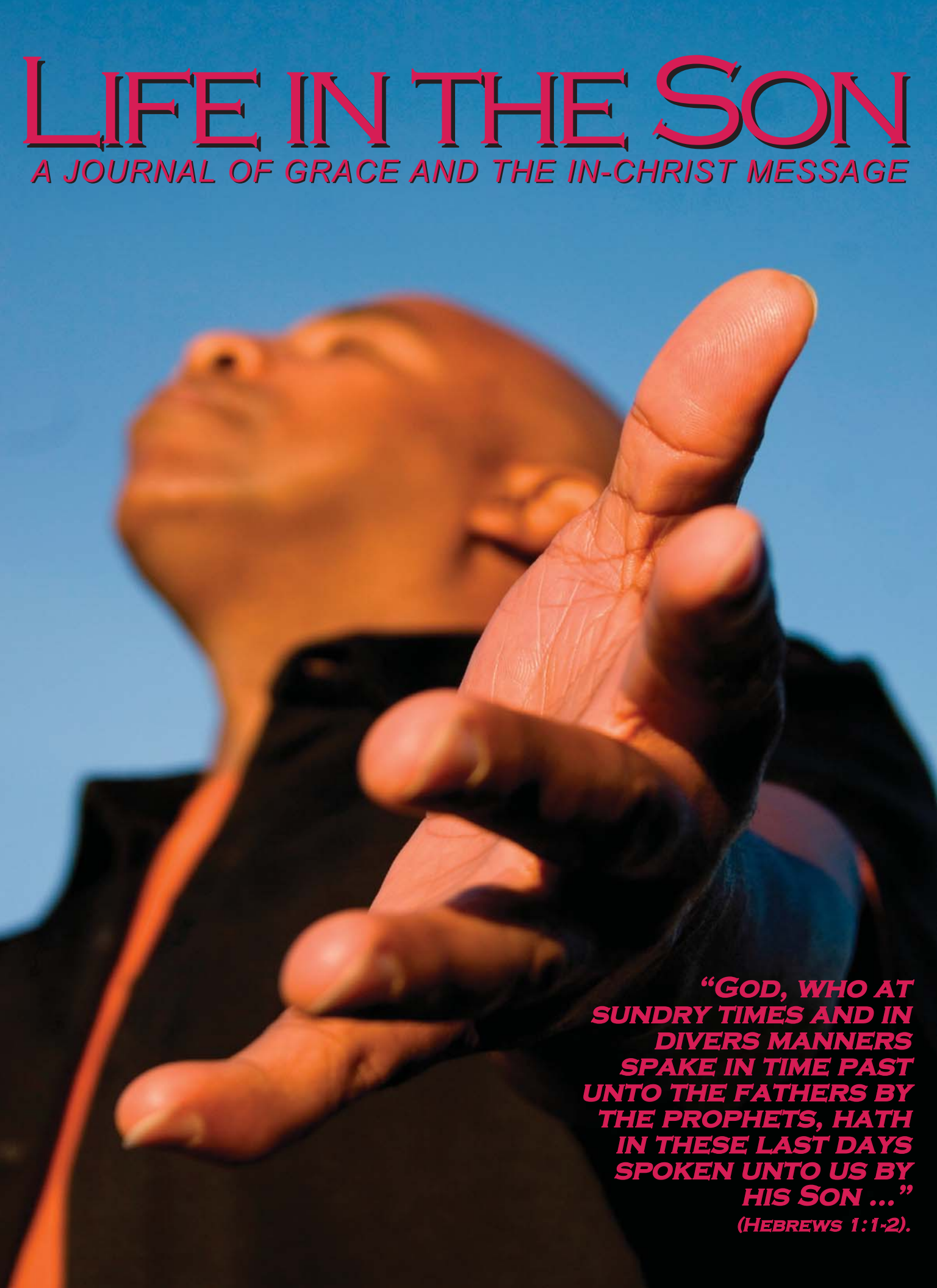


LIFE IN THE SON

A JOURNAL OF GRACE AND THE IN-CHRIST MESSAGE



**“GOD, WHO AT
SUNDRY TIMES AND IN
DIVERS MANNERS
SPAKE IN TIME PAST
UNTO THE FATHERS BY
THE PROPHETS, HATH
IN THESE LAST DAYS
SPOKEN UNTO US BY
HIS SON ...”**

(HEBREWS 1:1-2).

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LIFE IN THE SON

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EDITORIAL

OH! WHAT A FELLOWSHIP!

by Warren Litzman

The old song says, “What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms.” This past November, a joyful people met at the Pine Cove Conference Center in Tyler, Texas, for a Christ-life “Weekend in the Word.” Originally, at our inception many years ago, Christ-life believers would meet at Pine Cove for all our conferences, but our growth these past 10 years caused us to meet at several other places that were larger and allowed us to spread out across the nation. But this year, Pine Cove had a slot open in November and we decided to take it. What a wonderful time our Father gave us! We had people come from both coasts and from all across America.

Coming to Pine Cove felt like coming home because our long history there for past conferences brought so much learning about the Christ who lives in us and provided such great spiritual blessings. Memories of the past, coupled with the Father’s present-day truths,

made the 2010 conference a huge event that Christ-life believers who attended will never forget. The Pine Cove Conference Center has offered us the same schedule for next year, and we are already planning a “Weekend in the Word” for next November. In the last meeting, we filled all the space Pine Cove could give us and reservations for next year are already coming in. So mark your calendars now!

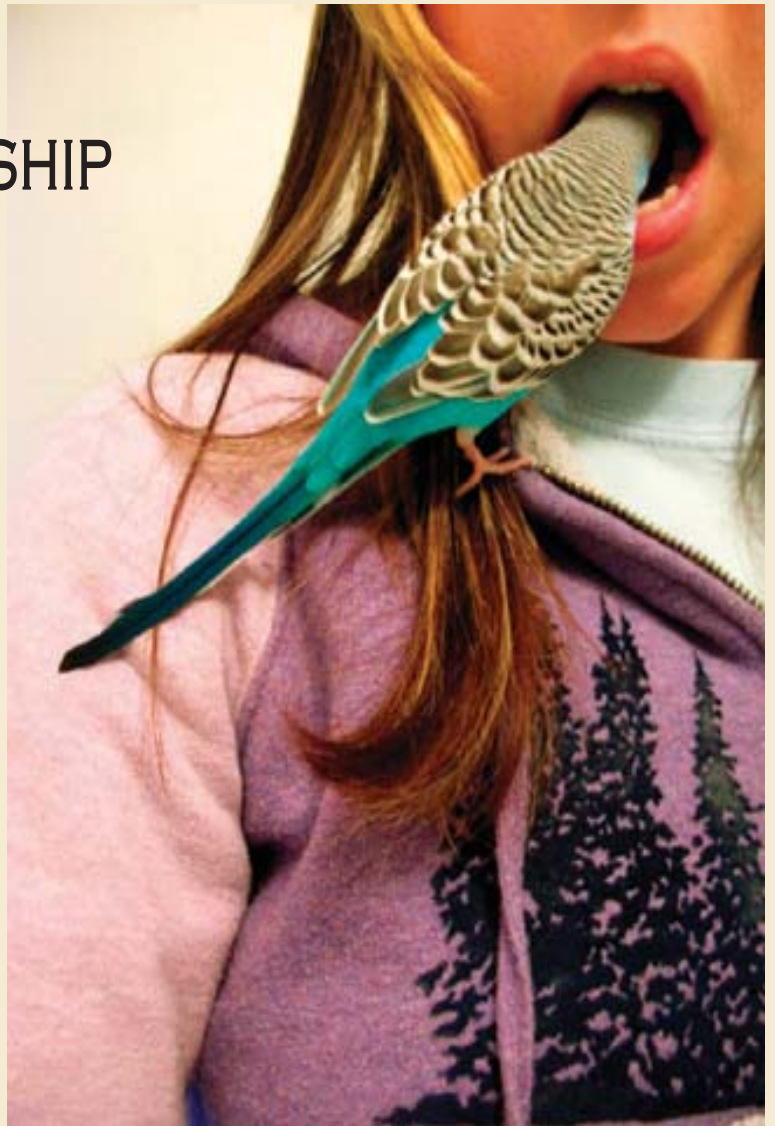
Christ-life believers seldom use the word *church*. We are part of the Church of Jesus Christ, the true Body of Christ, but from our beginning we felt we wanted simply to be a fellowship of believers who follow Paul into the final gospel given in the Scriptures. This has proven to be a blessing to many believers world-wide. There are hundreds of groups around the world that have formed fellowship groups to bring forth the message of the Christ who lives in human beings. Actually, every born-again believer already has Christ liv-

ing in them, but most do not attend a place where the fellowship of believers know about this. All born-again believers have Christ living in them because there is no other kind of salvation (Romans 5:10), but I believe that 90 percent of them know very little about this kind of living. So we do not consider ourselves a special group of people, but rather a group of people who want to know all about Christ in us. And it turns out that thousands of people around the world want the same thing. We’ve needed no buildings, no great sums of money; the lack of money does not hinder the work of the Father, and the abundance of money does not always help. We’ve needed no highly trained ministers; we’ve learned to trust the Holy Spirit to teach us. From the beginning of the Christ-life Fellowship, people who had a hunger to know Christ, as the Apostle Paul teaches him, have found a warm place in our fellowship. Everyone is welcome! †

TRUST: A RELATIONSHIP

by Chris Goosen

During the time that Yvonne, my wonderful wife, was in hospital with meningitis I was left to run the center where we care for destitute families. This was a very stressful time for me because I felt so helpless, and I had to entrust my wife to hospital staff whom I did not know. We have heard lots of stories about the lack of care in the private and government hospitals. Pressure at the center was mounting up as I had an project to prepare for and Yvonne was always right at my side to help with budgets and reports. Spending most of my day at the intensive care unit with Yvonne, nights were spent at the office. Finances were down and I had to find ways of raising money for the center. The C&S (circumstances and situations) gang was closing in on me, and at times I felt claustrophobic. The only thing I could do was to put my trust in my Father. This statement sounds very religious, but believe me, when you know Christ is your only Life, who else can you trust.



It was during this time that Father taught me a wonderful lesson. What I am going to share with you may sound silly and childish, but the way my Father spoke to me was proof of His love and grace focused towards me.

One morning a man came to see me at the office and asked what we did at the center. I gave him the whole “royal tour” of the center and answered all his questions. He then told me that he and four friends had won just over R10 million in the lotto and that he felt the Lord tell him to help us. He showed me a

deposit slip where an amount of R2.2 million had been deposited into his account by the Lotto company. He had seen a picture of a Toyota 14-seat bus I was raising funds for and said he felt that he should buy us one. Later he phoned me and said he had transferred R280,000 into the dealer’s account, and I was to go and sign the transfer and ownership papers at the dealer. The dealer said he was just waiting for confirmation that the money was in his account and then the bus would be registered in the center’s name and delivered to us. I

was elated—at last, the bus we had been trusting Father for was on the way. The following day, this man phoned me and asked me if I could help him with R500 as he had overspent the limit of his daily amount he could draw from the bank because of the amount he transferred to the dealer. I phoned the dealer and he was positive that the money was in his account.

I know what you are thinking: this is a scam. Well you're right, it was a scam. I have for quite some time been accused of having a wrong attitude and being a "doubting Thomas" when it comes to trusting people.

Well, I thought, this man could be on the up and up. He said he had proved that his hand was open to me with the vehicle he had bought for us, and if I could just help him out with the R500 he would put a further R100,000 into the center's account. I thought that R500 is not much to pay for an additional R100,000, so I put R500 into his Post Office account.

Of course, there was no money, and I was out of pocket R500. My first reaction was, "You're 63 years old, and you fall for that scam? You need prayer." Then I turned to Father and said, "I know I am a fool, and I know there's a very simple lesson to be learned here—don't trust people—but what do You

want to teach me from this experience." I told Father that I forgive the man and asked Father to send the Holy Spirit to bring that man to a knowledge of the Christ-life, and asked that my R500 will be seed to bring him to Christ. I am sure I was sincere in what I said. Nevertheless, it did not make me feel any less stupid.

I sat silent and ashamed at being caught like this. Then the voice of my Father, quiet, full of love and almost as if He felt my disgust said, "Chris, you are motivated by greed." Wow! What a wonderful way to learn that truth. I wept as I thanked my Father for His love and admitted He was right. Yes, I am motivated by greed. I want all the tools, all the latest electronic stuff, the best lenses for my telescopes, the latest DVDs, and on and on. None of that is wrong, but when greed is the motivating force, then my focus is wrong.

I was reminded of the article I wrote on pollution; this, too, is pollution. Greed is polluting my focus—away from Christ, who is my Life, onto the temporal stuff that has no life in it. As I sat in my car and thought this whole thing through, I started laughing. Five hundred rand was a small amount to pay for such a great lesson, taught by such a great Teacher.

Well, with the learning came healing. I value the

lesson and the Father's communication far above the value of a few rand (South African currency). When I shared this with Yvonne, she just smiled and said nothing, almost as if she knew I needed to be taught a lesson in the school house. I won't be caught like that again, and I will check to be sure my motivation for doing something or helping someone is Christ in me, through me, as me, and not greed. What a lesson.

Trust: A Relationship

After putting on paper my thoughts about trusting our Father, some questions started to rise up about trusting. Where does trust come from? Is it a human thing? Has it got anything to do with us having enough faith? Are there different levels of trust? Can everybody have trust? Maybe I just think a lot, or is this the Holy Spirit trying to say something to my very busy mind.

I think we should invest some time into these thoughts. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* shows 14 different meanings for the word *trust*. *W.E. Vine Expository Dictionary* shows *trust* as a noun and as a verb. Paul uses the word *trust* several times and with different meanings. In Romans 15:24, Paul uses the word *trust* as *expect* and *hope* (e.g., *I hope or expect to see you.*). In 1 Corinthians 16:7, again he uses the word

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trust as hope or expect: "I [hope or expect] to tarry...."

But in 2 Corinthians 1:9, Paul uses the word in a different way. He uses it as a verb, a doing word, and in *Thayer's Definition* there are several meanings:

1) persuade—a) to induce one by words to believe; b) to make friends of, to win one's favour, gain one's good will, or to seek to win one, strive to please one; c) to tranquillise; and d) to persuade unto, i.e. move or induce one to persuasion to do something

2) be persuaded—a) to be persuaded, to suffer one's self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe: to have faith: in a thing; to believe; to be persuaded of a thing concerning a person; and b) to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with

3) to trust, have confidence, be confident.

The meaning that stood out to me was the one cited in 1b, "to make friends of, to win one's favour, gain one's good will, or to seek to win one, strive to please one."

Second Corinthians 1:9 reads, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."

As I meditated upon these thoughts, I started seeing that trust is based on a relationship—a very special relationship, one

that we as humans know very little about. It goes much deeper than some of the relationships we have with other humans. I am talking about a relationship with our heavenly Father. Where does this relationship start? How do I get into this relationship.

This concept started in the mind of God back before the creation of the world.

Ephesians 1:4 reads: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Father chose us before anything was created—us, me—Father chose before anything else. He wanted a relationship. Read the meanings in 1b again.

This relationship depends on us being one with Christ. Paul called it the "mystery," that is, being one with Christ is the mystery, not the relationship.

Colossians 1:27 reads: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Having Christ—the Father's seed—in us is how this remarkable relationship starts. How does this happen? How can I attain to this status? What do I do to have this mind-blowing relationship? What does it cost? Where can I learn about it?

It all starts with the "birthing." Jesus said to

Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Being born again is where a wonderful and totally mind-blowing thing happens. There, on the cross, the plan of Father God was completed—the plan that was in the mind of God before the creation of this earth. The amazing thing is that so few Christians know what actually happened at the Cross. Paul, in Galatians, gives us a glimpse of what happened to us at the Cross with his remarkable statement in Galatians 2:20:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

When Jesus was put on that cross, we were in Him. We died on the cross with Him there. Our sin nature—that person we really are, full of sin—was in Jesus. When He died, I died. My body was not there; I was not even born yet. But all humanity, in their sinful state, was there in Him. That means that when I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as my only way to receive God's salvation, when I know that I need a Savior and that I cannot save myself—at that very moment, a wonderful event takes place in my spirit. At that



moment of believing, the old sinful nature—the satan nature that I was physically born with—is taken out of me and replaced with a new nature, the Christ nature. This is the mystery Paul talks about.

This is not yet a relationship. As I said before, a relationship comes from getting to know someone, spending time with that person, doing all to please that person. Well, to have a relationship with God, I need to get to know the Christ that lives in me—the one who has become my life. To begin this relationship, I have to know the risen Christ, and this comes by reading Paul’s epistles and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach me. Paul was the only person who received the revelation of the mystery.

Galatians 1:15 reads: *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”*

As I begin, “to give Christ a mind,” as Warren says, I am drawn to Philipians 2:5, which reads, *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”*

I have to physically start renewing my mind to who this new person living in me is. He is my new life, and He wants to live His life through me. Note the first word of the text, “let”—something I have to do. This word “let” is a verb, a doing word. As I allow the Holy Spirit to work in my soulish area (my mind, my will and my

emotions) teaching me about the Christ in me, I begin to build this relationship in which I talk to Him as a person. I begin to see Him as me doing all that I need to do during my day. It is no longer I that works, or drives the car, or deals with the problems at work and in the home; it is He as me. Soon trust starts to build. The more I get to know Him, I also get to know His Father, who is now also my Father, and trust starts to build in me. The deeper the relationship (the love affair) gets, the more I learn to trust my Father. Now, the meaning of trust becomes clear as in the description given by Thayer. I am persuaded that Father loves me; He is with me all the time; He directs my days, and He is my life. I am dead; He is alive, and because He lives

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TRUST:

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in me, I am alive. The life I now live is not my old life anymore, but a totally new life—His Life.

John 14:6 reads: “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”

Life is a person, not a thing—not a religious concept or doctrine, but a living person. That person lives His life through me. I trust that person because I have a loving relationship developing with that person. It is because of my relationship with Jesus that I can trust His Father. I have learned and now have little understanding of the relationship Jesus has with His Father, and now Jesus lives in me so I trust Father with every situation in my life.

I know it is very easy for me to say “I trust you” in a prayer to my Father, but as my understanding grows and my mind gets more renewed, and I am continually mindful as to who it is living in me, the relationship grows and it gets easier to trust Father in any and every situation. Without a true relationship, there is no real trust. As I work on my relationship with Father God, it is something I do, it is not a “pie in the sky” sort of thing or a faith feeling. I have to work on this relationship by renewing my mind, making choices not to do my own thing but to do His thing, and to do it

His way. After all, it is Him doing it through me.

I have also come to the realization that my trust in Father does not rely on how big or small the situation is. I do not have big trust for big things, or small trust for small events. I either trust Father that He is in control, or I don’t trust Him. If I still want to do my own thing to help the situation along, then I am not trusting. This does not mean that I sit around with a “what will be will be” attitude. Remember, my trust is based on a relationship. In that relationship, we talk to each other, we communicate, and I do as the Life within directs me to do.

As you read this, you may think that I am a very spiritual or holy person. Let me assure you that I have totally failed in my Christian walk. Even with a little of the revelation and a little knowledge of the Christ-life, I still fail daily, and I have to continually say out loud, “I am dead to that,” or “What I am doing is not Christ.” The way I handle these bad or sinful habits is now different than before. I no longer come under condemnation and sit and sulk. Because of my relationship, I can tell my Father that I have again failed and ask Him to teach me His way as I walk with Him through the circumstance or situation.

As I learn Christ, my relationship grows. My trust in Him becomes such a

natural part of my life that I begin to take time to think a thing through before I do or say it. Because I am learning my Father, I can with confidence include Him in all the practical things I do. He is involved in my welding, manufacturing, woodwork projects, my finances, my marriage and my driving, but only when I invite Him to be. I can still drive like a maniac—nothing stops me from doing that—but because of my relationship, I don’t want to hurt Him. So when the speed desire wants to come out, I just say, “I am dead to speeding,” and I calm down.

Relationship and trust walk hand in hand. You cannot separate them. After sharing with many Christian friends, I realize that so many people don’t know how to trust our most loving, gentle and wonderful Father. They tell me I must have great faith. I do not have any faith; He who is my Life has the faith. I just trust Him. †

*Come Thou Fount of
Every Blessing*

(hymn by Robert Robinson)

Oh, to grace how great a debtor,

Daily I’m constrained to be!

Let thy grace like a fetter

*Bind my wandering heart
to thee!*



THE GLORY OF THE CHRIST-LIFE

by Richard Moore

Your life will change forever when God shows you how Satan used to be your death-life (your sin nature). He made you poisonously selfish. Until we discover the old mind is from a sin nature, we remain bound to it. A false identity (the memory of sin) continues to reign (as us—a lie). As long as we think it is us, we are trying to overcome something that does not even exist (human sin nature—an evil human self).

We are free of the spirit-nature (Eph. 2:2–3) that gave us an identity as sinners. We must no longer identify ourselves as such, but rather put off the memory of the old man in our thinking and renew our minds to who we now are in Christ (Eph. 4:22–24). The putting off the old and the putting on the new can be clearly seen to be a mind thing (Eph. 4:23); the believer has already exchanged natures

(2 Peter 1:4). Human beings are not anything within themselves. This will bring freedom from the condemnation of the lie and bring conformity to the truth (Christ) within. This is what the death and resurrection of Jesus is all about (1 John 3:8–9).

The Basic Facts

Adam was created (without a father). Father furnishes a seed. Nature comes from a father. Salvation is an exchange of fathers (and natures). We still have flesh, but we have died to sin and are alive in the Spirit. We have no obligation to the flesh. The lust of the flesh is the remembrance of our sinful ways. It is the mind where the memory of sin resides as a powerless ghost as long as it is not falsely identified as you. This mind (who knows what is in man, John 2:25) can yield to the Christ-person that he is.

Our Father wants us to be at peace with ourselves and come to know who He is through the expression of His life through us. If we will let Him take us through the cross (our death and resurrection with Jesus), He will resolve our past most marvelously and give us an identity and a relationship with Jesus we never dreamed of. We will know who we are even as we are known. That which is perfect has come (the revelation of Christ in us). We are not perfect, but that is the whole point! We were made for Him, and He is our perfection! In our love relationship with Jesus, we can live with a clear conscience and an awareness that we are pleasing to the Father as we abide in Him. This is the glory Jesus gave us (shame-free living), and the world will know the difference (John 17:22–23). Amen! To God be the Glory! †



“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did fore-know, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son....” (Rom. 8:28-29).

God’s purpose for man, His highest creation, is for him to be “conformed to the image of His Son.” In the beginning, when God created man, He said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). We read further that “God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” (Genesis 1:27). God created man and woman in His own

image so that He could have fellowship with them.

When Adam sinned against God by disobeying His Word, he was corrupted. God’s perfect creation was marred, and man was no longer the very image of God. Ephesians 4:22 states that man’s nature was made “*corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.*” Romans 8:21 further states that, as a result of sin, all God’s creation was put under the “*bondage of corruption.*”

In spite of this, God’s purpose for man remains the same. His desire for all men and women is that they might be “conformed to the image of His Son.” God has provided the means to accomplish this purpose through the death,

burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior is conformed to His image.

As believers, we are conformed to Christ in three ways: positionally, practically and perfectly.

Positional Conformance

Positionally, we are conformed to the image of Christ the moment we accept Him as personal Savior. This conformance is based on the fact that we are identified with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension.

Romans 6:3 teaches that we are baptized into the death of Christ. The word “baptized,” in this verse, does not refer to an external

water baptism, but to a spiritual baptism which associates us with Christ in His work on the cross.

1 Peter 2:24 tells us that, when Christ died on the cross, He "... bare our sins in His own body...." 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that He was *made sin for us*. Paul goes on to say in Romans 6, verses 2, 6 and 8, that we *died with Christ*, and that as a result of His death we *died to sin*: "... [O]ur old [sin nature] is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed...."

In addition to being identified with Him in His death, we are also associated with Him in His resurrection.

"... [T]hat like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." —Romans 6:4-5

Romans 6:8 teaches that just as we died with Christ "... we shall also live with Him." Colossians 3:4 declares that Christ "... is our life...."

Finally, we are identified with Christ in His ascension. This fact is brought out in Ephesians 2:5-6, which teaches that we were made alive with Christ, raised with Christ and seated with Christ in the heavenlies. Philippians 3:20 proclaims that our conversation (our citizenship) is in heaven.

As a result of being identified with Christ in His finished work on Calvary, God sees us "*in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3-11). We are holy and righteous in God's sight because of Christ's righteousness. 2 Corinthians 5:21 declares that we have been made "... *the righteousness of God in Him*." 1 Corinthians 1:30 says that Christ "... *is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*."

Positionally, we are already conformed to the image of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and through Him we have access to and fellowship with the Father (Ephesians 2:18).

Practical Conformance

Even though positionally we are conformed to the image of Christ, practically, we do not always conform to the image of Christ in our daily walk.

We have been given a new nature that is conformed to His image, but we retain our old nature, which is corrupt because of sin. We can choose to yield to either of the two natures. When we yield to the new nature, we are conformed to the image of Christ, "... *who is our life*..." (Colossians 3:4); but when we yield to the old nature, it is impossible for us to be conformed to the image of Christ. This is why Paul admonishes us in Romans 12:2 to "... *be not conformed to this world*:"

but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...."

Whereas positional conformance is a one-time occurrence, practical conformance must occur on a daily basis. There are three areas of concern if we are to be conformed to the image of Christ in our daily lives: affection, attitude and appropriation.

Colossians 3:2 admonishes us to "*set [our] affection on things above, not on things on the earth*." The word *affection* refers to the mind. Our thoughts and interests are to be centered on heavenly things rather than earthly things.

Philippians 2:5 encourages us to "*let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*." Having the mind of Christ involves having the same attitude that Christ exhibited while here on earth. Verses 6-8 emphasize Jesus' attitude of service, humility and obedience.

Ephesians 4:32 teaches us to have an attitude of kindness, tenderness of heart and forgiveness—the same attitude which God manifested in sending the Lord Jesus to die on the cross for our sins.

Appropriation means utilizing or taking advantage of what Christ has already accomplished for us. Romans 6:11-13 indicates there are two things we must do to experience victory over sin in our lives: reckon and yield. Paul says to "... *reckon ye also your-*

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CONFORMED:
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selves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word "reckon" means to count something as true. We must trust in the fact that we died with Christ on the cross and are therefore dead to sin. Our old nature was crucified with Christ; therefore sin no longer has dominion over us. Paul further admonishes us to "... *yield [ourselves] unto God, as those that are alive from the dead...*" The word "yield" means to present yourself unto God. This is an act of faith whereby we put ourselves completely in God's hands.

Victory over sin in our daily lives is possible, but it is not gained through our own strength or efforts. It is only accomplished when we put our complete trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and

allow Him to live through us. Paul's personal testimony was, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me*" (Galatians 2:20).

Perfect Conformance

As believers in Christ we look forward to the day when we will be perfectly conformed to His image. Titus 2:13 refers to this event as our "blessed hope." While we remain on this earth, in our bodies of flesh, we retain our old sin nature and it is impossible for us to be completely conformed to the image of a holy and righteous God.

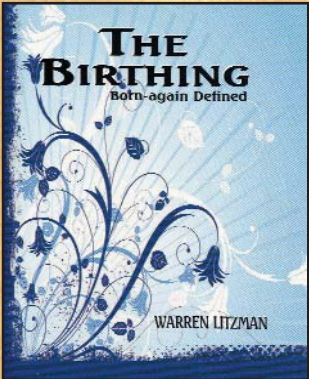
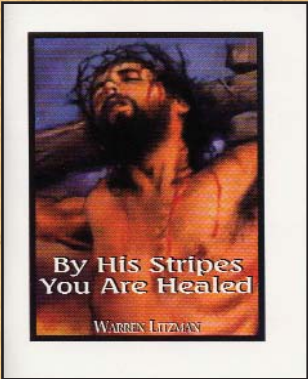
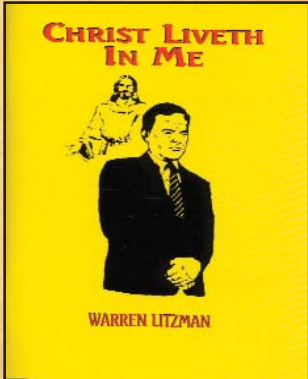
In 1 Corinthians 15:49, Paul states that "... *as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*" Verses 51-53 further state

that one day "... *we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...*" Our bodies, which have been corrupted by sin and subjected to physical death, shall be made incorruptible and immortal.

The event spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15 is the rapture—the day on which the Lord Jesus will return to catch His church up into glory. When this future event occurs, all believers will be perfectly conformed to the image of the Savior. Philippians 3:20-21 declares that our bodies of humiliation will be fashioned like the body of His glory. 1 John 3:1-2 teaches that "... *when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*"

When we are finally with the Lord in glory, then God's purpose for our lives will be completely fulfilled. We will truly be "*conformed to the image of His Son.*" †

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MODERN PRISON EPISTLE

MOTIVATION

by Rob Freeman

“... for the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

The world’s way of thinking is that doing what is “right” in our own eyes is more important than why we do what we do. The Bible teaches differently. In fact, it is when we have no king that we do what is right in our own eyes (Judges 17:6). And Proverbs 16:25 says very plainly: *“There is a way that seemeth right to a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*

Doing “good” for the wrong reasons has no lasting reward or value. Paul says he can sell all his goods to feed the poor and

lay down his life for others, but if love is not the motivation for his actions, *“... it profiteth me nothing”* (1 Cor. 13:3). God is love, and if a “good” work is not the result of Christ in you, then it is worthless in eternal value and may even be harmful (Galatians 5:4).

For instance: If a young man goes and mows an elderly person’s yard, rakes the leaves and pulls all the weeds out of the garden, in outward appearance that seems to be loving kindness—a good deed and a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). But if in that young man’s mind he is doing all this “good” because he is trying to find a way into the house so he can come back and rob it ... well, you see the point. But

the Lord looks at the heart.

Or if that young man is doing all that “good” in effort to please God (either for salvation or to manipulate God into bestowing “blessings”), then he is now competing against Christ for the glory of accomplishing justification. And is it any better if he’s trying to manipulate or earn the approval of man, instead of God?

The Christ-life believer must know that no “good” can come from our self apart from Christ in us. Only Christ as our life can produce His fruit. Christ is the Vine: He will produce His fruit. We are only the branches that the Vine will use to bring His fruit within reach of the hungry. †

THE RAPTURE AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST FOR THE CHURCH

by Warren Litzman

During my sixty years of study and teaching the Word of God, it has always been my conviction that the return of our Lord to this earth was something that was held exclusively in the mind of our Father. Nevertheless, I should look for Him daily and live as though He were coming at any moment. I have never given a great amount of time to the study of His coming. It has been my feeling that when a believer comes to the knowledge (by revelation of the Holy Spirit) that Christ lives in him, Christ has returned to that believer personally in a most significant way. That is what makes life on this earth what God intended it to be. This certainly does not take away the importance of our Lord's return on the resurrection morning, but it has simply meant to me that the believer needed to know about Christ in him more than any of the other factors of eschatology. Also, it has long been my feeling and understanding that those who are born again have no prophecy in the Scriptures that relates to them directly except

the coming of the Lord and the rapture of the body of Christ. This means—and it has proven to be my personal calling of the Lord—that it would be better to talk to people specifically about the coming of Christ to them personally as their life, rather than to take the believer's time in talking about the antichrist or the tribulation period or the millennium and all the aspects of these things.

It is my feeling, after these many years of study, that the next event to take place is the coming of the Lord—what we call “rapture”—where we meet Him in the air. Yes, I believe the body of Christ will suddenly, unexpectedly be raptured and go to be with the Lord. I believe this primarily because Christ is already in the believer, and the believer can become no more than he already is by Christ in him. He has the fullness of Christ in him now. He has the totality of what God can give him from the birthing. He does not know all about Christ in him and he does not live totally the Christ who is in him, but there is no more that God can put in

him. Thus, to teach that the believer must go through the tribulation period, or must have some severe discipline put upon him in order to be a good Christian, is contrary to the birthing. One who is born again cannot have any more of God in him than he received at the birthing. While he could spend a lifetime learning more and living more of the Christ who is in him, he could never receive more from God than he already has; for what he has received from the Lord is an incorruptible Seed. That Seed is perfect, and that Seed is Christ. He has received the Spirit of Christ, and he has been made a partaker of the God nature. Therefore, there is no more God can do for him. There is much more this believer can do to manifest and live these glorious truths; but there is no more God can give him. Thus, the tribulation period and going through hard times would not perfect this believer any more on God's part.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that it is not what the believer lives; it is not what the believer

thinks; it is what God has done that makes him a Christian. We are not saved because we live it, or are able to prove to the world that we are everything we say we are. We are who we are by a birthing, by a miraculous work of God accomplished at Calvary, whereby God had the right to remove an old sin nature and put a God nature into everyone who believes. Thus, the believer is always, at all times, ready to meet the Lord, for as 1 Corinthians 1:30 says, "... Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

But back to our subject. There are over 300 references in the New Testament to the return of Christ. These passages depict Christ's return as an overwhelming, cosmic and powerful event. Jesus Christ, Himself, declared that He would return "... in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30).

Paul spoke of the "... glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). "... [T]he Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in a flaming fire ..." (2 Thess. 1:7, 8). "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16). At His return "... shall that Wicked be re-



vealed, whom the Lord shall ... destroy with the brightness of [Christ's] coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). These scriptures from the Word of God set the hope of Christ's return most graphically in order to make an indelible impression upon our minds. We must realize that the coming of our Lord is beyond anything we have experienced in the past. It is

far beyond the power of our imagination to conceive. It is here that we are dealing with the dimension of reality about which we know nothing.

There are two misunderstandings about the rapture of the saints that need to be resolved. First, our Lord Jesus Christ does not come again to begin His reign at

(CONT. ON PAGE 16)

RAPTURE:

(CONT. FROM P. 15)

the rapture; He does not become King at His return; He does not begin sitting upon the throne of David at the rapture. All this was fulfilled when Christ ascended to heaven. It was then that God gave Him the name that is above every name (Phil. 2:9). It was then that God "... set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion ..." (Eph. 1:20-21). Everywhere, the New Testament proclaims that Jesus is Lord. Jesus Christ is already "... the prince of the kings of the earth ..." (Rev. 1:5). He is reigning at the right hand of God. Jesus, Himself, declared, "... I am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). "... [A]ll power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Now, this is the first important thing we need to understand about the Lord's coming.

At the rapture, Jesus does not come to decide who are His people and who are not. It is true that He "... was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" in Acts 10:42. The Bible teaches that the great final judgment will take place upon this earth; but the New Testament is overwhelmingly clear that this judgment is not a judgment to determine who the people of God are. The Apostle Paul declared, "... The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). Jesus, Him-

self, said, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:14). Those who believe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ stand justified before God. They have been brought into His family by a birthing. They are sealed and marked as His people by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in that sense they already live on the other side of judgment. The judgment that decides who belongs to Christ and who does not belong to Christ takes place before He comes. These decisions are all made as men are confronted with the gospel and their responses to it.

Well, if the Lord is not returning to begin His reign, and if He is not coming again to decide who His people are, what is the nature of the coming of Christ? The New Testament Greek uses three words to describe the coming of our Lord. The most common word is *parousia*, which means "coming" or "arrival". It is a word associated with the coming or arrival of a royal personage. Another word used is the word *epiphaneia*. It also is used to describe the coming of Christ. In English, it is often translated "appearing". For example, Titus 2:13 mentions, "... the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Timothy 4:1 says, "... Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing ..." Another definition of the word

epiphaneia is "manifestation". A third word used in the New Testament to describe the return of Christ is the word *apokalupsis*. It is used, for example, in 1 Peter, where it is translated "revealed" (1 Pet. 1:5). But to be more specific, the word *apokalupsis* means "the unveiling." Now, these three words, *parousia* meaning "coming" or "arrival", *epiphaneia* meaning "manifestation", and *apokalupsis* meaning "the unveiling," help give us a concept of the soon return of Christ.

To understand the significance of these terms, we must remember that the gospel declares the good news of what has already taken place. Christ has already died for our sins; He has already been raised from the dead for our justification; He has ascended to the right hand of the Father and begun His reign. He has taken the book from the hand of the Father; all human destiny is given into His hand, and He rules the world. He has already entered into His glory (Luke 24:26). I make a special point of this because of the many who still preach the kingdom message that the Church (or believers) must accomplish what Jesus has already accomplished, sitting at the right hand of the Father.

The coming of the Lord, in the rapture, is a great and powerful event, and is going to disclose the fact that Jesus is already the King and that He has already en-

tered into His glory. Now, the world does not see this, but it is our privilege as believers filled with the Holy Spirit, to have the Holy Spirit reveal this glorious truth to us. We are able, by the Holy Spirit, to see that Christ is the victor over sin, over death, over the devil and over all the powers that could stand against us. He has already exerted this power and made it so. So we are not as those who are chasing the devil or worried about the antichrist or fearful for the tribulation period; rather, we rest in Him who is all and in all.

In an important sense, the Rapture and the unveiling or manifestation of Christ at His coming, are really two parts of one great event. They are two moments in one great act of God. The first coming of Christ makes His second coming certain, for He (God) has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31). The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the assurance that He is coming again to judge the living and the dead. The first coming of Christ makes His second coming possible. The feverish activity of the Church does not make the second coming possible. Going out into the world and finishing Christ's work does not make this return possible, nor do the fervent piety and

attempted perfection of the Church make the Christ-Advent possible. The Bible says, "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness ..." (Rom. 9:28). As the true representative of His birthed people, Christ fulfilled all the conditions for His return. By His life of perfect righteousness; by His fulfillment of the law of God on our behalf; by His bearing away the curse of sin on the cross; by His meeting the justice of God; by His resurrection from the dead; and by His victory over sin, death, the devil and all the powers that are set against us, Jesus made His own coming possible.

Thus, the first coming of Christ was the fulfillment of all the conditions for the second coming of Christ. The first coming of Christ also makes His second coming in the rapture imminent. Because of His victory, because the Resurrection has already taken place, because the Lord is already King, the New Testament sees that the second coming can take place at any time God has chosen. The earth today is sustained solely by the Word of the Lord. When the Lord gives His Word, the unveiling—the glorious manifestation—of Christ will take place.

Meanwhile, in every generation, the signs of wars and rumors of wars and famines and commotions have been omens of Christ's imminent return. They have always been with us, and always will be. More

than this, however, the gospel is the greatest sign and strongest reason for the hope that the coming of Christ is imminent. Most people are looking for signs of the times to prove the Lord is coming back. We really should join with Paul and listen for the sound of His coming—the shout of the Lord, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. Nevertheless, we, like the first Christians, are warned that we need a faith that will endure both His imminent return and His delay. We have that faith, for Galatians 2:20 says, "...The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God ..." Therefore, we have the abiding, powerful faith that will help us whether He comes today or delays His coming. It is really not important for us to know the day, but it is important for us to know that God knows the day.

I have received three books in the past of people who prophesy that the Lord is coming in the year 2000, 2001, 2002, or whatever. How senseless this is! They still have not found Christ as their lives. They still have not had a revelation that Christ is in them. Once you know Christ is in you, all future prophecy, all future catastrophes the Bible says will take place, and everything that is happening at the moment, matter very little to Him who is our Eternal Life. If we are called to suffer

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(CONT. ON PAGE 31)

THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY KEPT SECRET

by Roger Bodary

Paul's Epistles

Paul's Epistles were the very first writings to the new Church which was being established in the different regions. His letters were to be circulated throughout these churches, to be read and studied by all the believers. These epistles have been established by most theologians as the foundational writings from which all New Testament doctrines are derived.

Paul, himself, refers more than five different times to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as his gospel—"to stablish you according to MY gospel [emphasis added]." Paul made this claim to the gospel, which no other writer of the Bible, or apostle, or disciple of Jesus Christ has ever made. When Paul refers to the gospel as being 'his', he does not mean he is preaching, himself, or building his own ministry; rather, he makes

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ..." (Rom. 16:25).

it clear to his readers that he preaches only Christ, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus...." (2 Cor. 4:5). Neither was this a prideful or boastful claim, as if he were someone great that should be lifted up: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, ..." (Eph. 3:8).

Paul makes this profound claim to separate himself from all other apostles, disciples, writers and teachers of the Gospel and to provoke his readers to focus their attention on what he is saying. He knew what God had given him was so revolutionary that it must be proclaimed to the whole Church.

"... [A]ccording to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you..." (Col. 1:25). "The word dispensation translates 'administration' or 'stewardship.' It is Paul saying that among the gifts he is given by God is the ability to arrange things so that the great truth might be made known to all believers." (Warren Litzman, Messages for The New Creation Race People, p. 10, now out of print).

"This brings us to the one person whom God could trust with the knowledge of the mystery—the Apostle Paul. As God plans things, it is logical to assume that He planned Paul's life from its beginning. He planned the development of a person

who could explain the mystery. In time, he would be able to carry out the duties of one who was to be an Apostle to the Gentiles, who were to be the people of the "new creation race," reborn by the placing of another [Christ] within them." (Warren Litzman, Messages for the New Creation Race People, p. 9, now out of print).

Paul is so bold in this fact that he states in Galatians 1:9, "... If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received [from me], let him be accursed." In other words, there is no other true gospel than his gospel, and if you do not know and understand the truth that he is proclaiming, then you do not know or have the true gospel.

Throughout his epistles, Paul leaves no doubt that he had been given a special calling of God and that calling was to "... preach ... the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8), "... according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25), "... to fulfil the word of God" (Col. 1:25).

Kept Secret Since The World Began

"Which, in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). "For 4000 years, from the foun-

dation of the world to Calvary, God had the liberating secret waiting. His plan was to get a new race of sons—not angels, not Jews, not Gentiles—but a new creation, with Christ as its life and God as its nature.” (Warren Litzman, *Messages for the New Creation Race People*, pp. 11-12, now out of print).

God ordained that His ultimate plan and purpose would be a mystery: *“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory”* (1 Cor. 2:7). The entire gospel of Christ is hidden in God—His Word, His life, His nature, His wisdom, and His truth. This mystery was hidden from the whole human race since the beginning of the world. God even kept it hidden from His chosen people, the Jews, and from the patriarchs such as Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets. Not until He made it known to the Apostle Paul was this mystery revealed to God’s people. Paul emphasizes this fact in his epistles, all in context of the Father’s ultimate intention of the believer in Christ. *“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Col. 1:26-27).

It is important to know the term ‘mystery’ and see why the Apostle Paul uses it in his writings. ‘Mystery’

in the Greek is ‘mustrion’. In the ordinary sense, a mystery means knowledge withheld, something that is hidden or not known or understood. *“It is knowledge which is outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension and can only be known in a matter and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illuminated by His Spirit.”* (W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository of the Old and New Testament Word*.)

Paul uses the term ‘mystery’ because he knew that no man could come into the knowledge and understanding of God on his own: *“... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man ... the things which God hath prepared for them that love him ... the things of God knoweth no man....”* (1 Cor. 2:9, 11). He discovered all humanity was totally blind and ignorant and in darkness, *“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”* (Eph. 4: 18).

Paul knew that he, himself, could not reveal and make known the mystery of God and His ultimate purpose. He received it by revelation and everyone else must receive it by revelation. So when Paul uses the term ‘mystery’, he leaves it to the Holy

Spirit to reveal it, *“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ...”* (1 Cor. 2:10).

God ordained that His ultimate intention would be a mystery so that no man could come to the true knowledge and understanding of His intention on his own. God, Himself, is in total control of revealing the mystery of Himself to those to whom He chooses to make it known. We conclude, therefore, that behind the mystery that was hidden from ages and generations is the fullness of God and His eternal purpose. †

(Taken from the book God’s Ultimate Plan Fulfilled In Christ, by Roger Bodary, pp. 20-23.)



STAYING THE COURSE

by Charles W. Wages

(Reprinted from *Timely Messenger*, Vol. 69, No. 3)

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:57-58)

“The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

This expression, though not Scripture, tells us something about a truth we all need to consider. On the highway of life, though, there are many detours and distractions. However, this should not turn us away from the appointed work the Lord has given us to do. Consider the apostle Paul when he was about to sail from Troas after God called him in a vision to go over to Macedonia. We are told, *“Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis”* (Acts 16:11).

Note that they came *“with a straight course”* to Samothracia, then to Neapolis, then to Philippi.

His mission resulted in Lydia, a “certain” woman whose heart was opened, receiving the message Paul was called to preach and teach. Paul never *strayed from the course*, but *stayed with the course*. This same statement is recorded in Acts 21:1, *“And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara.”*

Again we find Paul sailing *“with a straight course.”*

Now, what does this say to us who have been saved by God’s grace and called to work for the Lord? We must stay with and not stray from the *“Word of Truth.”* Remember what 2 Timothy 2:15 teaches: *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

One of the major tragedies of our present age is that men and women are detouring and even departing from the truth of

God’s Word. There is a tendency to substitute tradition for Truth, a tendency to read, study and quote books instead of the Book. In 2 Timothy 2:17 we are told that men’s words will eat as a canker because they have “erred” from the truth. This is serious and dangerous and leads to all kinds of spurious and false teachings that lead astray.

In 2 Timothy 3:7-8, we read of those who were *“ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* We wonder what these stupid people were learning! And then, sadly, they went so far as to *“resist the truth.”* Often, this is strong resistance and outright opposition to the truth. Finally in 2 Timothy 4:4, we read, *“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”* What a downsizing! The results of not *“staying the course”* concerning the truth of God’s Word were evident then and are surely evident today.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and



cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14).

“The truth often hurts, but it is the lie that leaves the scars.”

We must “*stay the course*” concerning the gospel of the grace of God, and the blessed hope it gives to those who have believed. A lot of false teaching goes under the heading of “the gospel”; most of it goes under the heading of “works.”

Works to be saved, works to earn a place in heaven, works so your good ones outnumber your bad ones, and maybe—just maybe—you will make it in the end. All of this nonsense leaves out the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ who died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; who was buried; and who rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3-

4). That is the true gospel. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and substantiate this great, grand, glorious, good news! Let’s stay with God’s grace when we speak of the gospel. The hope of the gospel is Christ, Himself.

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

What wonderful, practical, personal directives result in “staying the course.” Going back to 1 Corinthians 15:58, we are to be steadfast—this means to stand firm. We don’t see much of this in religion today. “Going with the flow” is more than a saying; it is often the rule. Entertainment, instead of worship, draws the crowds. “How to” books on every conceivable subject are the best sellers and often the source of conversation.

Role models are those of the music, athletic, and media fields. They are often spoken of as “icons”. By standard dictionary definition, an icon is a religious image worshipped by most Eastern religions, an object of uninitiated devotion. Further, an “iconoclast” is one who attacks established beliefs. Yet, men and women are loosely called “icons”. All of this causes human beings to forget the Lord and that He alone is the Savior of all mankind—the only one we should worship.

We are told to be “unmovable” or “immovable.” We shouldn’t be “tossed to and fro” by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14) but stand our ground on the truth of the Word, even if the “wind” is a hurricane. The last word to consider in a practical directive is “*abounding*,” meaning “exceeding abundantly above” all the tribulation, tragedies, trials, and trepidations that beset us all. We are to “*abound in hope*” (Rom. 15:13); “*[abound] in the work of the Lord*” (1 Cor. 15:58); “*abound ... in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us...*” (2 Cor. 8:7); and “*abounding ... with thanksgiving*” (Col. 2:7).

To conclude, when we “*stay the course*,” we shall know that our labor is not in vain. What a promise, what encouragement, what a hope! Let’s “*stay the course!*” †

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MOST OF IT
GOES UNDER
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OF “WORKS.”**

THE LIVING WORD

by Scott Halbert

**WHEN GOD
REVEALS
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BEGIN TO
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SCRIPTURES
AND THE
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“Get in the Word!” I told John during our counseling session. “If you don’t read your Bible every day, you certainly won’t have the victory in your life that you are looking for. God speaks to you by the Scriptures; if you’re not in the Scriptures, you certainly won’t know what God is trying to say to you!” John replied, “But I’ve tried and tried, and it doesn’t seem to be working.” I replied back in a loving but religious way, “Then you’re not trying hard enough, because if you were it would work.”

The Wrong Word

How often have we heard, spoken, or even thought these same words? I used to be well known in

our congregation for being a man who is strong in the Word, but I was strong in the wrong Word! I believe the Holy Spirit is leading hungry believers into an understanding of what it means not only to get in the Word, but is showing them that they are, in fact, in the Word, and that there is nothing they can do to get in the Word any more than they already are, even by reading their Bibles every day.

The problem is in our understanding of what the Word is. The Scriptures are not the Word. The Bible itself does not claim to be the Word, but instead points us to the Word: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was*

with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). John does an amazing thing here. In his use of “Word”, he is not speaking of a set of writings. This Word existed before there were any writings, in fact before the foundation of the world. The “Word” John is speaking of is a person! We know this Word today as God the Son, Jesus Christ.

Knowledge vs. Revelation

Most believers today know this, but merely knowing isn’t enough. There must be understanding, which can come only by revelation. We have tremendous knowledge in our churches today, but very little revelation. Consequently, we spend our

time preaching the Scriptures instead of preaching the gospel, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We preach the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the things we must do in order to be good Christians. We lift up men and their accomplishments, focus on miracles and healings and how to get God's blessings—everything but the Word!

The Apostle Paul said that the gospel he received did not come from any man, and that he received this gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ. He didn't say he received it by the Scriptures! God in these last days does not speak to us by prophets or even by the Scriptures; He speaks to us only by His Son. In a day when we have exalted the Scriptures to the point of making them our security, this statement needs some explaining. I am not saying that the Scriptures are of no value. The Scriptures are God-breathed and God-inspired and are able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15-16). But the fullness of God cannot be contained in a book; the fullness of God is contained in the person Jesus Christ (Col. 2:9).

God Speaks by His Son

Never do the Scriptures exalt themselves; they exalt the Living Word.

Never do they point to themselves as our source of life; they point to the living Word as the *only* life. Probably the greatest example of this is the Apostle Paul himself. Paul was a very religious man before his conversion. He knew the Scriptures like the back of his hand, and yet God never spoke to him until that day on the road to Damascus when Christ the Son was revealed to him. Likewise, unless we see Christ in the Scriptures, God is not speaking to us. God speaks in these last days only by His Son. It is interesting to see that in the New Testament when God spoke audibly, He had one message to give—His Son! *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son ...”* (Hebrews 1:1-2).

So what does this mean? How does God speak only by His Son? Paul was very clear about this—*by revelation!* This revelation is not of the Scriptures or of some secret formula by which we must live to get God to speak. It comes by the revelation of a person—Christ, the living Word. The revelation of Jesus Christ cannot be explained by man. It is a mystery that only the Holy Spirit can reveal. Even Paul, who never knew Jesus of Nazareth but knew Christ better than any of the

other apostles, did not explain what a revelation of Jesus Christ was. At least 14 times in his epistles he called it a mystery, saying that only God can reveal it to us.

The Word Becomes Flesh

In Colossians 1:26-27, he tells us that this mystery, which was kept hidden from everyone from the foundation of the world, is Christ in the believer—not just with the believer or helping the believer to become better or more moral, but birthed in the believer and becoming the only life of that believer. *This is the living Word becoming flesh.* This is the mystery that must come to us by revelation. If it does not, then believers will continue to preach the Scriptures, miracles, morals, works, everything but the true gospel. They will have head knowledge but no understanding that it is the birthing that makes them who they are.

Jesus dealt with a group of very religious people who had the same problem. They knew the Scriptures, had studied them for years, had built a whole lifestyle around them, and thought this was all they needed. But Jesus told them that in all their searching and doing they missed the one all-important focus of the Scripture—Himself. These Pharisees, who were the

(CONT. ON PAGE 24)

“GOD, WHO AT SUNDRY TIMES AND IN DIVERS MANNERS SPAKE IN TIME PAST UNTO THE FATHERS BY THE PROPHETS, HATH IN THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON ...”

(HEBREWS 1:1-2).

LIVING:

(CONT. FROM P. 23)

religious leaders of their day, did not believe in Christ at all, but it was their intense fixation on the Scriptures themselves and the letter of the law that blinded them from seeing Christ as their Messiah. Many today believe in Christ, see Him as Savior, and are birthed by God, but still have not received a revelation of Jesus Christ. Many are teachers and preachers with tremendous knowledge of the Scriptures—the religious leaders of our day.

The Apostle Paul, after Christ spoke to him on the road to Damascus, went into Damascus and waited there until Ananias came to him and prayed for him. The scripture says that

Paul received back his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit. He then went out immediately and began to proclaim that Christ was indeed the Son of God. So, here was a man who had been a religious persecutor of the church, now converted and proclaiming Jesus Christ. He was filled with the Spirit and extremely knowledgeable of the Scriptures, yet the gospel had not been revealed to him at this point.

Understanding Comes by Revelation

The scripture says that he went into Arabia and it was during this time that the gospel was revealed to him (Gal. 1:11-17). Paul said he did not receive it of man, neither was he taught it, but it came by

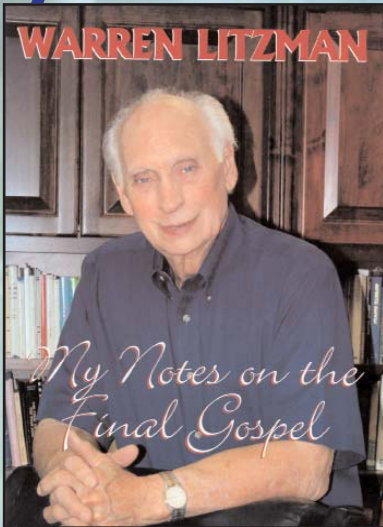
the revelation of Jesus Christ. He does not explain the revelation or attempt to teach it to us. In fact, this is the only record we have of Paul's time in Arabia, and as you can see, there isn't much there. Paul does not elaborate on his experiences, I believe, for the same reason Christ did not explain the birthing to Nicodemus. He knew that this was the job of the Holy Spirit and that only He could bring the believer to an understanding of the mystery of Christ.

This is quite a contrast to what is taught today—that unless we are in someone's program we are doomed to fail. Have you ever heard a preacher or anyone tell you that he could not teach you

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THE OAK TREE

A mighty wind blew night and day.
It stole the oak tree's leaves away,
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark
until the oak was tired and stark.
But still the oak tree held its ground
while other trees fell all around ...

The weary wind gave up and spoke,
How can you still be standing, Oak?"
The oak tree said, "I know that you
can break each branch of mine in two,
carry every leaf away,
shake my limbs, and make me sway.
But I have roots stretched in the earth,
growing stronger since my birth.
You'll never touch them, for you see,
they are the deepest part of me.
Until today, I wasn't sure
just how much I could endure.
But now I've found, with thanks to you,
I'm stronger than I ever knew.

--Author Unknown

The mighty oak came from a little acorn, even as an incorruptible seed, Christ, came from your heavenly Father into you. You may get damaged, but the seed in you grows deeper everyday, helping you overcome any and all powers that would attack you.



THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL

(PART 1)

[See Part 2, Next Issue]

by Geoffrey Bull

We have a wonderful Teacher, the Holy Spirit, given to us by the Father to enlighten us, to open our eyes to the truth, to teach us Christ. So to enable us to understand the truth concerning the Father's plan for us—the one true gospel—let us ask the Father to pour out His Spirit on us and open the eyes of our understanding. The most powerful prayer we can pray in this respect is the one Paul penned for us in his letter to the Ephesians. In fact, I firmly believe this is a prayer we should pray for ourselves and others around us every day. So before we go any further, let's pray right now the prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23:

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my

prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his

body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Foundational Truth for the One True Gospel

In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul speaks of "another" gospel that was being brought in to distract believers from truth and says that anyone who brings you any other (different) gospel than the "true" gospel—the one taught by Paul—is to be accursed. Now, take a moment and ponder the question, What is the gospel? If you ask a number of believers to give you a one-sentence answer to this question, you'll be amazed at the answers you get. Take another moment and write down your one-sentence answer, and then reflect on it later after you have read through this discourse. So let's take a journey through the word and see what is the one true gospel. There are some key passages of Scripture in which the truth is established

concerning the one true gospel. Let's read those truths right now and see what the Father has in mind for us.

Ephesians 1:3-6

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us in the beloved."

Colossians 1:18, 25-28

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence....Whereof I am made a minister; according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all

wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 2:20-21

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live the by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

John 12:1-2, 9-13, 19-25, 27, 35-36, 49-50

"Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him....Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the

King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord....The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal....Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour....Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them....For I have not spo-

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GOSPEL:

(CONT. FROM P. 27)

ken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

Life Out of Death— God's Glorious Plan

Keeping all the above passages in mind, let's focus on this latter passage from John 12, in which the basis of the one true gospel is given. Many years ago, circa early 1980s if I recall rightly, I heard a message based on this passage at a conference—a message that had great impact and was cemented into me, never to be forgotten. It came at a time when the Lord was opening my eyes to the "in Christ" reality. Now, the message as I present it here may not be exactly as I heard it originally, but the core of that message—the basis for the one true gospel—remains fixed in my mind. That's what I would like to pass on here.

It is important to understand the context of this John 12 passage—to understand what was going on. In the lead-up to this time, Jesus had performed miracle after miracle, fed multitudes with a couple of fish and a few small bread rolls, calmed storms, turned water into wine. He had raised Lazarus from the dead, the news about Him had gotten out and the people

were thronging around Him, proclaiming Him as their King. Even a certain group of Gentiles—the Greeks—had come to the Passover feast and approached Jesus' disciples to see if they could get to see Him.

Now, you must picture the scene in your mind and imagine what the people—particularly Jesus' disciples—must have been thinking. These were not Jews; they were Greeks. The Greeks were the intellectuals, the philosophers of the day. They had come to Jerusalem not only for the Jewish Passover feast, but to seek after Jesus and speak to Him. These philosophers, intellectuals, leaders of man's earthly wisdom had heard about Jesus of Nazareth and were seeking out His wisdom and counsel. Picture the disciples' thoughts: If ever the moment of glory had arrived, this was it, they thought! Not only were there crowds of local Jewish people thronging after Jesus and hailing Him as King, but the Greek philosophers were there wanting to gain wisdom and knowledge from Jesus. He had performed miracle after miracle and raised a man from the dead, crowds were shouting "Hosanna!", his path was paved with palm leaves, the mighty Greek intellectuals were there—surely, this was the moment of His crowning glory! And to top it all, they heard Jesus say, "*The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.*" Yes, they thought. This was the moment for which

they had been waiting! The crowning of their King, the hour of the Son of man's glory! Woo-hoo! After all, they were His disciples, His chosen, and there would be something in it for them. The ministry looked like it was about to expand into the Greek empire and beyond. By association with Jesus, they would be world-famous! They were reveling in the moment! Or so they thought.

Jesus then threw them a curveball with His words that followed—words they certainly did not comprehend, and words that left them dumbfounded. He did not count the miraculous deeds He had done, the adulation of the crowds, or even the presence of the inquiring Greek philosophers and wise men as the glory about which He was thinking and speaking. Having the Greek intellectuals come for His counsel and wisdom didn't register as glory to Him. Often, when He had healed someone he told them to go away and tell no one. He had refused previous attempts by the Jews to make Him King, and instead He had withdrawn into the mountains or lonely places, to be alone to converse with his Father—to hear from His Father to be certain He was on track with the Father's plan, established before the foundation of the world. That's what was occupying His mind. What was going on in the minds of His disciples—glory associated with fame—was

not the type of glory He sought, but in the midst of all of this, He clearly stated, *Now is the day of the Son of man's glory*. While He must have been thinking the presence of the Jews and Gentiles was indeed significant, as the day of His glory is a day that involves both Jews and Gentiles, His thoughts were certainly not in line with those of the disciples. He immediately followed His mention of the coming of the hour of His glorification with the mind-boggling statement that, *"Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."* It must be buried in the ground and die, for only in its death will there be the resurrection and harvest that follows.

The Law of Harvest

This is the law of harvest—that the solitary seed will bring forth fruit and will reproduce itself many times over. From the one will come many, all in the exact likeness of the origi-

nal one. That which you sow—the seed that dies—reproduces exactly after its likeness. You sow a single grain of wheat, and many times more of that exact harvest (wheat) springs up. So what Jesus was saying was that the hour was here for the Son of man to enter into glory, but that would only come about by His falling into death and reproducing Himself, bringing forth the many exactly after His own kind. Take a moment and think about what He is saying here. In His words, *"a [single] grain of wheat abideth alone [by itself],"* He is comparing Himself to one single, solitary grain of wheat. He is the only unique one of His kind.

In accordance with the Father's plan, conceived before the foundation of the earth and before the creation of man, here we have Jesus as the example of what humanity was meant to be: a real, true human who is exactly as the Father intended man to be: man, the container,

inhabited by Christ, the Life. In Eden's garden, Adam had the choice to partake of the Tree of Life and live by His life, but he did not. Man fell and lived not as God intended him to live; he chose from the "other" tree, and into him was birthed the self-loving, self-serving, selfish nature of the Devil. But here, for the first time, we have the man, Jesus, as man was meant to be from the beginning. He's pure; He's holy; He's love, and He's Life, Jesus in the flesh. But only one: the one, solitary, true "seed."

The Dependent One

He is the one who said of Himself that He could do nothing and that all He said he heard from the Father and all He did, He first saw the Father doing. This is what made Him unique: His utter and total dependence on His Father. He said of Himself, drawing upon all His own abilities, that He could do absolutely nothing—zip, not a thing, nothing! He said:

(CONT. ON PAGE 30)

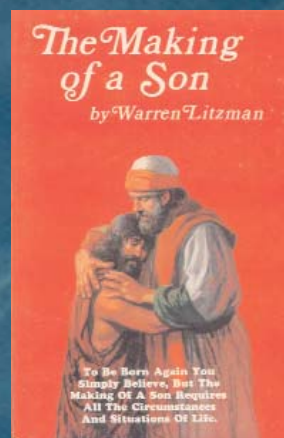
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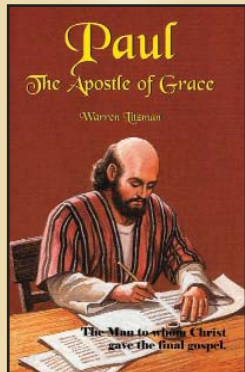
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GOSPEL: (CONT. FROM P. 29)

“For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent Me, has given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

In His prayer, just before His betrayal and arrest, in John 17:7–8, He said:

“Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me....”

As Jesus lived and shared His life with His followers, we see a unity with His Father: a union, a oneness, and yet a total dependence on His Father. He listens, watches and obeys. Nearing the end of His earthly life, He reflects upon His life and, paraphrasing His words, we hear Him say, *Father I obeyed you, I did all you*

told me, I expressed you, I let them see you and hear you. I man your name, your character, not me or anything of myself I have been a container of you Father, an expresser of you Father. I am your Word that was made flesh.

Yet, in all this Jesus was not a puppet with the Father manipulating his strings. He was a person—the God-man, the true human, the Father in Him and He in the Father, in a dependent union with His Father. John 17:21, *“...as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.”* Jesus, in His relationship with His Father, chose to be the dependent, surrendered, submitted one, in order that He might be an expresser of the thoughts, the mind, the compassion, the love, the very heart of the Father. He is the expression of the nature and character of the Father. He is the Word of

the Father. He is the Word that was made flesh. He came to show us what was in the heart of the Father. He is the dependent, surrendered man that is the perfect expression of the Father.

Your words are the invisible, inner thoughts and intents that come out of you in an audible, tangible form. Your words are distinct from you, yet they are part of you in a different form. Your words go inside of and are assimilated and comprehended by the hearer. Your words communicate the real, inner you to the hearer. Jesus is the Word of the Father—the exact representation or expression of the Father. He is the expression, the speaking-out form of the invisible God. That's why He is the one unique, holy, pure “seed.” He is God's love in human form, about to be cast into the ground to die, to multiply, to fulfill the Father's intent for mankind. †

RAPTURE:
(CONT. FROM P. 17)

tribulation, it will be the Lord who suffers by us. He has overcome it, so we have nothing to fear. We know we can endure, because it is not we who endure, it is Christ in us. More than enduring, while there is still a day of salvation, we can unite with Him in a union by hearing and listening to the gospel. By the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we can become one with this Christ who is in us. Thank God there is still an opportunity not only for us to grow up in Christ, but for us to bring others into this glorious union relationship with Him, for God does not want anybody to perish. He wants everyone to come to repentance. The future return of Christ is pictured in apocalyptic language, because it is not possible

for us to conceive all that is involved in this glorious Advent of the Lord. All we can know about the future is revealed to us in the gospel Christ gave the Apostle Paul—what we call the “final gospel.”

This Christ event is pictured and pledged as an important part of our future. But the amazing and miraculous thing of grace is that we do not have to wait to see the Lord in the air when He comes for us; we can know Him in us right now, as we renew our minds. God impresses our minds with the fact everyday that this could be the final day. He may be here today; He may come tomorrow; but if He does not, I have Christ already living in me and working out of me by the grace of God. †

LIVING:
(CONT. FROM P. 24)

Jesus Christ? Have you ever had anyone tell you that you must have a revelation of Christ? This is what we need today—to humbly step back and give the glory to Christ, to exalt the living Word so that God may again speak to us by His Son.

God reveals this truth in His own time to those believers who are hungry to know Him. When God reveals His Son in us we will begin to understand the difference between the Scriptures and the living Word. We will search the Scriptures not to learn basic life principles or how to be moral people, but so that God can speak to us by His Son as we see only Him in the Scriptures. †

(Scott Halbert is a vibrant teacher of the Christ-life and lives in Bastrop, Texas.)



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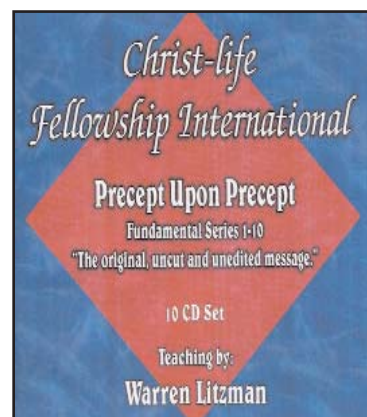
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