



## A Conquering Messiah

Johnny O. Trail

The Bible records Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem just a few days prior to His crucifixion. This is hailed as the “triumphant entry” by people who study scripture. When one does a close examination of the event and the symbols present at the time of Christ’s entry, some harsh irony becomes evident regarding their understanding of the Messiah and His complete rejection just a few days later.

Matthew records Jesus’ entry into the city. He says, in Matthew 21:8-11, “And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who come in the name of the Lord’ Hosanna in the highest!’ And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, ‘Who is this?’ So the multitudes said, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.’”

In the similar account, John’s gospel reveals the specie of tree that was laid before the Messiah as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. John 12:12-13 says, “The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him...”

What is the significance of the branches of a palm tree being used in John’s account? Until recently, these palm trees had become extinct. At one time, Palestine was known as the land of palms and the area was lauded for the fruit that the tree produced. Pliny the elder famously wrote about the fruits stating that some were one cubit in length. In addition to the palm trees in Palestine, he identified forty-nine different varieties of the tree. The palms that were used to adorn the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem were either growing in the location or being used in celebration of the upcoming event.

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# The Lion Who Was a Lamb

## A Study of Revelation 5:1-14

Andy Erwin

A great many heroic and good men have graced the lives and societies of our world throughout history. But even “the best men are men at best.” The greatest men and women have weaknesses and frailties and err in judgment from time-to-time.

Throughout scripture, we are introduced to mighty and holy angels, heavenly messengers and ministers endowed with unfathomable power to intercede in the lives of men at the behest of their sovereign Creator. Yet, no angel among the multiplied thousands upon thousands could possess the scroll held in the right hand of the Majesty on High. The combined populace of heaven and earth, both great and small, living, and dead, could only watch and wait to hear and to see the message which was to be unfolded from the scroll with its seven-fold seal.

As John weeps over the hopelessness and unworthiness of all creation, man and angel alike, One appears. Only One. The “matchless supernal One.” One is worthy. One is able. Only One is allowed to receive and to reveal the message of the scroll. How might this One be described? A Lion. A Lamb. Both are equally fitting metaphors to describe the person and the ministry of the Son of God, the Christ, the crucified Savior of the world.

The significance of the imagery is profound and clear. In true apocalyptic prose, the introduction of the book of Revelation is repeated (1:1-2). God the Father – the only true and living God – has a message to disclose to His oft-persecuted children. His message will be revealed through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The penman of the message is none other than the beloved apostle and servant and companion in

suffering, John. As the celestial scene unfolds, our attention is gripped, and our imagination is captivated along with John’s by the vividness and uniqueness of the transpiring drama before us.



### A Vision of the Lamb of God

A scroll with a seven-fold seal and writings on the inside and on the back captures John’s attention. The scroll was held **in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne (v.1)**. A mighty angel appears and inquires of the court, “**Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?**” The silence was deafening as “**no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it**” (vv.2-3).

The unworthiness of man and angel caused John to weep much, but one of the twenty-four elders calmed his troubled soul, saying, “**Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals**” (v.5).<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of the heavenly throne room, John witnessed a Lamb standing, “**as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the**

**seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth**” (v.6). The Lamb had once been slain. He is the Lamb of God who was slain to take away the sins of the world (John 1:19-24; Isaiah 53:7).

OT sacrifices involving a lamb served to foreshadow the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. In Exodus 12 we can see that the Passover lamb was to be given as a Passover sacrifice for those within the sanctified house. In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul teaches us that Jesus is the ultimate reality of the Passover sacrifice. His blood sanctifies all those within the house (cf. Ephesians 5:26; 1 Timothy 3:15). Just as the Passover lamb was without spot (Exodus 12:5) so too is Jesus (1 Peter 1:19). Our Lamb was a vicarious offering given by God for the atonement of the world (Hebrews 2:9).

In Exodus 29:38-42 the Jews were instructed to make two offerings a day. One in the morning and one in the evening, with a lamb being used as the sacrifice for sin, continually. Jesus did this once for all when He offered up Himself (Hebrews 10:14). The daily offering served the Jew in the same way that Christ serves the Christian. He is our daily or perpetual sacrifice for sin. The sacrifice was to be made at the door (Exodus 29:42), and only the priest on the Day of Atonement could go within the veil (Leviticus 16:2, 12). We may enter within the veil at any time through hope since for us our Lord Jesus has already entered (Hebrews 10:19-20). Through Jesus everyday can be a day of atonement and of personal fellowship with God.

The Lamb of Revelation 5:6 has “**seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the**

<sup>1</sup> The designations of Christ as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” are taken from OT prophecies of the Messiah

(Genesis 49:9; Isaiah 11:1, 10; Jeremiah 11:19; 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8).

earth.” “Horns were symbolic of strength and honor (Psalm 89:17, 24) and particularly associated with the Davidic king (1 Samuel 2:10) and hoped-for salvation (Luke 1:69).”<sup>2</sup> That there were seven horns could only represent a fullness and absoluteness of strength and honor and power possessed by the Lamb. He is all-powerful and all-knowing.

The Lamb takes the scroll from God. He is the only One with authority to do so. He has been given all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18 ff.). Upon receiving the scroll, a worship scene in the throne room commences. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship the Lamb with the same devotion with which they worshipped the Father (4:8, 11). Just as the Father is worshipped in heaven, so too is the Lamb given glory, honor, and thanks.<sup>3</sup> The prayers of the saints are depicted as “golden bowls full of incense.” Christ knows, hears, cares, and intercedes on behalf of the prayers of the saints (cf. Hebrews 4:13-16). He is fully aware of all that is transpiring on earth.

Musical instruments such as harps and bowls of incense were common fixtures in ancient courts of royalty and are only fitting for this scene depicting the Royal court of heaven. We mustn’t make the oft too common mistake of believing that since these things are found in Revelation that they belong in the worship of the Lord’s church on earth. Nowhere in the NT do we find authorization for these items to be used in Christian worship to God. Man has no more authority to dress in animal costumes to resemble the four living creatures than to use mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship.

In passages speaking of worship and praise to God we read of the church or of individual Christians singing hymns in eight different passages.<sup>4</sup> We do not have one passage in the New Testament which authorizes the use of mechanical instruments in the church or Christian worship.

God has commanded us to sing. He has commanded us concerning the types of songs we are to sing – psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. He has commanded us concerning corporate worship – teach and admonish *one another*. God has provided every instruction necessary to accomplish worship in the music of the church, and instrumental music is not included.

**“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God, And we shall reign on the earth” (vv.9-10).**

It was a new song; we have a “new and living way” (Hebrews 10:20). Christ has made us a kingdom – His kingdom – of priests to God. The Lord’s church is His kingdom (Matthew 16:16-18; Hebrews 12:22-29). His kingdom is comprised of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). His church is a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Just as Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests in the OT, the designation is continued for God’s people in the NT.

John saw and **“heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!” (vv.11-12)**

An innumerable company of angels offer a sevenfold praise to Christ. The angels of heaven worship Him. He is not merely another angel (cf. Hebrews 1:4 ff.). He is God (Isaiah 9:6-7; John 1:1-3), and worthy of all the praise due to the Father.

John observed **“every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and**

**all that are in them, I heard saying: Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever! Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever” (vv.13-14).**

Creation in its entirety worships the Father and the Lamb in one accord. Every creature whether in earth or heaven, living or dead cannot resist praising God. There are occasions in scripture when the Father is spoken of as God, as well as the Son, as well as the Spirit. Each are deserving of our praise as being Divine, as being God, or the Godhead (Acts 17:29; Colossians 2:9).

### Application for Today

Seeing the adoration given to the Father and the Son in heaven should evoke in our consciences the need and desire to offer such adoration to the Godhead on earth. Our worship must be spiritual, uplifting, and vibrant. Periods of worship together as the church should be considered some of life’s most treasured moments. Too often Christians go about their worship with drudgery, apathy, and cold formality. God is deserving of so much more.

For worship to become more meaningful, the object of our worship and the reason for our worship must be clearly understood and appreciated. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “You worship what you do not know.”

“Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29:2). “Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth” (Psalm 96:9).

Let us remember that we are coming before the Lord God when we worship. And, “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, And the great King above all gods” (Psalm

<sup>2</sup> Ian Paul, *Revelation*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downer’s Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2018), 133.

<sup>3</sup> Compare this scene with Daniel 7:9-14 and see the same imagery.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 15:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 14:15, 26; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13

95:2-3). “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand” (Psalm 95:6-7).

Worship is not something we do out of obligation to God; but something we offer in appreciation of God. “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and

riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12)

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The palm was a symbol of national conquest and the phrase that was being uttered by the ones lining Christ’s path into the city was a request to God for freedom from oppression. In their situation, the Jews wanted freedom from the oppression of the Roman empire. While there are other passages that deal with the use of the palm in various settings, this most likely harkens back to the Maccabean period and their overthrow of their Greek oppressions. 1 Maccabees 13:51 says, “And entered into it the three and twentieth day of the second month in the hundred seventy and first year, with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees, and with harps, and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs: because there was destroyed a great enemy out of Israel.”

The Prince of Peace riding on a donkey stands in stark contrast to the palm branches laid along His pathway into the city of Jerusalem. Sellars Crain writes,

It could well be that the difference between the views of Jesus and the crowd is seen here. By riding the donkey, Jesus implied He had no revolutionary aspirations; while the crowd’s use of palm branches, an allusion to the Maccabean triumphs, implied that they saw him still as a revolutionary messiah.<sup>1</sup>

This might inform their understanding of the Messiah. By their way of thinking, He was supposed to be a conquering Messiah who would release the Jewish nation from Roman captivity. Jesus’ earthly ministry was aimed at releasing all people from the captivity of sin and death. This would

be greater and much more complicated than any earthly military conquest.

When it became apparent that Jesus was about to be crucified, their expectations did not match the reality of the situation. At one time, the common people heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37), the multitudes followed Him (Matthew 15:30), and they watched Him heal their sick and infirm people. Now, the attitude of the people would change.

They hailed Him as a conquering king (John 12:13), but just a few days later, they would cry out for Jesus to be murdered. In Matthew 27:20-23 we read, “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ They said, ‘Barabbas!’ Pilate said to them, ‘What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’

They all said to him, ‘Let Him be crucified!’ Then the governor said, ‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Let Him be crucified!’”

In a bloodthirsty conspiracy, the Sanhedrin orchestrated the events that led to Christ’s unjust trial and capital punishment. The multitudes would be complicit in offering a continual, harmonious cry for the release of Barabas and the murder of Christ. These same multitudes

were among those who welcomed Jesus a few short days ago as a conquering king.

This shocking turn of public sentiment happened in less than a week. They would go from praising Him to calling for His execution during the time of Passover. One wonders if people in our age treat Christ in the same way.

If Jesus meets our expectations of what He should be like, people are happy to follow Him. However, if following Christ means that we must change ourselves to reflect Him living in us, it causes some to forsake Jesus and stop following Him.

To what extent does Christ reign in your life? Is He sovereign just so long as it is convenient for you? Luke 9:23 says, “Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’”

<sup>1</sup> Crain, Sellars (2011). *Matthew 14-28, Truth for Today Commentaries* (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2011), 208.

# Five Steps of Salvation

Bill Boyd



Sermons often end with an invitation. As part of the invitation preachers often repeat the five steps of salvation. Those steps are: Hear (Romans 10:15-17); Believe (Romans 10:10); Repent (Romans 2:4); Confess (Romans 10:10); and Be Baptized (Romans 6:3-4). It is interesting that all five steps are found in the book of Romans. I have been reading from some admirable young preachers that write as though “The Five Steps” invitation embarrasses them. I hope they read this.

The “Five Steps” is not a check-off list, and that is not all there is to it. At the “House to House” web page there is a list of “27 Things to which Salvation is Ascribed.” It is a good list, but it is hard to remember. All five steps are in that list. Some of those twenty-seven things are things that God does, some of the others are implied or included in the five steps. “The Five Steps” are a sort of summary of what man must do to properly respond to the grace of God.

“Five” is easy to remember because we have five fingers. The great pioneer preacher, Walter Scott, used to preach something like the five steps. He would have little children hold up their hands and teach them, finger by finger, that Acts 2:38 was about faith, repentance, baptism, the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. He would tell them to go home and show their parents, and to tell their parents that he would explain this to them when they came to hear him preach. He baptized thousands!

Marshall Keeble used to preach a sermon from a chart with five steps to

the church and seven steps to heaven. It is a classic. In his sermon, the seven steps are the seven “virtues” found in 2 Peter 1:5-11. He would call the five steps “ladder No. 1,” and the seven steps “ladder No. 2.” He talked about preachers who told sinners that they need to add these virtues to their character if they wanted to be saved, then he would say, “Here is the trouble with my modern sanctified friends. Poor things are trying to climb ladder No. 2 and have never climbed ladder No. 1.” He, too, baptized thousands!

I like to teach children the five steps, but I like to include “be faithful.” I have them raise their little left hands with me, and finger by finger, beginning with their little fingers, I have them point to their fingertips with their right hand saying, “Hear; Believe; Repent; Confess...” Then I show them how to swoop the pointing finger of the right hand down between their pointing finger and thumb of their left hand saying, “...be baptized...,” and end with two thumbs up “...be faithful!” You should try this. Practice on yourself. It is fun to do, and children love it.

Someone says, “I do not read anything in the Bible about salvation by steps!” Romans 4:12 says that Abraham was, “...the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham.” Abraham trusted God and did what God asked him to do. To walk in his steps is to follow his example. There are ten

examples of conversion in the book of Acts that pare well with these five steps. All five of these steps are not found in any one of these examples. The “Five Steps” is a good way to show how to put Bible teachings together. Every one of these ten examples includes “hearing” and “baptism.”

People are taught that they have been elected from all eternity, that infants without faith should be baptized, that they can be saved through an emotional experience; that they should confess “I believe that God for Christ's sake has saved me;” that they cannot understand the word without the Holy Spirit in their hearts; that repentance comes before faith; that salvation comes before baptism; that they should say the sinner's prayer and accept Jesus as their personal savior. The “Five Steps” is a good way to address those teachings.

Gospel preachers have been misrepresented and ridiculed for years by being called “five steppers.” Those who have criticized “Five Steps” in the past did not believe some parts of it. The old guys are used to the criticism, but we are a little taken back when young preachers who preach the same gospel tell us that we should not teach it that way. It is not that they teach another gospel, they just do not like the way we say it. I hope they come up with a better way to say it and baptize thousands! Until they do, I wish they would not be embarrassed when we teach it the old simple way.



# Essential Awareness

Ronald Bryant

There is no excuse for triviality in the Bible class or in the pulpit. The one who serves as a teacher or preacher is not a performer, nor is his role to proclaim personal thoughts or feelings. Unimportant issues and human-interest stories may please hearers for a time, but the fundamental issue for the teacher and preacher is the proclamation of God's will with an awareness of the reality of man's eternal destiny.

It is evident that many have a shallow view of life. Not a few have an even shallower view of God. Yet it remains that all have a responsibility regarding their souls. Those who teach and preach have the responsibility of exalting God and His revealed will, and of turning eternal souls to Him. Self-centered and self-serving speakers pose a very real danger to all who follow them.

Loss of spiritual focus and fidelity poses a grave danger to all. It has ever been the case that shallow convictions lead to pointlessness of life. Paul declared that the wisdom of the world is foolishness before God (1 Corinthians 1:20-21). The exalting of self-help rules and programs, and the telling of human-interest stories may serve for a moment, but such fails to honor God, and poses grave danger to those who are influenced by them.

God's plan is that people be drawn to Him in faith and obedience. His will and purpose are to that end. There is nothing trivial about God's purpose or plan. There is nothing mundane, or casual about the work of drawing eternal souls to faith and repentance.

Faith is a transforming process. When one comes to faith his entire life is affected. Every aspect of the life of a Christian is ruled by faith. Coming to faith is coming to a complete commitment of one's heart and life to God in and through Christ. It means fully embracing His will and purpose. It means responding to His love manifested in Christ with love. There is nothing trivial about such love.

Faith is ruled by passion for God. When one comes to believe, every aspect of his life is ruled by a deep and compelling awareness of and desire to know God. His intellect and emotions become ruled by a vibrant personal desire to be one with God. Faith transforms both conduct and character. Passion for God, for His will and purpose, is not a shallow process. It leads to righteousness – to a life of righteousness. There is nothing trivial about such passion.

Faith leads one to repentance. People left to their own devices do not repent. The goodness of God leads men to repentance (Romans 2:4). Setting forth God's call to repentance is central in the teaching of God's message (Acts 17:30-31). Yet, there are many who view repentance as a difficult and limiting, even wearisome process. Consequently, they refuse to regard their pride as a problem, and they view their failings as insignificant. Not a few view their programs of devotion as worthy substitutes for repentance. They do not regard sin to be sin. They see no need to repent. That they desperately need to turn from sin and to God is not a trivial matter.

Obedience is an act of faith. The believer is ready to obey. The consciousness of a believer at the moment of his commitment, moves him in a full and ready commitment of his heart and life to God. His commitment is a genuine yielding to God in and through Christ. Only they who are humble enough to yield to God's will and purpose shall be saved. Only those who truly believe obey, and only those who obey believe. The work of calling eternal souls to obedience is essential, not trivial.

Every Bible class teacher, and every preacher, for his own soul's sake, and for the sake of the souls of others, needs to faithfully examine their character and efforts in view of God's plan and purpose. The proclamation of the will of God is an awesome responsibility. An awareness that one is engaged in the work of proclaiming eternal truths to eternal souls is essential. One of the most sobering thoughts in the heart and mind of the servants of God is that such work is not now, nor has it ever been a trivial matter.



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# House to House Heart to Heart

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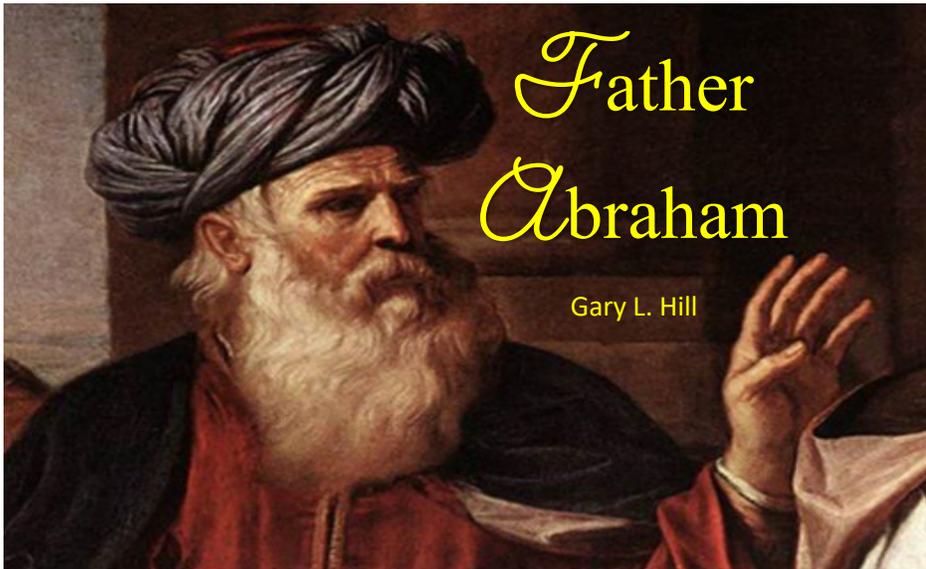
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As Christians we are reminded of the importance of the life and faith of Abraham. The world is reminded of the patriarch in the conflict occurring in the country of Israel today. Abraham is the direct ancestor of both the Jewish and Arab peoples. The important thing to focus on is the role this faithful servant of God played, in the salvation of mankind. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ was promised in the long ago as to be born as a direct descendant of the man Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).

What historical evidence do we have to paint a picture of the story of this great man and the role God played in bring about the scheme of redemption? The Bible, being the inspired word of God, is true in all it speaks. The time of Abraham was long ago but historical truths have been discovered that illustrate and illuminate this time.

Archaeological discoveries have allowed historians to determine the time of Abraham was in the second millennium B.C, the middle of the 22nd century B.C. The culture and customs that excavations have discovered give evidence that this is consistent with the time. Showing this is the case are the

excavations of Ur and the finding of tablets in Mari and Nuzi. Abraham lived during the late period of the Sumerian culture. This culture gave us the first known cities, government, law systems and language.

The excavations of Ur, the city where Abraham was born, was done by Sir Leonard Woolley (1922-1934). "His efforts gave some insight into the splendor of Ur during the centuries just prior to Abraham's birth." (Davis, 165) Among the most interesting discoveries were the royal tombs of Ur, dating back to about 2500 BC. The magnificent jewels, musical instruments, and statuettes found in them illustrate the fine craftsmanship of that period.

The tablets that were discovered are important also in establishing the historicity of the period of Abraham. For example, the Nuzi tablets were discovered by archaeologists in the 1920s. They were from both an official archive and the private archives of rich individuals. "The documents, especially the ones from the private archives, reflected social customs relating to real estate, adoption and marriage." (Provan, Long and Longman III, 113)

From these, the Bible student can see how law, instructions, and practices are the same as found in the book of Genesis. One example of this is that these tablets show where a man could have a child with his wife's hand-maiden to produce an heir. This reminds us of Sarah doing that through Hagar.

There have been numerous archaeologists and historians that have shown a respect for patriarchal narratives. "Archaeological finds from this period have demonstrated that the biblical details are historically accurate facts that could only been preserved by those who actually experienced the conditions at this time." (Price, 74)

Many see the evidence as showing that the story of Abraham is what would be expected when comparing the historical evidence to the narrative found in the Bible. Thus, the great acts of Abraham are shown to be historically and divinely inspired. We are blessed to know how God chose this great man to lead the world to the Savior (Galatians 3:8-9). The plan and purpose of God to redeem us is the greatest blessing we have received.

### Sources

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# Worldwide Preacher Training

Mike Kiser and I left for nearly a month-long mission trip on September 28<sup>th</sup>. We began the trip by speaking on the lecture-ship for the Southern Africa Bible College in Benoni, South Africa.



From there we traveled to Cape Town to teach students in the Somerset West School of Preaching and Biblical Studies. We stayed in the home of Paul and Hettie Gerber. These are fine people and true servants of the Lord. We were also blessed to preach for the church there and in Benoni while in South Africa. I found great interest among the preachers in that country to continue their education.

We left South Africa to travel to Ghana in West Africa. We taught in the West Coast School of Preaching. We also preached for the Nsawam church while in Ghana. I was privileged to speak on a live call-in radio Bible study as well.



Upon leaving Ghana, we traveled to London. Once more, we found interest for preachers to continue their education, not only in the UK but also in India. While there, we enjoyed preaching for the Wimbley congregation.

In addition to teaching courses in schools of preaching, we have experienced great success in conducting workshops for

preachers and church leaders. We believe these workshops will serve to open doors of opportunity for future schools of preaching to be established as well as strengthening the enrollment for schools already going.

Your support of this effort is making a difference in the church throughout the world. Almost 2,500 souls were touched by your fellowship in this work 2023 in five countries, including right here at home. Worldwide Preacher Training is not just a foreign mission, but a domestic mission as well. Heaven only knows the extent of good



and growth we are contributing together.

We were blessed to conduct courses, workshops, seminars and preach in congregations in America, England, Ghana, the Philippines, and South Africa. Altogether, approximately 60 students enrolled in classes, 400 participated in workshops and seminars, and 2,000 attended services where I preached in 15 congregations in five countries.

Three new textbooks were published for classes and students of the scriptures. These are: *Considering Jesus: Studies in the Book of Hebrews*; *Take Heed to Yourself: Essentials in Ministry from 1 Timothy 4:16*; *Christ Victorious: Studies in the Book of Revelation*.

The *Gospel Gleaner* was also published quarterly. The subscription list now includes most US states and several foreign countries.

But I'm ambitious, and I'm not satisfied with our work yet. Maybe I never will be. I see a great need to offer continued education to men who have already graduated from two-year programs, some of whom

are now teaching in schools of preaching in their cities, towns, and villages.

My hope is to establish or partner with a school that can enroll graduates of schools of preaching and provide them with the opportunity to continue their education. I know, and believe you will agree, that a two-year program is insufficient by itself to equip men with the kind of education they need if they are going to be teachers in schools as well.

We can provide books, classes, and support to these students with travel and food stipends, when necessary, but we will have to continue working together.

I'd like to ask you to consider four areas where help is needed.

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- Spread the word of what we're doing together. If you believe in this work, any facet of it, spread the word! Advertise for us and help us to be successful.
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On the night of Jesus' birth, the angel and the multitude of the heavenly hosts praised God saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14) Peace on earth is a theme of Christmas artwork and literature.

On the night before His death, as Jesus was gathered with His disciples in the upper room, He said to them "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). Yet we know Jesus was facing a violent death and the disciples lived a less than peaceful existence and several died violent deaths.

A survey of world history tells us there has been less than 268 years of peace in the last 3500 years of human history. Where is that peace that Jesus promised? Is there any reason to have faith in that promise Jesus made in that upper room some two thousand years ago? Can followers of Jesus expect fulfillment of the promise today?

Let us look closely at what Jesus actually said to the disciples: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). He did not promise a peace that the world could give. He did not promise an absence of fighting or conflict. He clearly said His peace would not be like that which the world

could give. So those who look for world peace from Jesus have misunderstood His promise.

When could the disciples expect this peace to come? It would come after Jesus left them (John 14:12, 25-31). Only after the supreme sacrifice of love that would bring peace and good will between God and man had been made would that peace come. Only when they came to understand the greater love of that sacrifice through the revealing power of the Holy Spirit would they understand the peace Jesus was offering them (John 15:9-17).

What then is the nature of the peace that Jesus promised? The apostle Paul was a man whose life had plenty of turmoil and violence, yet he was a man who came to understand the peace Jesus promised. From him we can learn the secret of understanding and obtaining that peace.

In his letter to the Philippian Christians, he describes that peace and gives secrets to obtaining that peace. This peace of God is not an absence of conflict, but a contentment of soul, mind, and heart, even if the world around you is anything but peaceful. The peace of God and from God the world does not and cannot understand because it is spiritual in nature (Philippians 4:6-7). It is a peace and contentment of the inner

man accompanied by and produced by prayer, supplication and giving of thanks (Philippians 4:5-7). It is a peace that is an integral part of an obedient life (Philippians 4:8-9).

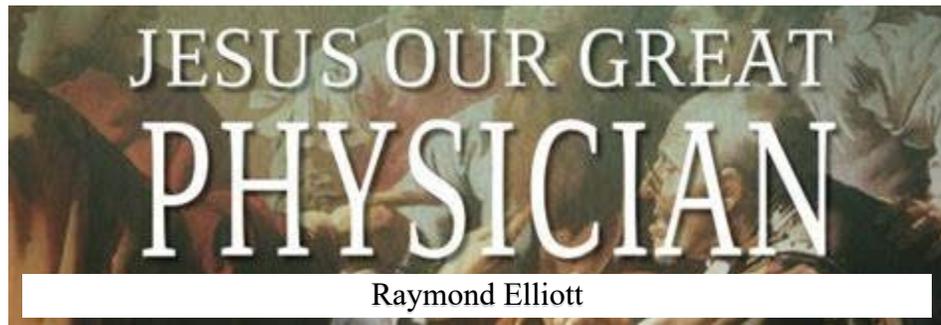
Paul found peace and learned the utility and power of this peace in his own life. In whatever circumstance Paul found himself, he was content. He had learned he could have that contentment and peace of God that passes human understanding through the Christ who gave him strength (Philippians 4:12-13).

Is there any reason to have faith in that promise Jesus made in that upper room some two thousand years ago? Can followers of Jesus expect fulfillment of the promise today?

Indeed, we can. The promise of Jesus still stands. It is not found in the tribunals and peace councils of men. His peace is found today just as it was by Paul and the first century Christians. It is not found in an absence of fighting and war. It can only be found through prayer and an obedient life. He will strengthen men today to find it just as He did for those in the church at Philippi.

Before Jesus and His disciples left the upper room the night before He was to give His life for us, Jesus tells them on what basis all this would take place: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Do you believe Jesus? If you do, then you can have contentment and the peace of God which passes understanding in your life today.



When calling Levi to become His disciple, Jesus was associating with the publicans and sinners and eating and drinking with them. This evoked the wrath of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. In answer to their criticism Jesus replied, “They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:29-32).

Luke, the physician, wrote of the Great Physician, Jesus Christ. Jesus had to be great because of the nature of the disease called sin. There are times when a general practitioner is all that one needs; however, there are occasions whenever a specialist is required because of the seriousness of the disease. In combating the malady of sin there is no other one to whom man can go save Jesus Christ.

We can best understand how effective Jesus is when we view **the horribleness of sin**.

First of all, the seat of this sickness is the heart. This is where sin originates in the individual. Jesus knew this fact and stated it in this fashion, “For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man...: (Matthew 15:19, 20). The wise man wrote, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). We can readily see the need of following Solomon’s admonition to “Keep thy heart with all

diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

Second, sin is universal in its scope. Paul declared in Romans 3:10, “As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one. For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Jesus Christ was the only person who has lived on this earth who has not been tainted with sin.

Third, sin is contagious in nature. Paul expressed an eternal truth when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.” How many young people, guilty of transgression, have cried, “I fell in with the wrong crowd.”

Fourth, there is a deceitful nature of sin. It has a way of appearing good and acceptable when in reality it is evil and damnable. “But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).

Fifth, the eventual consequence of sin is death to the one who is afflicted with this awful malady. Paul made this clear in Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” A person may die physically with a terminal disease but be saved eternally through Jesus Christ; however, the individual who dies with the disease called sin is forever separated from God in eternal punishment.

“Death” in this passage contrasts with the expression “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Thus, Paul has reference to eternal death or separation. We can readily see the awful nature of the disease called sin. Therefore, a physician was needed who would be able to cope with and cure such a malady.

Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, possessed all **the qualifications** of such a one to whom the sin-sick world could turn to for healing.

The first qualification we want to mention is that Jesus has the proper endorsement. God the Father confessed at the baptism of Jesus, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). Again, at the transfiguration, the Heavenly Father declared, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5). The goodness of the life of Jesus, the lessons He taught, the miracles He performed, and His victory over death, all testified to His divine sonship and the endorsement of heaven (John 20:30, 31; Romans 1:4).

Second, Jesus possessed a sympathetic attitude toward mankind. He heard the cry of distress and came. He suffered with and for mankind. Matthew records such a scene that displayed this attitude, “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed, and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd” (9:36). His

death on the cross expressed of His matchless love (Isaiah 53:4, 5).

Third, Jesus possesses all knowledge of human nature and the disease called sin. It is stated in the Holy Scriptures that he “knew what was in man” (John 2:25). Though Jesus was never afflicted with the malady of sin, he knew all about it. He even mentioned that sin originates in a man’s heart (Matthew 15:18, 19). Jesus knows that eventually the consequence of sin leads to a spiritual death (James 1:13-15).

Fourth, the Lord always maintained perfect and moral spiritual health. Unlike other physicians who often contact diseases and die, Jesus never knew sin in His life. The Hebrew writer spoke of this fact when he mentioned that Jesus was tempted in all points like we are “yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:14-16). In reference to Christ, Peter wrote, “who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). Had He been a sick man he would have endangered the lives of His patients.

Fifth, the Great Physician has the remedy for sin, regardless of how dark and base it might be. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18). The apostle Paul declared that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). The remedy is of proven worth. By it countless numbers have been saved from sin and death and have been prepared to make this world a better place in which to live.

Though the remedy is infallible, **restoration to health is conditional**. One may spurn it or neglect it; the result is

the same. Faith in the Great Physician and a willingness to follow His instructions are necessary. Jesus taught in Matthew 7:21, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

The prophet Jeremiah raised the question, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there” (Jeremiah 8:22)? Jesus is that balm and that physician. He is the only one who can save. But a person’s heart must be submissive to His will as found in the words of Jeremiah, “Heal me, O Jehovah and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise” (Jeremiah 17:14).

The **prescription** that the Great Physician has given for the healing of our sin-sick soul is that we should believe in Him as the Son of God, repent of our sins and based upon our confession of faith to be immersed in His name for the remission of our sins (John

3:16; Acts 17:30; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). If we do this and live for Jesus Christ our soul will prosper in this world and we will live eternally with our Savior (3 John 2; I John 5:11-13).

### THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

*The great Physician now is near, The sympathizing Jesus;  
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer;  
O hear the voice of Jesus;  
All glory to the dying Lamb! I now believe in Jesus;  
I love the blessed Savior’s name, I love the name of Jesus.  
His name dispels my guilt and fear, No other name but Jesus;  
O how my soul delights to hear The charming name of Jesus.  
And when to that bright world above,  
We rise to see our Jesus,  
We’ll sing around the throne of love  
His name, the name of Jesus.*

*Sweetest note in seraph song, Sweetest name on mortal tongue,  
Sweetest carol ever sung, Jesus blessed Jesus.*



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# The Significance of Biblical Preaching

Marlon Balbalosa



Biblical preaching is an important part of religious groups all around the world. It is extremely important for both the preacher and the congregation. Furthermore, biblical preaching is vital to the church, serving as a lighthouse or light for Christians. The significance of biblical preaching cannot be overemphasized.

In this essay, we will look at the significance of biblical preaching and why it is so important in today's world. We can better comprehend the enormous impact that biblical preaching has on individuals and societies by investigating its role in supporting spiritual growth, offering moral guidance, and safeguarding the integrity of religious beliefs. Furthermore, we shall investigate why it is critical for the church to have purely biblical preaching.

We may understand why it is critical to prioritize biblical preaching in the church by studying the authority of Scripture, the function of biblical preaching in creating theology and sustaining theological faithfulness, and its impact on the spiritual growth and unity of the congregation.

Here are some of the reasons for the significance of biblical preaching, and some of these are based on the experiences of preachers in their decades of work in serving the church.

## The Authority of Scripture

The Christian faith considers the Bible as God's authoritative word. It contains a divine revelation that directs believers' faith, doctrine, and behavior. The church ensures that its teachings are in line with God's inspired

and infallible word by emphasizing biblical preaching, which is why many preachers in the Philippines are very strict in following the authority of the scriptures especially in preaching it.

Commitment to Scripture as the final source of truth protects against doctrinal distortion, false teachings, and personal biases that can arise when departing from biblical principles. By upholding Scripture's authority, the church maintains its loyalty to the foundational truths of the faith and provides a solid foundation for believers to build their lives on.

## Spiritual Growth and Church Unity

Biblical preaching is essential for encouraging spiritual growth in individuals. Preachers guide believers in their understanding and application of religious teachings through the exposition of precious scriptures. Preachers provide a source of inspiration and wisdom by looking deeply into the Bible, assisting individuals in developing a personal relationship with the divine.

Biblical preaching provides spiritual nourishment by addressing the congregation's innermost needs and providing solace, encouragement, and guidance in the face of life's challenges. It nourishes the soul and encourages a closer relationship with the Divine presence, allowing believers to grow in faith and build a stronger spiritual foundation.

When faithfully preached, the word of God has the power to convict, transform, and edify believers. It addresses the congregation's spiritual needs by providing guidance, encouragement, and correction.

Biblical preaching brings people closer to God, allowing them to grow in their faith and understanding of His will. Furthermore, exposing the entire congregation to consistent biblical preaching promotes unity in beliefs, values, and purpose. A community that shares a common understanding and application of biblical principles forms a community that is united and centered on Christ and His teachings.

## Theological Consistency and Doctrinal Integrity

We all want to follow the divine will of God and biblical preaching is critical in shaping and preserving the church's doctrinal integrity. It ensures that the congregation's teachings and beliefs are consistent with the biblical message.

Preachers provide a clear understanding of essential doctrines such as salvation, the nature of God, the person of Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit through faithful exposition of Scripture. Biblical preaching protects believers from doctrinal error, heresy, and the introduction of unscriptural teachings. The church maintains theological consistency and supports a unified understanding of the faith among its members by remaining faithful to biblical preaching.

## Ethical Framework and Moral Guidance

Biblical preaching provides people as well as society with moral guidance and a moral framework. The Bible contains timeless concepts and ethical teachings that help shape believers'

moral compass. Preachers demonstrate these principles and guide people through applying these individuals to their daily lives through biblical preaching.

Biblical sermons provide insights into moral problems, promote compassion, justice, and integrity, and provide tools needed to navigate the complicated issues of modern society. Biblical preaching emphasizes the importance of virtues such as love, forgiveness, humility, and honesty, allowing people to make moral choices and positively contribute to their communities.

### **Preserving Religious Teachings**

Biblical preaching is essential for the transmission of religious teachings across generations. We must rely on the Bible to lay down the foundations for their core beliefs, rituals, and values.

Preachers must make sure that these doctrines remain relevant and accessible in modern times through biblical preaching. They solve the problem between ancient scriptures and contemporary life by interpreting and contextualizing biblical passages to meet the requirements and difficulties of their congregations.

Biblical preaching contributes to the integrity and continuity of faith communities by devotedly conveying the essence of biblical commands. It ensures that the scriptures' wisdom and insights are passed on to future generations, preserving the pure and unadulterated teachings of faith.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, the importance of biblical preaching cannot be overstated because of its significant effect on people as well as communities. Biblical

preaching increases personal growth and a more profound relationship with the Divine by providing spiritual nourishment. It also provides moral guidance and an ethical framework, allowing individuals to make moral decisions and positively contribute to society.

Furthermore, biblical preaching is critical in the preservation and transmission of religious teachings, ensuring the continuity and integrity of faith traditions. The importance of biblical preaching as a source of inspiration, guidance, and moral grounding cannot be overestimated in a world where we are facing numerous challenges. It is still guiding, uplifting, and transforming the lives of believers, promoting spiritual growth and a greater awareness of one's faith.

The need for scriptural preaching in the church is extremely important. The church acknowledges the authority of Scripture and upholds its role as the inspired Word of God by adhering to

biblical preaching. This commitment protects doctrinal integrity, protects against false teachings, and ensures theological consistency.

Biblical preaching promotes spiritual growth in individuals and congregational unity by uniting believers in their understanding and execution of biblical principles. By putting biblical preaching first, the church stays true to its roots, provides a solid foundation of spirituality for its members, and equips them to navigate the complexities of life following God's truth.

[Editor's Note: Marlon Balbalosa is one of fine students at Asian Christian University. His article was submitted in fulfillment of an assignment given in a course on homiletics.]



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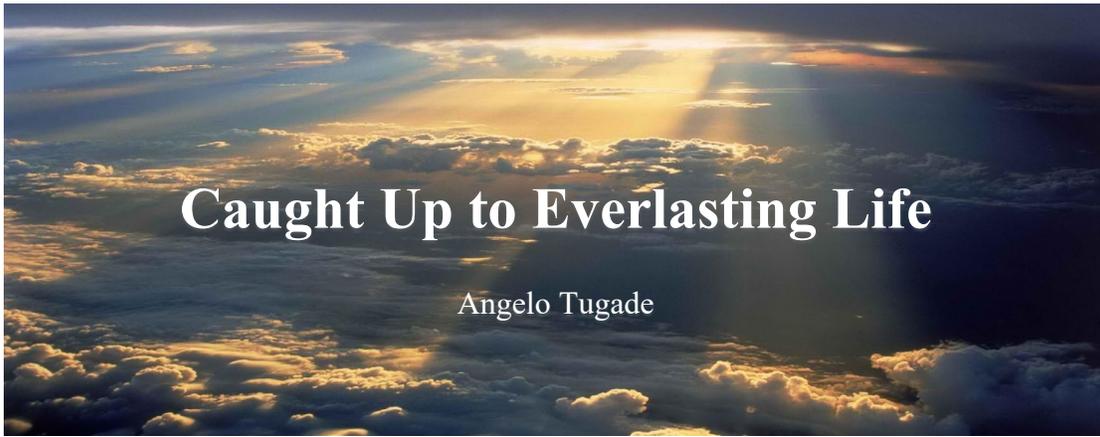
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# Caught Up to Everlasting Life

Angelo Tugade

As Christians, all of us are yearning to go to heaven, where there will be no more pain, and tears will be wiped away, and our sufferings will finally end. It is impossible to know and to imagine it, since heaven is completely beyond our comprehension (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Many of us ask a lot of questions with regards to this life. Many ask about how to get rich, many ask about how to become famous, and many ask about life after death. Many are also bewildered and ask the question of what heaven looks like. When a family member dies, we often find ourselves reflecting on the question “where are they now?” I cannot answer and explain to you the details, but the Bible will show and tell us what it looks like.

The best way to picture heaven and gain a glimpse of what God prepared for us is in Scripture. Heaven is depicted as the ultimate destination for those who follow the teachings of God and to those who live godly and righteous lives.

## What Happens at Death?

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was risen from the dead and will come again in His second coming. This event will bring an end to the sufferings of those who obeyed and followed His will and at the same time the will lead

to the final resurrection of the dead and the final judgment of all human beings.

Some believe that the dead have just fallen asleep, and when Christ returns to the earth, He will awaken all those who believed and followed His will, and they will go with Him to heaven.

Others teach that after death, they will be reborn. While others believe that after death they will immediately go to God in heaven.

But what does the Bible say about life after death? After death, the spirit of man leaves the body. Those who obeyed God and to those who lived righteously will go to be with the Lord in the state of paradise (Luke 23:43).

In that passage, Christ is speaking during His crucifixion to the thief. He said, “Today you will be with Me in paradise.”

What about those who do not obey God and choose not to live righteously? Their spirit will go to a palace called torment and wait for the judgment. They do not have the chance and privilege for mercy as they await the final judgment.

There are only two places where a man can go – heaven or hell. The scriptures teach us the necessity for us to be prepared (see Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, John 3:16). It is up to us to decide.

## Heaven Is a Place

Acts 1:6-11 teaches us that Jesus ascended to heaven, which would tell us that He moved from a place on this earth to another place which is heaven. Furthermore, we know that Jesus continues to have a body even after His resurrection, albeit one that is glorified by the Holy Spirit (John 20:24–29; 1 Cor. 15).

According to John 14:2, our Lord Jesus Christ said, “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”

Heaven is the Father’s house and there is a place for the saved. It is a place prepared before the foundation of the world, a place prepared for the blessed, a place prepared by our Lord Jesus Christ for the innocent and for the faithful. Heaven is a prepared place, and we must long to go there (Hebrews 11:6) and fulfill our duty as God desires and wants us to do.

## Heavenly Joy and No more Suffering

In Revelation 21:4, we read, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” The image depicts heaven as a place with no more

suffering, no more pain, no more trials, and all we be joy and gladness. Heaven will be a place where God brings comfort and solace to us, to those who obeyed and followed His will.

In heaven, we will live eternally, unendingly – “for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have *eternal* life.”

Heaven is promised to God’s children. The hope of heaven is the foundation of the Christian faith, a place of everlasting joy and everlasting life.

### Conclusion

Heaven is a real place, prepared and awaiting the faithful and righteous who stand in their faith even until death. It is our hope. It gives us strength. Heaven serves as motivation for every believer.

Heaven should be our aim, to be with God someday. “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).

[Editor’s Note: Angelo Tugade is another one of fine students at Asian Christian University. His article was submitted in fulfillment of an assignment given in a course on last things.]



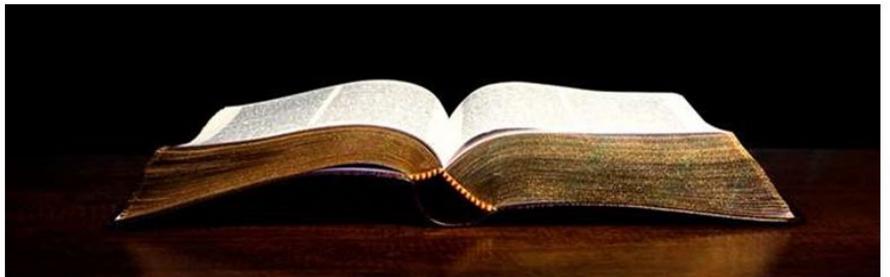
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**“Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account” (Phil. 4:14-17).**

Philippians is a wonderful letter. I often encourage preachers when they begin a new work to preach the book of Philippians on a Sunday evening. It is a book that “draws brethren together” remaining on “the same page” in their labors. It very well addresses matters that may be existing in your new work...but you don’t know what they are! God knows and His word addresses those issues through the simple proclamation of this excellent book written to the church at Philippi.

This wonderful congregation aided Paul in Thessalonica and in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9). As in our text under consideration, they communicated (had fellowship) with Paul’s affliction meaning they knew what was going on with

Paul. They viewed giving as a blessing to help and to meet the necessities of others, especially Paul. It was not that Paul “desired the gift” but rather Paul desired fruit that would abound to them—what they would give to Paul would not only be helpful, but fruitful. Is this not what our Lord taught in Luke 6:38? Note: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

Churches of Christ follow the pattern of the Philippians—to grant gifts to others who labor in the kingdom or as we would usually say, “support mission work” of carrying the gospel to all the world (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:44-47; Jn. 20:21-23). In so doing, churches recognize many laborers are worthy of their hire (1 Tim. 5:18) as they live from the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14).

Let us further consider our text and the word “communication,” a word that *Vine’s Expository Dictionary* defines further as “to share together with...be partakers of...sharing with others what one has, in order to meet their needs.” How can we improve in responding to

mission works and how can mission works improve communication with congregations?

#### Thoughts for Congregations/Elders

- **Brethren, when a request comes your way, take a moment to consider it.** Follow up by looking at their website. Give a call or two to others who currently support the work—you very well may know someone, and their reference will assist you in a decision. Reach out to the one making the request with a phone call or a “team” (zoom) meeting. Be ready with questions about the work.
- **After the meeting, look it over and see how you can assist with a gift.** It may be a “one time request” or a request to be a fellow laborer watering and/or planting (1 Cor. 3:6-9) on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis. Beloved, it is fruit that will abound to your account.
- **If you evaluate a work carefully and you are unable to address or assist due to current works you support or other matters to address evangelistically at home, let the requested work know of your decision—and might I suggest the following approach:** “Brother, upon review, we are unavailable to assist you at this time, however please reach out to us next year and allow us to look at it again.” Although you may say “no” now, a “yes” very well could be just ahead. I’ve experienced a “no” in my labors only to become a “yes” later.
- **Never think a small gift will not work.** “Well, we can’t give much,” some may say. I read once in the greatest Book of all where a widow and her boy truly had little to eat—matter of fact, they were going to

eat it and then wait to die. The prophet of God brought forth the word of God and instructed her according to God's way and the more she mixed, the more she received. Yes, I am speaking of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:7-17. Our great God and Father can take our little meals and little oils and do wonderful things with His word, friends! (See also 2 Tim. 2:9; Isa. 55:10-11).

### Thoughts for Evangelistic/Mission Works

- **Brethren love hearing about good sound works and news (Acts 14:27).** They love to hear about the open doors, the good news, and its effect in this world, baptisms, and growth of the church. Present the goodness and goals of your work.
- **Brethren love hearing what can help their congregation and what can help them spiritually.** How can your work benefit their growth? Growing Christians are faithful Christians. Peter in his second epistle begins with growth and ends with growth (2 Pet. 1:4-11; 3:18). When brethren can use your efforts in *their* growth, they will help grow *your* efforts.
- **Brethren don't mind giving if they know why.** A careful study of 2 Cor. 9 teaches the simplicity of sowing and reaping and planning begins in the heart—a purposeful heart (v. 7)—a heart that chooses or prefers a certain amount to give unto God. It's a heart of joy and zeal; a heart that embraces God's grace that abounds in the life of one with a purposed heart. But brethren need to see your work, your zeal

and your joy and understand the opportunities that are there. Once they see your purpose, it becomes their purpose.

- **Be a good steward of what you have (1 Cor. 4:1-2).** Are there adjustments you can make? An expense that you need to eliminate and move funds into other areas? Is there something within your work that is just not accomplishing what it should? Brethren love co-laboring with one who is a responsible steward looking out for the things of God. They see what you *are* doing and what you *will* do with their gifts to you.
- **Be specific in your request.** In my labors, when one says, "If you need anything, let us know" my reply is usually "I'm glad you asked—there is something" and I present something specific of which they can be of help. When you present your work, are there specific areas within your work which others can assist? Make them known clearly; emphatically, yet graciously.
- **Don't be afraid to ask.** It was a "no" when you started and if by chance it is still a "no," well, now you know. But never asking will always result in a "no." Be confident in your work, excited for the cause of Christ and press onward.

Would to God that we all have the "Paul and Philippi relationship" with our communication of the greatest message of all—the gospel! Let's think on these things, brethren, and press onward with the clarion call of the gospel of Christ! "There's a call comes ringing...send the light!"



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# Temptation and How to Bear It

## Genesis 39:7-9

1. I have chosen this story from the life of Joseph because it illustrates our subject well.
2. A wonderful epitaph is given to Joseph. Gen. 39:2; Acts 7:9
3. Some are troubled because temptations come after obeying the gospel.
4. Satan found out he could not overcome Joseph with troubles and frowns of the world. So, he tried his hand with soft, charming pleasure.
5. From this story there are four principles to keep in mind.

### I. Satan Is Responsible for Temptations.

- A. We cannot blame God - James 1:3; only Satan - 1 Corinthians. 7:5; Mark 1:13. He often uses evil people. 2 Peter 2:14, 18.
- B. Satan is the master of deception. 2 Corinthians 2:11
- C. The whole purpose of temptation is to mislead. Satan always gives out misleading information and misleading promises.

### II. There Is a Difference Between Temptation and Sin.

- A. Jesus and Joseph, both tempted, neither sinned (Joseph in this case only). Hebrews 4:15
- B. Temptation is the avenue that leads us into sin. James 1:14. It is the perversion of some legitimate thing (natural desire). 1 John 2:15-17.
- C. Temptations are not even a sign of weakness. 1 Corinthians 10:13

### III. There Is a Reason Why Satan Tempts Us to Sin.

- A. Satan knows that sin will destroy our influence. Early on, Joseph had a good influence on others. Sin would have caused him to lose it.
- B. Satan knows that sin can ruin our life. John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8
- C. Satan knows that sin will cost our soul. Romans 6:23

### IV. We Can Be Victorious Over Temptation.

- A. Satan is not omnipotent. Therefore, he can be defeated. James 4:7
- B. Victory is through Christ. His death; His intercession - Hebrews 2:14, 18; His abiding presence. Matthew 28:20.
- C. We are provided the divine means by which we can overcome:
  1. The word of God. Matthew 4:4; Psalms 119:11
  2. Conviction of our own conscience. Psalms 119:104
  3. Exhortation from our brethren. Hebrews 3:13
  4. A full suit of armor. Ephesians 6:10-17
  5. Our Lord's admonition: "Watch and Pray." Mark 14:28
  6. The Divinely provided escape route. 1 Corinthians 10:13

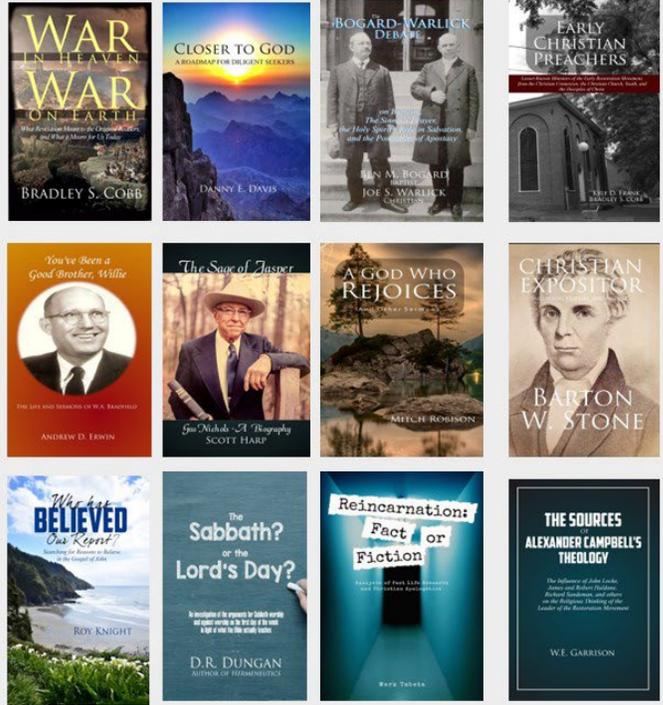
1. Joseph was not a "superman," he overcame, and we can too.
2. God's desire is for us to overcome. Luke 22:31-32

*-Mike Kiser*

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