment; thankful even when there are apparent difficulties in our pathway? The Lord Himself is our Helper." — *Loma Linda Messages*, p. 537

What is this passage telling us? How much of the good things that we have, do we really deserve? Nothing, really. We deserve what happened to Christ on the cross and Satan desires to destroy all of us. All that the Lord would have to do is withdraw from anyone of us, and we would perish in spiritual darkness, and perhaps perish physically, also.

"But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him also will I deny before My Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Matthew 10:33–36

"He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possessed Christlike meekness and love, they were not confessing Him. A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life's burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them. And 'whosoever shall deny Me before men,' He says, 'him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.'" — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 357

Did you know that the word "thankful" appears in only three places in the Bible? "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be **thankful** unto Him, and bless His name." Psalm 100:4. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were **thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:21. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye **thankful**." Colossians 3:15

Many people are thankful for their health, strength, life and blessings—but, what are you thankful for? Can we think of anything else for which to be thankful? And, how much should we be thankful for?

"It is Satan's plan to talk about that which concerns himself. He is delighted to have human beings talk of his power, of his working thru the children of men, but by indulgence in such conversation the mind becomes gloomy and sour and disagreeable. We may become channels of communication for Satan thru which words bring no sunshine to the heart. But let us decide that this shall not be. Let us decide not to be channels thru which Satan shall send gloomy disagreeable thoughts. Let our words be not a savor of death unto death, but of life unto life, in the words we speak to the people and in the prayers we offer. God desires us to give unmistakable evidences that we have a spiritual life. We do not enjoy the fulness of the blessing

The above statement lists a lot of ways that we can deny Christ. According to this definition, are not most professing Christians denying Christ, today? Yes, sad to say they are.

I saw an interesting documentary the other night about Adolf Hitler, and I was struck by just how much Hitler's mind parallels the way that all of society is going—very deceived, therefore very deceptive, unbalanced, perverse and unhappy.

Is not that exactly the way that all of society is going? "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Matthew 10:37. "The Saviour bade His disciples not to hope that the world's enmity to the gospel would be overcome, and that after a time its opposition would cease. And what does this mean that He said?, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword.' This creating of strife is not the effect of the gospel, but the result of opposition to it." *-Ibid.*, p. 35

It was not Jesus that caused all of this strife, but rather it was opposition to Him and the truths that He taught, that causes all of the strife.

"Of all persecution the hardest to bear is variance in the home, the estrangement of dearest earthly friends. But Jesus declares, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.'" *-Ibid.*, p. 357

Just the other day on Facebook I saw a post on how an individual was a proud follower of Jesus, and so I commented on how that was kind of an oxymoron—for Jesus will lay our pride in the dust. I posed the question as to whether that individual really knew the grace of God, since they were so proud? I wonder why my comments did not stay posted very long on that Facebook page—maybe they did not want anyone to be seen asking that type of question. How about a humble follower of Jesus?

"And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me." Matthew 18:5

"The mission of Christ's servants is a high honor, and a sacred trust. 'He that receiveth you,' He says, 'receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.' No act of kindness shown to them in His name will fail to be recognized and rewarded. And in the same tender recognition He includes the feeblest and lowliest of the family of God: 'Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones'—those who are as children in their faith and their knowledge of Christ—'a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you,

he shall in nowise lose his reward.' Thus the Saviour ended His instruction. In the name of Christ the chosen twelve went out, as He had gone." *-Ibid.*, p. 357

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18–19

"The reason that we carelessly indulge in sin is that we do not see Jesus. We would not lightly regard sin, did we appreciate the fact that sin wounds our Lord. . . . A right estimate of the character of God would enable us rightly to represent Him to the world. Harshness, roughness in words or manner, evil-speaking, passionate words, cannot exist in the soul that is looking unto Jesus. He who abides in Christ is in an atmosphere that forbids evil, and gives not the slightest excuse for anything of this kind. Spiritual life is not nourished from within, but draws its nutrition from Christ, as the branch does from the vine. We are dependent upon Christ every moment; He is our source of supply. All our outside forms, prayers, fastings, and alms-giving cannot take the place of the inward work of the Spirit of God on the human heart." *-Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 290

Why do we so carelessly sin? It is because we do not keep Jesus before us, and we do not cultivate thankfulness for all that He has done for us.

"When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. . . . He is a branch of the True Vine, and bears rich clusters of fruit to the glory of God. What is the character of the fruit borne?—The fruit of the Spirit is 'love,' not hatred; 'joy,' not discontent and mourning; 'peace,' not irritation, anxiety, and manufactured trials. It is 'long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.'

"One branch is not to borrow its sustenance from another. Our life must come from the parent vine. It is only by personal union with Christ, by communion with Him daily, hourly, that we can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit. . . . Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend on our union with Christ and the degree of faith we exercise in Him." *-Ibid.*, p. 290

I heard a very interesting statement made by a psychologist on the radio the other day. He said that our source of happiness must come from outside: This makes sense—but only if that source comes from God. Otherwise, we can easily be manipulated by another human being and

lose sight of true happiness.

“And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.” Matthew 26:73–75

How was it with Peter, after He had denied Christ?

He knew what He had done, because Jesus had told him ahead of time what he was going to do. The real problem with Peter was that He did not know himself. Unless you and I understand ourselves, and our absolute need of God’s power to sustain and help us, we will end up denying Jesus, just like Peter did.

“He [Judas] . . . did not become transformed, and converted into a living branch through connection with the True Vine. This dry sapling adhered not to the Vine until it grew into a fruitful, living branch. He revealed that he was the graft that did not bear fruit,—the graft that did not, fiber by fiber and vein by vein, become knit with the Vine, and partake of its life.

“The dry, disconnected sapling can become one with the parent vine stock only by being made a partaker of the life and nourishment of the living vine, by being grafted into the vine, by being brought into the closest relationship possible. . . . The twig holds fast to the life-giving vine, until the life of the vine becomes the life of the branch, and it produces fruit like that of the vine.

“‘I am the vine,’ said Christ; ‘ye are the branches.’ The closest possible connection is here represented. Engraft the leafless twig upon the flourishing vine stock, and it becomes a living branch, drawing sap and nourishment from the vine. Fiber by fiber, vein by vein, the sapling clings, until it buds and blossoms and bears fruit. The sapless twig represents the sinner. When united to Christ, soul is joined to soul, the feeble and finite to the holy and infinite, and man becomes one with Christ.

“The apparently dry branch, by being connected with the living vine, becomes a part of it. . . . The soul, dead in trespasses and sins, must experience a similar process. . . . As the graft receives life when united to the vine, so the sinner partakes of the divine nature when connected with Christ. Finite man is united with the infinite God. When thus united, the words of Christ abide in us, and we are not actuated by a spasmodic feeling, but a living, abiding principle.” —*Ibid.*, p. 291

How many times was Peter reproved by Christ? Many.

And how many times was Judas reproved? Almost none—at least until the very last, and even that Jesus kept hidden from the rest of the disciples.

We have a choice—either abide in Christ, or, for sure, we will deny Him. Waves of worldliness, pride, lust, anger—all of it are washing over us, and if anything of the world sticks upon us, we will be washed away from the rock, Christ Jesus.

“And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 7:30–32. We have to be in the world, and it is only as we are *not of* the world, that we can be safe and saved.

“In too many households, prayer is neglected. Parents feel they have no time for morning and evening worship. They cannot spare a few moments in which to give thanks to God for his abundant mercies,—for the blessed sunshine and the showers of rain, which cause vegetation to flourish, and for the guardianship of holy angels. They have no time to offer prayer for divine help and guidance, and for the abiding presence of Jesus in the household. They go forth to labor as the ox or the horse goes, without one thought of God or heaven. They have souls so precious that rather than permit them to be hopelessly lost, the Son of God gave His life to ransom them; but they have little more appreciation of His great goodness than have the beasts that perish.

“Like the patriarchs of old, those who profess to love God should erect an altar to the Lord wherever they pitch their tent. If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Fathers and mothers should often lift up their hearts to God in humble supplication for themselves and their children. Let the father, as priest of the household, lay upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. In such a household, Jesus will love to tarry.” —*Christian Education*, p. 221

We will either deny Christ by failing to behold His great sacrifice in our behalf, or be thankful for what He has done, and truly live in the light of His presence, and know His salvation.

May the gracious God whom loves us so much, be the focus and interest of our look and attention, is my prayer. Amen.

**Jerry Eaton**



## Work for the Night is Coming

We sing in our gospel hymn, “Work for the night is coming, When man works no more.” Today we still have day light, but it is darkening, and soon everything will be too late. The work of salvation that we planned to do but did not finish, for this neglect we will be eternally lost. Paul said, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Philippians 2:12. This is our most important life work that we must complete before time is finished. Jesus said to the woman, “Go, and sin no more.” John 8:11

Jesus also said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. This is a high standard, and we must reach it; otherwise, we will not be saved. Now we understand why we need to work earnestly in order to reach this standard.

Jesus said, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:24

We must learn perfect love. We must love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves. To show how this love works, Jesus spoke about helping others.

“And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or

thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” Matthew 25:33–40

The ones that did not help their neighbours were sent to everlasting punishment. Many professed Christians fail in this point. For selfish reasons they keep their money to themselves, and their time for their own purposes. It requires work to love their neighbour and they do not want to do it. Also, to reach perfection we need knowledge. We read in Hosea 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee.”

Jesus said to a certain lawyer who had asked Him, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” Luke 10:25–26

It was for lack of knowledge that the Jewish people rejected Jesus. It is for lack of knowledge that religious people are keeping Sunday as a day of worship to God.

It requires work and time to gain knowledge. God has given us the Bible to read; yet, many Christians have not read it completely through. They should read it at least ten times, in order to gain the necessary knowledge.

Besides the Bible, God has given us the Spirit of Prophecy books. They are mediums for our salvation. The angel, Gabriel, came about two thousand times from

heaven to give Sister White visions and knowledge about what to write. If we do not read them, then God wasted the effort to give us the testimonies, and we may perish for lack of knowledge.

Another requirement for salvation and eternal life is missionary work, and this requires time and work.

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 28:19-20

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come." Luke 10:1

The great world, over 7 billion inhabitants, have only one hope, to hear the saving message; and that is from the church of God. It is a great responsibility. If we neglect our duty, can we expect to hear the words of Jesus, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"? Matthew 25:21

It is by saving others that we can save ourselves. "There are many who would work if urged into service, and who would save their souls by thus working." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 390

"It is labour that keeps the strong man strong. And spiritual labour, toil, and burden bearing, is what will give strength to the church of Christ." –*Life Sketches*, p. 188

"The very simplest modes of work should be devised and set in operation among the churches. If the mem-

bers will unitedly accept such plans, and perseveringly carry them out, they will reap a rich reward; for their experience will grow brighter, their ability will increase, and through their efforts souls will be saved." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 433

There are many other ways we can work for the Lord's cause. All the officers of the church have taken upon themselves a great responsibility to make sure that the church will function according to God's plan. The church leader makes sure that all departments are in order and all the members are faithful. The secretary of the church keeps record of all business meetings, and makes announcements to the members of all future events. The treasurer receives all the donations during the year, and, in the end, writes receipts to every donor. Also, he pays all the expenses of the church from the church funds.

The offices of the deacons and deaconesses are also important. They are compared to a mother, who fulfills numerous responsibilities. Then we have the children's teachers, who develop the young minds by the word of God, that when they get old they will not depart from their early education.

All these offices require work by the officers. They must study and learn in order to teach others. All this work that they do for others develop their own characters, preparing them for heaven. We must realize that our time is running out. We sing in our gospel hymn, "Work till the last beam fadeth, Fadeth to shine no more; work for while the night is darkening, when man's work is

o'er." AMEN.

**Timo Martin**



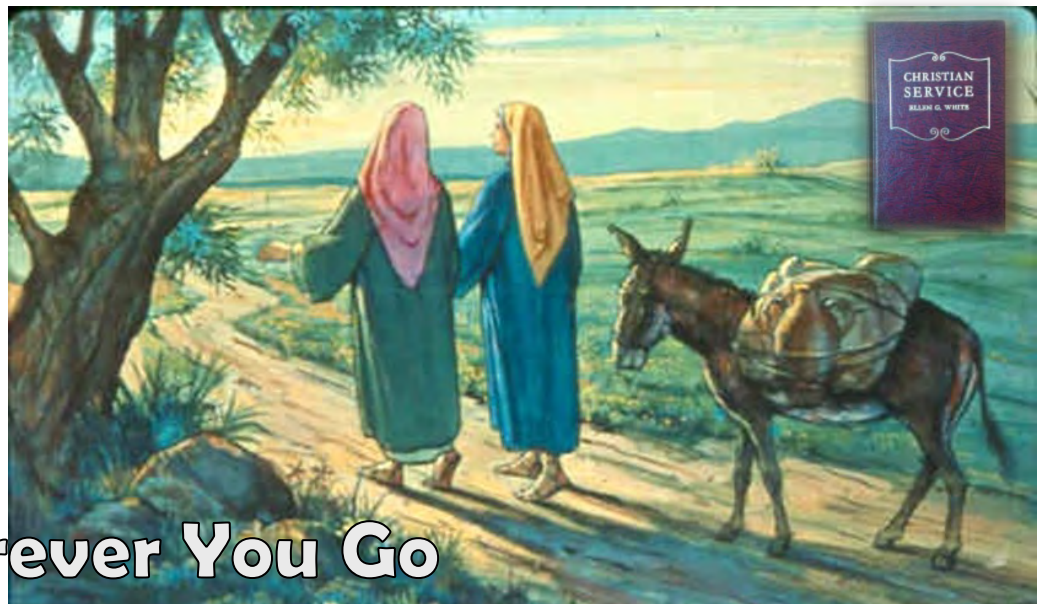
## LOOKING FOR YOU...

**If you are interested in submitting an item for publication in *The Reformation Messenger*, please submit by email or mail.**

**Submit: Drawings, Announcements, Reports, Articles, Poems, Photos, Personal Testimonies and Experiences.**

## MISSIONARY NOW

Our readings from the book, *Christian Service*, during the month of February reminded us of the attitude that Christians should have about missionary work and especially the role women have in this precious work.



## Wherever You Go

*“But Ruth replied, Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live I will live. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!” Ruth 1:16–17 (NLT)*

I happen to know a couple of young people who love the Lord and who also had feelings for each other. During a Youth Conference she walked to the front of the auditorium to pledge her life to a missionary endeavour, committing herself, her energy, and her talents to the cause of God. What an honour. What courage!

Her boyfriend could not help but shed tears as he acknowledged that he had lost her to One who was far greater than he; his soul bowed before Him who is able to call unto Himself the unworthy and make of them great vessels unto honour. All he could say before His presence and His perfect will was “Hallelujah, honour forever be unto Thy Name.”

*“God’s faithful people have always been aggressive missionaries, consecrating their resources to the honour of His name, and wisely using their talents in His service.” –Christian Service, p. 22*

In this life, beloved brethren, after having been touched by the regenerative light of God, we are nothing, if not aggressive missionaries for the Master. All of heaven poured out upon the cross of Calvary for the salvation of the human race is a debt which will never even begin to be repaid by our efforts; yet, it is a life devoted entirely to Christ in gratitude for His great sacrifice unto which we have been called. Nothing less than our very best will be acceptable to God, nor be sufficient to fit us for His future glory, prepared for His saints since the foundation of time.

Looking on with admiration at the life of this young sister, I contemplated the great future before her. At the school of Christ, she would learn every possible thing there was to know about true medical missionary work, something that would fill her heart with satisfaction and excitement. This couple spoke briefly afterwards, as he took the opportunity to congratulate her with all of his heart for the wonderful opportunity she had had the courage and faith to take. She didn’t need to say it, but she thanked him for being supportive of her decision and supportive of her. Indeed, “there is no better place to be than in the hands of God.”

*“The Saviour will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and this will give them a power that will exceed that of men. . . . Self and selfishness must be put out of sight.” –Christian Service, p. 27*

I have always thought that women are closer to the divine character of God than are men. For in every woman inherently lies the ability and capacity to love so selflessly that one cannot help but make comparisons to the unconditional love of God. Men then, by nature, oftentimes so rough and unrefined, are consequently unfitted to do the work of compassion that a woman can do with ease. As we look to the great men of the world, we must wonder at the greatness of the woman at his side. How many men, having found the understanding support, the empathetic patience and compassion of a wonderful partner have gone on to conquer the many obstacles and challenges of this world? How many men today can face the unmerciful world with steely determination and unflinching courage because they have one at their side who serves as their inspiration and motivation? God has given us our equals, our counterparts in these wonderful creatures



because together, in Christ, we can do a work that could not possibly be realized alone.

“If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. . . . God calls for earnest women workers, workers who are prudent, warm-hearted, tender, and true to principle.” –*Christian Service*, p. 28, 27

The Spirit of God makes the call to missionary work, desperately trying to make us see that God does not save us from ourselves so that we can continue living for our own pursuits and goals. He tries to lead us to have compassion for others living in miserable darkness, waiting for young people such as her to be aroused to our responsibilities for the souls perishing around us. “God gave you back your life so that you could serve Him!”

The Bible warns us that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God” (Hebrews 10:31), for by doing so, by accepting the call of duty Christ places upon each individual soul that He has redeemed with His precious blood, we become part of the great conflict, not against flesh and blood; but “against principalities,

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6:12. We engage in the conflict that reached its climax in the death of the Spotless Son of God, and will soon culminate in the destruction of the author of sin and its evils, Satan.

“Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way, that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished. . . . Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them. They would acknowledge Him as their wisdom and efficiency, and He would bring to pass that which He desires to work out through them.” –*Christian Service*, p. 260

There is no telling just how far God will ask us to go, just how far He will lead us. He promises nothing but His continual presence; and guarantees us nothing except that “peace. . . which passeth all [human] understanding” (Philippians 4:7). May the Lord bless you richly, steady your faith and prepare you to follow His leading, wherever it may take you, wherever He goes, is my wish and prayer in Christ's Exalted Name, Amen.

**Canadian Field Missionary Department**



**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

**On behalf of the Canadian Field and members of the Montreal Church, we warmly extend our invitation to you, your family, friends, neighbours and everyone who wants to be part of our Annual Spring Conference.**

**The theme will be: “A Force Called Grace”.**

**Date: Friday, May 15th to Sunday, May 17th 2015.**

**Come and be blessed through the subjects that will be studied and by the fellowship of our brethren in Quebec. May God richly bless you as you invite others.**

**For further information contact us at 514-521-7272 or [johanna@truth4free.org](mailto:johanna@truth4free.org)**

# Climbing - A lesson about Jesus



There I stand with climbing shoes on and a rope tied to my climbing harness, an 18 meter high wall in front of me. I look up to the top and realize how challenging the climbing route actually is, but I can also clearly see my goal—there is no turning back now. I turn my head to my friend. We nod to each other and I say, “Climb ready”. My heart starts beating fast as I am doing the first grips. With concentration I ascend the route, step by step, but at some point I feel the sweat on my hands and my muscles start burning. I am almost at the top, so with combined strength I do the last grips and finally reach the anchor. When I started rope climbing, I did not know that I would actually learn a great deal about Jesus.

Usually when you go rock climbing there is a lead climber who climbs up first and leaves the ground with no protection in the rock. As you ascend your route, you take the rope with you and you clip it into the fixed quickdraws. When you reach the anchor, you secure the rope and then the belayer lowers you back to the ground. The leader shows that the climb is possible and he sets a good example. Jesus also went ahead of you to prepare the way for you. In John 14 Jesus promised: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” For the word “prepare” the original Greek word is “prodromos” which describes a person running ahead (a forerunner) to reach the destination before others. In this way he is arriving safely in advance for the benefit of others who also need to get there. He wants to show that, even though the climb can be tough sometimes, it

is possible to reach the top. Jesus went through all the difficult situations and temptations. “As one of us He was to give an example. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24

After the lead climber is back on the ground, he becomes the belayer and it is time for the other climbing partner to ascend the route. The belayer wears a harness that has a belay device attached. The rope threads through the belay device. The climber has to fully trust the belayer so that whenever he falls—he might fall just a little bit, but he will fall never to the ground—the belayer is in full control of the situation. Jesus wants to be your belayer as well, the one you trust 100%. He wants to teach you that you are not in control; He is. He wants to show you that when He seems most absent and you are falling, He is really most present and is there to catch you. Jesus walks beside you even when you cannot see, hear, or feel Him. He provides you with what you need to get through deep pain and unbelievable circumstances. Place your trust in Him and let Him prove to you that He will not disappoint you. Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). Trusting your climbing partner also strengthens the bond between the two of you. You know that the other person would not let you get hurt. It is the same with Jesus: Every time you trust Him and have more and more experiences with Him, the relationship grows stronger.

The belayer is also the one motivating and giving advice to the climber, which helps him to go on. My climbing

partner often tells me, "Come on, you can do it!", "Put your foot on that left hold." Or, "Try again. Don't be scared!" When I feel tired or my arms get weak, I tell my friend, "Tight," which means to tighten the rope right away. That way I can take a break by just sitting back in the rope without falling. I can renew my strength and think about the next step. In your life Jesus is the one telling you: Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the LORD your God. I will be with you everywhere you go. (Joshua 1:9). When you do not know the way, Jesus is yelling from the bottom: I will guide you and teach you the way you should go. I will give you good advice and watch over you (Psalm 32:8). In times of weakness and tiredness He promises you: But those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak (Isaiah 40:31).

On your way up it is very important to focus on the anchor at the top of the climbing route. Sometimes you may take a quick glance at the other fellow climbers or to the ground, only to realize that this is just distracting you from your actual goal. Do not look down or to the side because you might get discouraged from going on.

Have your goal set in your sight! When Peter took his eyes off Jesus he began to sink. Always, look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrew 12:2).

When you reach the anchor at the top of a climb, you shout, "Take," and wait for a response from the belayer, indicating that he has you on belay and is ready to lower. You have to lean back and let go of the rocks and the rope. Here again, it is your turn to trust your partner that he will bring you safely back to the ground. It will take quite some effort to let go at such a height. Only if you let go can you make the experience that you will be held. It is the same with trusting in Jesus. Only if you are dependent on Him, if you let go completely, will you know that He always catches you. He wants you to let go of your pride that keeps you from seeking Him. He wants you to let go of the jealousy that keeps you striving for the things of this world, that only bring disappointment; things you really do not need. He wants you to let go of finding your strength in people, things, hopes and desires, so that you might find your strength in Him alone. Loosen your grip on the things that hold you back to live the life that God has in mind for you!

*Manuela Di Franca*

## **The Heavens Declare the Glory of God**

**"The Creator has given abundant evidence that His power is unlimited, that He can establish kingdoms, and overturn kingdoms. He upholds the world by the word of His power. He made the night, marshaling the shining stars in the firmament. He calls them all by name. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork, showing men that this little world is but a jot in God's creation.**

**"The inhabitants of the unfallen worlds look with pity and reproach on man's pride and self-importance. The wealthy and the honored of the world are not the only ones who glorify self. Many who profess to revere God talk of their wisdom and their might. They act as if God is under obligations to them, as if He cannot carry on His work without their aid. Let such gaze into the starry heavens, and with admiration and awe study the marvelous works of God. Let them think of the wisdom He displays in maintaining perfect order in the vast universe, and of the little reason that man has to boast of his attainments.**

**"All that man has—life, the means of existence, happiness, and other blessings unnumbered that come to him day by day—is from the Father above. Man is a debtor for all he proudly claims as his own. God gives His precious gifts, that they may be used in His service. Every particle of the glory of man's success belongs to God. It is His manifold wisdom that is displayed in the works of men, and to Him belongs the praise.**

**"By and by the gates of heaven will be thrown open to admit God's children, and from the lips of the King of glory the benediction will fall on their ears like richest music, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' (Matthew 25:34)" —*Lift Him Up*, p. 54**



Two issues back, in February of 2014, I wrote an article entitled, “Divine Law in Science.” In a part of this article I took Newton’s first and third laws of motion and compared them to our spiritual life. Recently someone asked me about Newton’s Second Law of Motion and if there is any spiritual comparison that can be made. Why did I leave out the second?

At the time that I wrote the article I had thought about the second law briefly; and since it was just a scientific formula I did not give it a second thought. It is a formula that describes motion, taking into consideration the mass of an object, and the amount of force needed to produce a certain acceleration. This Second Law gives us an exact relationship between force, mass, and acceleration and can be expressed as this mathematical equation:  $FORCE = MASS \times (times) ACCELERATION$ .

Acceleration is produced when a force acts on a mass. The greater the mass of the object being moved, the greater the amount of force needed to move it—to accelerate it. Everyone unconsciously knows that heavier objects require more force to move the same distance as lighter objects. As the force acting upon an object is increased, the acceleration of the object is increased. As the mass of an object is increased, the acceleration of the object is decreased.

God is the author of all science and it is He that developed these formulas that human scientists have discovered. This law is seen in operation all throughout nature, for example, the wind. The stronger the force of the wind, the heavier the objects that it can move, also, the lighter objects are moved a further distance. A light summer breeze may move a few stray leaves lying in the grass across the lawn, while hurricane force winds can move much heavier objects such as cars a short

distance; it can uproot trees and move lighter objects like leaves a greater distance. Jesus used this example in describing how the force of the Holy Spirit moves up on an individual. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” John 3:8. “As the wind moves in its force upon the lofty trees and brings them down, so the Holy Spirit can work upon human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe the work of God.” – *In Heavenly Places*, p.22

The main difference between the force of the wind and force of the Holy Spirit is the fact that the wind is indiscriminate. It exerts its force against everything that comes across its pathway, while the force of Holy Spirit (by choice) is dependent on the willingness of the human being. “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” Acts 7:51

From this scientific formula in Newton’s Second Law of Motion we can also learn a lesson for our spiritual life. The acceleration of a person in their spiritual life is dependent, not only on the force applied (by the Holy Spirit), but on the mass of the person. This mass is not the actual weight of the physical person, but the spiritual mass that a person is carrying that they will not let go of. The weight of this mass is dependent on how strongly the person is hanging on to the world; how burdened down they are with the cares of this life, and their own struggles. Many people are extremely weighed down with the cares of this world, causing the force (voice) of the Holy Spirit to move them at a slow pace, if it can move them at all. “No class is free from the temptation to worldly care. To the poor, toil and

deprivation and the fear of want bring perplexities and burdens. To the rich come fear of loss and a multitude of anxious cares. Many of Christ's followers forget the lesson He has bidden us learn from the flowers of the field. They do not trust to His constant care. Christ cannot carry their burden, because they do not cast it upon Him. Therefore the cares of life, which should drive them to the Saviour for help and comfort, separate them from Him." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 51. Thus the voice of the Holy Spirit becomes weaker. Due to the weight of the mass, some people advance, and accelerate quickly in their spiritual life. Some move very slowly and some are stagnant—not moving at all. They are chained to their heavy burdens. And sometimes the force of their burdens is so heavy that they are being pulled backwards.

Many hesitate to lay their mass (burden) at the foot of the cross. They want to keep it. Others want to carry their mass (cross) alone, not choosing to let Christ help them. They will find their cross deplorably heavy. Their Christian life is lived with a frown and a heavy brow—a life bereft of joy and happiness. They need to let go of their hold on earth and lay hold on Christ, taking up His offer to, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28–30. Then there will be joy in the place of sorrow.

God has the perfect formula to keep us moving and growing in our spiritual life. He has planned each of our lives in a manner fit for our character development. Just like each inanimate object has a different mass, so also each of us has a different spiritual mass and need a different amount of force, or pressure, to be able move us to finally reflect the spotless character of Jesus. We cannot compare our Christian walk with anyone else's. This would do one of two things: it will either discourage us as we see there are others far more advanced in their spiritual walk than we are, or it will make us proud as we see we are further ahead than someone else. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." 2 Corinthians 10:12. "In God's plan there is no place for selfish rivalry." —*Education*, p. 226. "We should not measure ourselves by the world, nor by the opinions of men, nor by what we were before we embraced the truth. But our faith and position in the world, as

they now are, must be compared with what they would have been if our course had been continually onward and upward since we professed to be followers of Christ. This is the only safe comparison that can be made." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 406. Never should we grumble regarding our lot in life. It is all the leading of the Holy Spirit. Some have more wealth, some less. Some have excellent health; some are more feeble in their health. Some are powerful speakers, some are meek and quiet. All have different talents—all are being led by the Holy Spirit according to their ability to advance. You have God's specific plan, and formula, for your life.

Sometimes the work of the Holy Spirit comes in a remarkably forceful manner and can be described using the common phrase in English, as a "Wake-up call." Like an "electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 267. The Apostle Paul had such an experience on the road to Damascus. "Filled with fear, and almost blinded by the intensity of the light, the companions of Saul heard a voice, but saw no man. But Saul understood the words that were spoken, and to him was clearly revealed the One who spoke—even the Son of God. In the glorious Being who stood before him he saw the Crucified One. Upon the soul of the stricken Jew the image of the Saviour's countenance was imprinted forever. *The words spoken struck home to his heart with appalling force.* Into the darkened chambers of his mind there poured a flood of light, revealing the ignorance and error of his former life and his present need of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 115 (emphasis mine). The Apostle Paul was ready for this change of heart. He was willing to give up his old way of life; the traditions of the Pharisees. The way had been prepared in Paul's life for many years before this event.

This is not a race to the finish where only the first person to cross the line receives the prize. In this race, all who finish before time runs out will receive the prize. Some will have run longer than others. Some may have run for 80 years, while others for 2. However, the prize is granted to all who allow the force of the Holy Spirit to keep them moving along until they cross the finish line.

## CONTENDING FORCES

In the spiritual life of man, there are different forces

involved. There are good and evil forces contending for the heart of man, they can move us (accelerate us) in one direction, or in the opposite direction. "In the Word of God are represented two contending parties that influence and control human agencies in our world. Constantly these parties are working with every human being." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1118

When the world is not fully let go of, often a tug-of-war goes on in a person's mind before the final decision is made as to which force will be the strongest in the person's life. "A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 231. The stronger a hold people have with this world, the more difficult is it to detach and get moving in the right direction. However, we are told that we must "mortify the deeds of the body." Romans 8:13. Mortify, meaning, put to death.

There are many forces of evil at work in this world and they have a different method of working. Satan uses brute force to trap his unsuspecting victim. In the Bible we read of people who lived in the time of Jesus and were demon possessed. They began by yielding just a little to the evil one, who then took them in his grasp and fully possessed them to the point where they were incapable of freeing themselves (Mark 1:23–26; 5:1–8). I am sure it happens today, also. In these cases, the individual had yielded to the force of the evil one, loosening their connection from good, and they were accelerating on the road to destruction. "A train of cars was shown me, going with the speed of lightning. The angel bade me look carefully. I fixed my eyes upon the train. It seemed that the whole world was on board, that

there could not be one left. Said the angel, 'They are binding in bundles ready to burn.' Then he showed me the conductor, who appeared like a stately, fair person, whom all the passengers looked up to and revered. I was perplexed and asked my attending angel who it was. He said, 'It is Satan. He is the conductor in the form of an angel of light. He has taken the world captive.'" —*Early Writings*, p. 88. Only the power of Christ can bring freedom as they are seen accelerating quickly towards destruction.

Jesus uses no brute force. He only uses the force of love "The love of Christ is the force and power of every message for God that ever fell from human lips." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 288 (emphasis mine). And this love is able to change people's lives in a manner that no other force on earth can do. "The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 220

"Our Saviour has been lifted up upon the cross of Calvary, and the love of Christ shining from the cross speaks constantly to the sinner of the sufferings of Jesus for fallen man. His love for the fallen race constantly draws sinners to Him." —*The Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1890 (emphasis mine)

When parents, in raising their children, use physical force or punishment to get them to comply and obey, it creates rebellion in the heart. When the force of love is used, it melts the heart and creates a desire for obedience because of love. This obedience is long-lasting. This same principle should be used in missionary work. Souls are to be won, not by fear of punishment, but they are to be drawn by the power of the love of God. "The truth is to be spoken in love. Then *the Lord Jesus by His Spirit will supply the force and the power*. That is His work." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 123 (emphasis mine)

The force of love is such a strong force that it can move the heaviest burdens that man is carrying and can melt the hardest hearts that man may possess. God could use brute force, but He chooses not to. He wants willing obedience and cooperation. Then you, in turn, will be a mighty force for good, as He lives in and through you. "Your energies are required to co-operate with God. Without this, if it were possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influences of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken. There must be the willing and the doing on the part of the receiver. There must be an action,

represented as coming out from the world and being separate. There must be a doing of the words of Christ. The soul must be emptied of self, that Christ may pour His Spirit into the vacuum. Christ must be chosen as the heavenly guest. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. Then there is a new heart, and new, holy resolves. It is Jesus enthroned in the soul that makes every action easy in his service." —*Healthful Living*, p. 304

## RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT

The force of the Holy Spirit is never applied against the will of a person. The will of man is the determining factor of the power of the force applied by the Holy Spirit. Man can resist the power by clinging onto his earthly ties and making them stronger. "Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 57

"Every child should understand the true force of the will. He should be led to see how great is the responsibility involved in this gift. The will is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or choice. Every human being possessed of reason has power to choose the right. In every experience of life, God's word to us is, 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve.' Joshua 24:15. Everyone may place his will on the side of the will of God, may choose to obey Him, and by thus linking himself with divine agencies, he *may stand where nothing can force him to do evil.*" —*Education*, p. 289 (emphasis mine)

Being given a choice, many consciously resist the force of the Holy Spirit. They close their eyes from seeing and their ears from hearing the truth. They are willingly ignorant (2 Peter 3:5). However, this will not excuse them in the great day of the Lord. "Because your heart was not right with God, you did not receive the light He sent to you. You set up your stubborn will to resist the reproof which the Lord gave to you in love." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p.228

When truth comes to the church, or to individuals, some easily accept it and apply it to their daily lives. Some struggle with it and it takes them longer to accept and apply the new truths. Some outright reject the message. Why do some reject the new truths? "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,

and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." John 3:19–20. Ask yourself if you have any burdens, cares, or sins in your life that are slowing you down in your spiritual advancement.

"You have had many convictions, many pangs of conscience. You have had so many purposes and made so many promises, and yet you linger and will not come to Christ that you may have life. Oh, that your heart may be impressed with a sense of this time, that you may now turn and live! Cannot you hear the voice of the True Shepherd in this message? How can you disobey? Trifle not with God, lest He leave you to your own crooked ways. It is life or death with you. Which will you choose? It is a fearful thing to contend with God and resist His pleadings." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 296

When we let go of this world and realize our helplessness, then the mighty force of the Holy Spirit will work in us and we will accelerate on our heavenward journey. "He who feels his weakness, and wrestles with God as did Jacob, saying, 'I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me' (Genesis 32:26), will go forth with the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere of heaven will surround him. He will go about doing good. His influence will *be a positive force* in favor of the religion of Christ." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 314 (emphasis mine)

If you find yourself moving ever so slowly on your Christian journey, (or not moving at all), then examine yourself and pray the prayer of David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23–24. And when the Lord does find something amiss in your life and reveals it to you from His Word, or from a fellow believer, then let it go and lighten your load; lighten your mass.

May God help you to lighten your mass (connection with the world and worldly cares) so that the force of the Holy Spirit can work mightily in and through you and hasten (accelerate) you on your journey to heaven, is my prayer. Amen.

**Wendy Eaton**



## Revelation's Lake of Fire Revealed

Throughout history there have been those who have taught about the horrors of hell, playing on people's fears in an attempt to bring them to worship God. What kind of god do they portray by this kind of preaching? I remember as I grew up, my Grandmother told me about a place called purgatory and hell, where all sinners have to go in order to be purified. They pass through several places and pay a certain amount of money for their sins. "Wow", I said, "then there is very little chance I will be saved." I looked at God as an unjust God, saying to myself that this is what life is all about. We are doomed, not only to death, but to everlasting punishment. How many people in this world today believe the same thing, my friends?

The concept of a soul within us that cannot die first became a "Christian" doctrine at the end of the second century AD. Hell had been taught in Greek philosophy long before the time of Jesus, with Plato, in 427–347 BC. The teaching of an everlasting place of punishment for the wicked is the natural consequence of a belief in an immortal soul. At the end of the 2nd century Christianity had begun to blend Greek philosophy—human speculative reasoning, with the teachings of God's Word. It arose out of the Gnostic idea that the body, flesh and matter, is inherently evil and must be purified and purged by fire elsewhere. The idea of a place like purgatory did not have its beginnings in the Christian church, but in ancient pagan religions. So, the question is: if God is so loving and good why would He want to punish sinners eternally? Why would He want them to continue burning forever? That is a fair question. Now, the Bible teaches about hell fire, but this is not what many Christians may have thought or what they have heard in their churches.

What really is the lake of fire? What does the Bible say about the Lake of Fire or Hell? Is hell the lake of fire? The lake of fire is mentioned five times in the Bible and only in the book of Revelation between chapters 19 and 21. Here it is mentioned in connection with the Millennium, or 1000 years, which is the time between the two resurrections—the first resurrection of the righteous and the second resurrection of the wicked, the ones who turned their back on Jesus while they were living.

The five verses are as follows:

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Revelation 19:20

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Revelation 20:10

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 20:14

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21:8

In answer to the questions, the lake of fire is the burning surface of the earth which takes place after the Millennium. It is the phase of the judgment which is called "the execution of the sentence." This judgment falls upon the Devil and everyone else who has refused to surrender to Jesus. It is the final annihilation of the wicked. This is a very accurate word; "the final annihilation," or, the "final destruction," or, "second death." Nothing is left after that. The Apostle Paul explains why this happens to these people. "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" Philippians 3:18–19. They are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction.

In the Bible we read that the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. The Devil is also cast into it. Death and Hell are cast into it. Anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life is cast into it and this would include unrepentant sinners.



As I stated, this Hell, or lake of fire, takes place after the Millennium, which means it does not take place now. A lot of people think that there is a hot place right in the centre of the world and that is where the wicked have ended up for thousands of years.

In Matthew 13 we read the parable of the wheat and the tares. Here Jesus says that there was an owner who sowed wheat; but half way through the process an enemy came at night and sowed tares. The servants of that owner, or farmer, came to him and said, "What do you want us to do? We see that tares are growing. Do you want us to pluck them out now?" The farmer said, "no—don't do that. Let both of them grow until the time of the harvest. At the time of the harvest we will gather both of them and then separate the wheat from the tares and burn the tares." That is what Jesus said. Later He explained the parable." As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 13:40–42

To answer the question that people may ask us, "Is hell going on now?" what would the answer be, according to Jesus? The answer would be, "no," because that will not take place until the end of time. The wicked, the tares, are not destroyed until the end. No one, therefore, is burning in hell right now. Hell fire does not exist at the moment. It will exist in the future, but it is not present at this time. In 2 Peter 3:7 we read, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." It says here that they are reserved for that day which means that it is not going on at this time.

This is quite different than the common teaching in the Christian world, and the Bible tells us how God feels about it. "For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act." Isaiah 28:21. Here Isaiah calls this a strange work because God's natural tendency is not to destroy. His natural tendency is to build up, to create, to save, and to deliver. In the Bible we read of a proactive God; the Bible teaches that God makes it happen, in spite of the fact that this is indeed a strange work for Him. But He does it—He does it because it is necessary.

Many people think it is eternal torment (lasting forever) because of how the Bible is written. They say that everybody teaches and preaches it that way. There are people who will say, "I have always believed that you are going to be tormented forever and ever." In Revelation 14 it seems to say that this is so. In verses 10–11 we read, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured

out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." This is in reference to the person who has the mark of the beast. It seems fairly clear, because the Bible says this torment goes on forever and ever. But you need to read the whole context to get the full understanding of what is written here.

To rightly interpret the Bible, it must always be read in context. Bible scholars call that "Exegesis" meaning "to guide" and this is the proper approach to Bible study. On the other hand there is "Eisegesis" which is reading into the Scriptures what we think they should mean. We want the Bible to teach us, and not us to teach the Bible. Context is paramount. The word "forever" can be translated in the Bible to mean, "until the end of the age." In other words, there is an absolute way to translate it and sometimes it refers to a limited amount of time, even though it says forever. For example, if I say I love my wife forever; what do I mean by that? If I take it literally and apply it, what happens if one of us dies? Did I mean I would love her forever? No. If I am dead I cannot love her. It is applicable as long as I am alive. So, forever has limitations, also.

We can read another example of the word "forever" in Exodus 21:6. Here it refers to the situation when a master bought a slave. "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever." Here it means, of course, as long as he is alive. If he is dead he cannot serve his master.

Jonah is another example. "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God." Jonah 2:6. He felt like this—in other words, he was doomed. Forever in this case was only three days.

The third example is found in 1 Samuel 1:22, 28: "But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there." Here forever is in reference to Samuel, he served the Lord as long as he lived. This is what we need to understand about the word, "forever".

The term "unquenchable fire" is also used and "unquenchable" means that it cannot be extinguished. It does not always mean never ending. For example, in Jeremiah 17:27, we are told the following words: "But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to

bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." Jerusalem is not burning today. It means that no matter how hard you try, you cannot undo God's decision about burning the city. You cannot quench that fire. No human hand can put it out.

Another example we have in the Bible is found in the book of Jude, verse 7. We are told that Sodom and Gomorrah, were destroyed by eternal fire. If we go to that part of the world today, do we find these cities still burning? Eternal fire means that the fire burns eternally—as long as its fuel burns it cannot be quenched. As soon as the city was completely burned to the ground it was over; the fire stopped. What God is saying here is that no matter how hard you try to stop the judgment you cannot stop it from taking place. So, an eternal fire is one whose effects and results, are eternal. It is the voice of God saying, definitely this will take place. Everlasting punishment is eternal. This is not an everlasting punishing. There is a big difference, between the noun "punishment" and the verb "punishing." Reading from Malachi 4:1, 3: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Burning something up is not the same as continuing to burn on. The Bible is crystal clear that God is not tormenting people forever and ever. This idea came from paganism. The motivation to follow Jesus is not the fear of His tormenting us with fire but rather the motivation should be His amazing love towards sinners.

The face of the wicked is that they will be as though they have not been. God respects our choices. Either we want to be saved or we want to be lost. The choices we make today will reveal our destiny. Forever saved or forever lost—this is what the Bible teaches us. You and I cannot be on the middle ground.

There are some difficult Bible texts for some people to understand on this subject, such as Mark 9 and Luke 16 where Jesus talked about unquenchable fire and undying worms, and also the rich man and Lazarus. What is the lesson that Jesus wanted to teach people, both in His time and in our time today? These references cannot be taken literally. The point in these references is

that only by listening to God's word today can one secure a future in heaven. Again the context is very important here. The question many ask is, "why are the wicked destroyed, in spite of God's grace?" Does God want to save only a few people? Is Jesus promoting favouritism? Did He not die for all humanity?

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Timothy 2:4. Hell, or the lake of fire, is prepared for the devil and his angels and it takes place at the end of time. The wicked will join them. "That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." Job 21:30. According to Revelation 20:14 this lake of fire is called the second death. This death is eternal. Jesus died the second death for us, the death which has no resurrection. Jesus died the death of the sinner; the death of the wicked. That is why, when Jesus died, He cried out to His Father saying, "Why have You forsaken Me?" He felt the entire weight of sin upon His shoulders. Jesus died the death of the lost, because He is the only One who comes back from the second death. Christ died so that no repentant sinner needs to die the eternal death. Why do wicked people die although such a great salvation was provided? The Apostle Paul tells us, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12. But for those who received Jesus, as we read in Revelation 2:11, the promise is given that the overcomers will not know the second death.

What will you choose today? Have you received Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord? Can you look into His face when He comes and say; "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:9. It is my wish and prayer that you may choose today what I have chosen 17 years ago. This is the best choice I have ever made in my life. When I come to the cross and see what Jesus has done in my favour; when I open my Bible and see the beauty of His character and that all His life was—a self-denying and self-sacrificing life for me—I just bow down on my knees and say, "who am I, Lord, to deserve such a great honour to be Your child and live eternally in Your kingdom?" Amen.

*Nicholas Anca*

# Introduction To Bacteria And Antibiotics

“The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.” Deuteronomy 28:22

Microbes are organisms too small for the eye to see and are found everywhere on earth. There are many types of microbes: bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. While most microbes are harmless and even beneficial to living organisms, some can cause disease among humans, animals, and plants.

## WHAT ARE BACTERIA?

Bacteria are microscopic, single-celled organisms that live in enormous amounts throughout the earth. In fact, they are found everywhere on earth. Most bacteria are harmless and are, in fact, necessary to sustain life on earth. Bacteria in the soil helps organic material decompose, e.g. trees, plants, animal life. The decayed material is what makes soil fertile. Bacteria also take nitrogen from the air, which plants use for nutrition. There is up to 3 billion bacteria in a gram of soil. The total amount of bacteria on Earth is five million trillion trillion (that is a 5, followed by 30 zeroes).

In fact, our bodies contain 10 times more bacteria than human cells. Our body contains 10 trillion cells and 100 trillion bacteria. The largest number of bacteria are contained in our stomach, intestines and on our skin. The average person has 2–5 pounds of bacteria in their body. There are more bacteria in our intestines than there are people on earth. In fact, we have 500-1,000 species of bacteria in our intestines. Even in our body, bacteria is present for our benefit. In the stomach, bacteria help us to break down carbohydrates so that our body can digest and absorb nutrients from our food. Bacteria in our gut (intestines) help protect against other disease-causing bacteria that may come from the

food and water we eat. They are also needed to make Vitamin K and biotin (B7), both essential vitamins for our body. The bacteria on our skin help to crowd out other harmful bacteria from infecting us. Most bacteria in our body are harmless; we are protected from them hurting us by our immune system. Some bacteria even help to boost our immune system by assisting in the function of immune cells.

If bacteria are so beneficial, why are we scared of them? It is because not all bacteria are beneficial. Harmful bacteria have always existed since sin entered into the world. Of all the bacteria in the world, 1% actually cause deadly infectious diseases in man, animals and plants. In humans, some of these diseases include cholera, syphilis, anthrax, leprosy, tuberculosis, pneumonia, tetanus, and the bubonic plague. Throughout history, bacterial infections have caused the death of millions of people. In the 1300s, 25 million people died in Europe from the bubonic plague. Reports from ancient Egypt talk about smallpox epidemics, with mummies examined from that time having evidence of smallpox scars on their faces. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before it was eradicated, smallpox killed 300 million people worldwide. Tuberculosis (historically called consumption) was considered a death sentence, even in Sister White’s time. Her son died from a form of pneumonia bacteria.

Bacteria also cause less deadly infections, such as strep throat, urinary tract infections, skin and wound infections. However, all these infections, if not treated, have the potential to cause severe complications and even death. In the past, people died from infected wounds. Infections often killed more people in battle than the wounds themselves. Eighty percent of soldiers who had wound infections, died. However, even without effective treatments, not everyone who was infected died. There was always a percentage who survived, whose

immune system was able to counteract the disease. Throughout history, high infant mortality rates were always present because babies are born without the full complement of good bacteria to prevent infections. Thus, they are more susceptible to disease.

The most common fatal bacterial infections at the present time are respiratory infections, with tuberculosis killing about 2 million people a year, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. Even with vaccines and treatments available, certain bacteria still kill in large numbers in areas where these are not available. For example tetanus, a bacteria that most people in the developed countries have been vaccinated against, still kills 500,000 people a year.

Even the beneficial bacteria that we have in our bodies can cause disease if it travels to another part of our body. For example, *E. coli* bacteria help break down the food in our intestines so that we can absorb its nutrients, but, in our urinary tract, *E. coli* causes infections. *Staphylococcus* bacteria on our skin protect us from other harmful bacteria, but if we get a cut or wound, *staphylococcus* can travel into our body and cause an infection. *Staphylococcal* toxins are a common cause of food poisoning; they can be produced by bacteria growing in improperly stored food items.

Bacteria replicate very quickly. One bacterium can create 16 million bacteria in just eight hours. This is significant when it comes to disease-causing bacteria. A bacterial infection can spread very quickly once it develops. Bacteria replicate by dividing into two parts after the DNA contained in the original cell splits into two parts. Each new bacterium contains the identical DNA from the original cell.

### WHAT ARE ANTIBIOTICS?

An antibiotic is defined as a substance that inhibits the growth of or destroys bacteria. Antibiotics work either by preventing bacteria from forming or from replicating. Most of the readers of this article will have been prescribed an antibiotic at some point in time in their life. Since their discovery, antibiotics have saved the lives of millions of people who would have otherwise died.

### HISTORY OF ANTIBIOTICS

Throughout the ages, people used various substances to treat infections. During ancient times, Greeks and Indians used moulds and other plants to treat infections. In Greece, mouldy bread was used to treat wounds. Babylonian doctors used a mixture of frog bile and sour milk. Warm soil was used in Russia by the peasants to cure infected wounds. All of these substances contained nat-

ural bacteria-fighting properties.

In 1928, a Scottish scientist named Alexander Fleming made a discovery that would change the world. He noted that a specific blue-green mould was attacking and killing bacteria contained in a petri dish in his lab. This mould, identified as *penicillium notatum*, revolutionized medicine and treatment of bacterial infections. Penicillin was the first antibiotic discovered; and, for the first time



**Penicillin in petri dish**

in the history of the world, antibiotics became the treatment for bacterial infections. No longer would diseases such as pneumonia kill people by the millions. Most antibiotics that have followed penicillin have also been derived from plant and animal life, and are completely natural. Now pharmaceutical companies are able to also synthetically manufacture antibiotics in large volumes, but they still use the natural antibiotic as the base. Today, over 100 different antibiotics are available to cure minor, and life-threatening infections. The majority of bacterial infections can now routinely be cured by antibiotics, including the ones that typically killed millions of people in the past.

Today, in North America, deaths by infectious bacterial diseases are only *one-twentieth* of what they were in 1900, before any antibiotic chemicals had been discovered. The main causes of death today are what are referred to as “the diseases of old age”: heart disease, kidney disease and cancer. Nowadays, we would be shocked to hear of someone dying from an infection that started in a scratch; before antibiotics, it was common for people to die from such infections.

### ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT BACTERIA

But now, only 80 years since the introduction of antibiotics, the world has also created a monster. Bacteria, like any other animal or plant life, have adapted to the medicines that are trying to kill them, through a process known as “survival of the fittest;” the strongest of its species is able to resist disease, toxins, etc. When a per-

son has been prescribed an antibiotic for an infection, the bacteria mount a defense against this attack. Most of the time, the antibiotic is able to kill all the bacteria. However, sometimes, a certain bacteria is strong enough to survive the attack and doesn't die. The strains which survive are the ones that then replicate and reproduce. Bacteria that are not killed or stopped by antibacterial drugs may also change in form so that they resist attack against their cell walls—or even produce enzymes that kill the antibiotics. What this has done to bacteria is that it has made them stronger and more able to resist whatever is trying to kill it; and in this case it is an antibiotic. The strongest of the bacteria are able to fight an antibiotic and live, causing a super-strain of bacteria that can potentially resist against any and all antibiotics. Over the last several decades, over-use of antibiotics has reached an all-time high. The result has been drug-resistant bacteria and “superbugs” that evolve faster than scientists can figure out how to fight them.

The medical community is also responsible for treatment-resistant bacteria. Doctors prescribe antibiotic drugs to their patients when they are not needed. Sometimes, they are given to people who have a viral, not a bacterial infection. Antibiotics have no effect on viruses, but it will kill off the harmless and even beneficial bacteria living in the person's body. The surviving resistant bacteria, free from competition, will live and multiply and may eventually cause disease. Or the doctor does not test the strain of bacteria present before prescribing an antibiotic, and they give the wrong one, causing the disease-causing bacteria to continue multiplying. Then there is the problem that people do not take the antibiotic as prescribed. People stop taking the antibiotic as soon as they start feeling better. Not all the bacteria will have been killed. A small number of semi-resistant bacteria, which needed the full course of antibiotics to kill them, survive. The more resistant bacteria take over, and the infection returns, but in a much stronger form. People also are prescribed antibiotics for long periods of time for chronic problems. All these contribute to the development of resistant strains of bacteria.

The use of antibiotics in animal feed to promote animal growth has also led to the development of hardier strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. In North America, 70% of antibiotic use is in farm animals. People who eat meat also ingest treatment-resistant bacteria. Now people become the host to these resistant strains. People are also ingesting antibiotics in their food, which also causes the stronger bacteria in their bodies to build up a resistance to antibiotics. Since the first generalized use of antibiotics in the 1940s, most known bacterial diseases

have built up a resistance to one or more antibiotics. And there are some bacterial diseases that do not respond to any known antibiotic. People are dying of strains of bacteria that now have no known cure.

For example, some of the most deadly infections were once mostly harmless bacteria that many of us have living on the surface of our skin, but has now mutated into something that could kill us. The staphylococcus aureus bacteria has developed strains that can now cause “flesh-eating disease.” Many hospital environments carry methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), which causes deadly infections in patients who are already weakened by disease and illness. Methicillin refers to the antibiotic which, in the past, had been able to cure the staphylococcus aureus bacteria. The names of others of the most deadly infections are also called by the antibiotic that they are resistant to, e.g. vancomycin-resistant enterococci, carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae. Patients who are admitted to hospital for any number of reasons, can pick up one of these deadly bacteria, and because the person is already sick and their immune system is weak, they can die from the bacterial infection that they acquired in the hospital instead of being able to go home after being treated for the illness that brought them to hospital. People are dying of infections for which there is no antibiotic strong enough to combat it. And now the fear is that these deadly infections, instead of being confined to small areas of the world, will become more prevalent and start killing people in large numbers.

Scientists have determined that unless new antibiotics are discovered, or we change the way we use antibiotics, in a few years we could be back to the time prior to the discovery of antibiotics, and millions of people will die from simple infections again. There is a hunt for new antibiotics. Scientists comb the world, going to the remotest places, in caves, in the middle of jungles, in the waters of the Arctic, hoping to find a new, previously unknown mould, or algae, or organism that may be the next cure for the stronger strains of bacteria that exist. Research in newer types and combinations of drugs is ongoing, as is research in the development of vaccines to prevent bacterial infections. In only 80 years, antibiotics, while they still cure, have also become a curse. Is there an answer to the current situation which exists? Perhaps the answer is not only in finding a cure, but also in preventing infections in the first place. Strengthening our immune systems to prevent bacterial infections from taking hold is part of the solution. We will learn more about this next month.

**Part 2: Solutions to the antibiotic-resistance problem.**



# Families in the Bible

## Part 1

### ABRAHAM AND LOT

“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” Genesis 12:5

Abraham was one of Terah’s three sons. Two of his sons, Nahor and Abram (as he was then named) got married. Sarai, Abraham’s wife, was unable to have children. The Bible says “she was barren; she had no child.” Haran, Abraham’s brother, died before his father Terah, and left his son an orphan. Seeing this, Abraham took Lot in, and raised him as if he was his own son. When God called Abraham to come out of, and leave Ur of the Chaldees, he took Lot with him, and that is how this story of uncle and nephew begins.

As Abraham prospered so did his livestock and all those around him. Lot began to have a huge herd of his own. The quarrels between Abraham’s and Lot’s servants over space and water for the animals began to intensify. One day, Abraham said to Lot, “Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” Genesis 13:8–9. Here we see what a good man Abraham was. Instead of choosing a piece of land immediately for himself, he let his nephew have the first choice. What did Lot do? Did he choose the better, more fertile land? Or did he choose to stay put?

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of

Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.” Genesis 13:10–12

Lot could have let Abraham have the better land, but instead he was selfish and took it for his own gain. This decision of moving towards Sodom would be the start of Lot’s troubles, as he would suffer the greatest loss of his life.

King Chedorlaomer of the Elamites rode into Canaan to conquer and force the kings there to once again be under his submission. One of the cities he plundered was Sodom, where Lot lived. He took Lot, his family and all the inhabitants of the two cities captive. What did Abraham do then? “Seeking, first of all, divine counsel, Abraham prepared for war. . . . The patriarch divided his force so as to approach from different directions, and came by the encampment by night. His attack, so vigorous and unexpected, resulted in speedy victory. . . . Lot and his family, with all the prisoners and their goods, were recovered, and a rich booty fell into the hands of the victors. . . . The worshiper of Jehovah [Abraham] had not only rendered a great service to the country, but had proved himself a man of valour.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 134–135

When the King of Sodom offered Abraham to keep all the spoil that they had collected, Abraham kindly refused. Thus he saved his nephew and set an example for the people of Sodom.

The day came when Lot’s bad decision caught up with him again. Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed because of all the wickedness that was going on in the two cities. The angels came and warned Lot to leave at once. Lot tried to save his family and neighbors but they all laughed at him, started a riot and thought he

was crazy. Finally, Lot left with only his two daughters and his wife. As the fire and brimstone destroyed the city, Lot's wife turned to catch one last glimpse of home, something the angels told them not to do. She immediately turned into a pillar of salt.

Lot lost everything that very day: his belongings, his wife, his other children and his home. All this he lost because of one selfish decision.

It is my wish and prayer that we can be generous and caring like Abraham was to Lot, and that we may learn to not be selfish, as it will destroy us. Amen.

**Cyrus Newby**

## **LABAN'S FAMILY**

Jacob's mother's brother was Laban, so Laban was Jacob's uncle. Jacob came to meet Laban by fleeing from his home; from his brother's wrath. "And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away." Genesis 27:42  
-44

Jacob was told to live with Laban until Esau's wrath was no more. When Jacob arrived in Haran, the land of his mother, he saw three shepherds tending their flocks in the fields. He asked them if they knew who Laban was. They said, yes. Then Jacob saw a beautiful woman coming with a flock of sheep to the well. Jacob took off the stone from the well so that the sheep could drink. "And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother." Genesis 29:10

The Bible says that, after that Jacob kissed her and wept and said that he was Rebekah's son. Rachel ran and told her father, Laban; Laban came out and said, "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh." Genesis 29:14

Jacob spent a month inside the house of Laban. Laban asked Jacob if he could stay longer and perhaps work for him and he asked Jacob what wages he would want. Jacob answered that he wanted Rachel. He just wanted Rachel. Laban agreed and Jacob worked for Laban seven years for Rachel. As the end of the seven years came

to a close and it was time for the wedding. Now, Laban loved money so much that he tricked Jacob by giving him Leah, whom he disliked. Jacob was furious. Laban later worked another deal with Jacob saying that if he worked another seven years, he would get Rachel also. So Jacob worked another hard seven years, so he could to marry Rachel, thus earning more money for Laban.

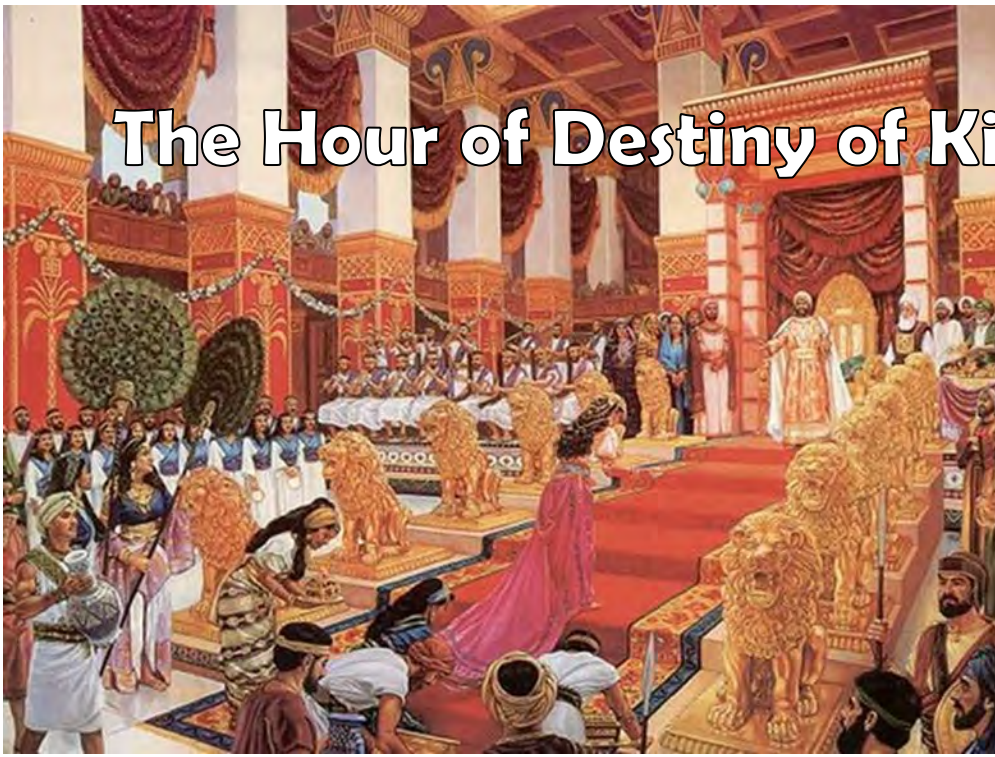
This clearly reveals Laban's character. He loved money. It was his idol. Soon after the end of the second seven years, Jacob decided it was time to leave, however, Laban begged him to stay. Jacob agreed to stay, but he asked for wages. After the agreed amount of wages, over the course of time, Jacob had more flocks of sheep and cattle than Laban. This caused Laban to keep changing Jacob's wages. "And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me." Genesis 31:7

After another six years Jacob decided it was finally time to leave. He packed up his possessions, and, along with his children and his wives, left without telling Laban. On the third day that Jacob was gone, someone told Laban that Jacob had left. Laban ran after Jacob, hoping to make him come back. They met at the top of Mount Gilead after seven days. Laban was angry but God came to him in a dream and told him some important things.

"And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." Genesis 31:24. Laban could not touch Jacob or hurt him. So when Laban arrived at mount Gilead, he saw Jacob's tents set. Laban asked why he stole something from him; Jacob swore he didn't. He even told Laban to check the tents to see for himself. Laban went into Leah's tent and Jacob's maidens tents but did not see anything. He went into Rachel's tent, but did not see his idols there, for Rachel had sat upon them. "Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not." Genesis 31:34

From the history of this family we see that they were all deceiving one another. Rebekah, Laban's sister, tricked Isaac; Jacob tricked Isaac; Laban tricked Jacob; Rachel tricked Laban; and, later, Jacob's sons tricked Jacob. Deceiving is breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden. We must be careful that we do not deceive one another and that we do not fall into the deceits of Satan. Amen.

**Stephen Newby**



# The Hour of Destiny of King Solomon

## Part I

knowledge and judgment, his immense wealth and entire lifestyle were out of the ordinary. Everything was in the superlative. There was a literal migration of rulers from all over the world to see and hear this illustrious Hebrew monarch in person. Also, this is remarkable, for of whom else has it been recorded to

Many kings, queens, and emperors have passed through the ages. There have been mighty ones, weak ones, great ones, good ones, cruel ones, etc. Each had his/her peculiarities or achievements, by which they were, or are, remembered in history.

But none of them would, nor can, measure up their name with Solomon, the king of ancient Israel. Neither could they, in the slightest degree, ever surpass Solomon's status as a person or regent. For the Scripture record tells us that God, who appeared to Solomon in a dream, said: "Io, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." 1 Kings 3:12. And what God says cannot be changed.

As we know the story, Solomon did very well for many years. "[He] loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father." 1 Kings 3:3. He built the glorious temple, the jewel and pride of the nation, a splendid palace with the magnificent throne room, the wall around Jerusalem, a navy, and he established and fortified cities. All was done on a monumental scale.

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." 1 Kings 4:29–30, 34. This record stands indeed unchallenged till today.

The very person of Solomon, his superior wisdom,

be sought after with such keen interest!

Here was nothing in the line of normal standard of how royalty used to live at that time. Because all the earth desired to visit Solomon, everyone came also with plenty of gifts, which, accordingly contributed to his enormous wealth, besides his own enterprises of bringing gold from Ophir and other treasures.

### AT THE PALACE

One visitor outdid the other with precious, costly, beautiful and extraordinary presents to find favour and also to set up treaty agreements. Only the very best of everything—exquisite jewelry, intricate embroidery, magnificent artifacts, choice vessels of gold and silver, precious silk, brocade, finest linen, rare, exotic birds and animals, select spices, etc., etc., were presented before this imposing monarch.

There was a steady coming and going of foreign dignitaries to the royal palace, and Solomon exceeded everyone's expectations with his brilliant style of entertaining the guests. Some challenged him (according to Josephus) with difficult riddles, including the Queen of Sheba, which Solomon solved in a flash that left his hearers speechless. There was no question he could not answer.

Solomon studied nature and fascinated every ear with amazing explanations of his knowledge about creation and discoveries about all matters and subjects of science and life, which kept the audience spellbound.

The royal banquets were an experience and feast in a class of its own. Besides mouth-watering, exquisite cui-



sine, gorgeously clad servants, there was music of the finest sort to enchant the ear. There was also sublime poetry, dazzling beautiful dancers, performances of superb athletes, etc. These were days, not only to satisfy the palate, but also the mind, the senses and the eyes. No one who was privileged to experience all those wondrous events would forget the lavish generosity and hospitality of King Solomon.

He certainly lived up to his fame. No wonder every nation desired to be affiliated with him.

### THE RISING OF SHADOWS

With the droves of presents came also beautiful virgins to be given as gifts. Solomon married them and, with time, there were hundreds of them. Here, one must say, he did not act wisely at all, and dark shadows began to fall upon his celebrated prominence.

These ladies brought with them their heathen religions, every nation having their own gods and style of worship.

For many years Solomon was faithful to the God of his fathers, and the Spirit of God was with him, as the Bible says. What a fantastic story of the life of this king, until . . .

Until one continues to read on to Chapter 11 of 1 Kings, beginning with "But". I am always saddened when coming across: "But king Solomon loved many strange women. . . . Solomon clave unto these in love." 1 Kings 11:1-2

Suddenly, all the lustre of Solomon's glory, grandeur and greatness fall like scales to the earth. The tragic, sobering truth of Solomon's following years hit the reader with a hammer! Surely even the wisest man on earth is not immune to apostasy from the truth and the favour of God. This is a most solemn warning to anyone with great talent, intellect and zeal for the Lord.

### SATAN'S JEALOUSY

God loved Solomon and appeared to him twice. It was the king's earnest desire to follow the LORD.

But, this is another "but" however addressed to Satan, who hates everyone with hellish passion who is loving and serving the holy God and Creator of the universe.

Satan was consumed with jealousy towards Solomon, and determined to bring this admired great man, and regent, from favour to disgrace. He watched closely as Solomon began to marry, at first, the Egyptian Princess, and later the many foreign women given him by the hundreds. His eyes really widened, being quite astonished, observing those things. Satan knew well that this was a direct transgression of the commandments and

laws given to Moses for Israel (1 Kings 11:2; Deuteronomy 17:17).

Now Satan saw his chance to enter a solid wedge between Solomon's faithfulness to God and the strong hold of his wives. In time the gulf widened, the king's devotion to the God of Israel lessened more and more, as his indulgence to every gratification of the carnal mind and passion increased.

"I made me. . . I got me. . . I gathered me. . . And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them." Ecclesiastes 2:3-10

Now Satan clapped his hands together and dancing with hellish delight shouted: "Ha, ha, hahhh, I got him, I got him!"

We are not told by the Scriptures if Solomon was trying to convert his wives and concubines to the only true God. But we know that **they** were certainly successful in slowly biasing **him** to **their** deities and ways of worship. These wives were Satan's subjects and he used them as his elected tools to ensnare the king with their artful enticements, not only to yield to excess sensuality, but also to make him an idol worshipper.

One could do no greater offense to God and this was Satan's goal. He, in his jealousy, and his hatred to God, finally succeeded to snatch Solomon out of the Creator's hand.

In triumphant frenzy, the fallen cherub manipulated Solomon as his choice marionette. Becoming wax in the hands of the strange wives to do Satan's bidding, the king made of himself an open shame, not only to God, but also to his nation. He offered sacrifices to the most abominable heathen gods and even set up high places to worship there.

"And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice. . . and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not." 1 Kings 11:9-10

"And the LORD stirred up an adversary. . . . Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom." 1 Kings 11:14

"And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah. . . . [he] reigned in Damascus. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did." 1 Kings 11:23-25

"And Jeroboam the son of Nebat. . . even he lifted up his hand against the king." (verse 26). Him Solomon wanted

to kill, because of the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite (v. 29–39). He prophesied that, because of his apostasy, after his death God would rent the kingdom out of his posterity and make Jeroboam king over Israel. Solomon fell so deep that he would not even shrink from considering the murder of someone God had chosen to become His servant.

God had exalted Solomon to highest honour, wealth, prosperity and excellent wisdom (1 Chronicles 29:25). Therefore, his apostasy was the more heinous, despicable, abhorrent and offensive. He betrayed the God of Israel to whom he had built a most glorious house of worship.

What did he think when he saw its splendor before him, that holy edifice where he worshipped with gladness and offered with thanksgiving sacrifices by the thousands—when offering to heathen deities nearby?

Strange, that not even his great wisdom and keen per-

ception could make him see what he was doing. There was something terribly wrong going on in him. This is indeed the mystery of iniquity; the mystery of sin. The king's fall was complete. It seemed there was no hope for him.

***There was a Precious Promise Given to David:***

“I will be his father, and He shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men. . . But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul.” 2 Samuel 7:14–15

The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that Solomon was “saved by the hair of his teeth.” For David's sake, God would not let go of Solomon.

You can read about his conversion, “Out of the Abyss,” in Part II, in the next issue.

***Edda Tedford, Canada***

## Believers in Cuba



# Mali





## ***Back of the Clouds***

***Never fear though shadows dark around your path may fall;  
Do not let your heart be troubled.  
From His throne in heaven, God is watching one and all,  
He will ever care for you.***

***Keep the light of hope eternal dwelling in your heart,  
Rest upon the Father's promise,  
And you'll find that care and trouble quickly will depart,  
Heaven's peace will enter in.***

***Back of clouds, the sun is always shining,  
After the storms your skies will all be blue;  
God has prepared a rosy tinted lining,  
Back of the clouds it's waiting to shine through.***

***Carolyn R. Freeman***