

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

October 2006

“To all that be in Rome [or wherever you are], beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 1:7) You have been called by God to be saints, to be holy people. I pray that you cooperate with God so that He can perform this work in you. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

Special Notice: My family and I will be traveling for the next few months (see page 7), visiting brethren and holding meetings. Please pray that the Lord will work mightily on this trip to save many souls for His kingdom. Also, please be patient in receiving correspondence from me. My secretary, Ruth Ranieri, will help with anything you need while I am away, and I will write to you as I am able. I hope to see you soon at one of the upcoming meetings in your area.

Something More

by Lynnford Beachy

(The following is an edited transcript of a sermon preached at the 2004 West Virginia camp meeting. *Editor*)

Jesus gave us a beautiful promise in Luke 18:29, 30. Here He said, “Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

Jesus said that those who have forsaken anything for God’s sake will receive manifold more in this time and in the kingdom of heaven life everlasting. When we look in the Bible do we see that everybody who has forsaken things for Christ, receives more than they have forsaken in this present time, in this life? Often times *it appears* that people didn’t receive more. They forsook everything and they didn’t get it back. Sometimes in our lives we ask ourselves, “what’s in it for me? What can I get out of this?”

I remember thinking about this before I became a Christian, when I was still in the world. I only had one friend who was a Christian, one person who took me to church. I remember looking around at some of the other people and thinking about Christianity, that it didn’t appeal to me. Do you know why? Because what I considered was that there was too much that I had to give up. I kind of put it on a balance and I thought that I have to give all these things up and what do I get in return? I get

nothing! That was kind of the way I thought about it. I thought that Christianity was a whole bunch of “Thou shalt nots,” and that I wouldn’t get anything out of it. Christianity didn’t seem appealing to me, and I think that’s probably true for a lot of people. They think that to be a Christian you have to give too many things up, and you don’t get anything in return. Is that right? Have you thought that way before?

But, is that true? Jesus said if we forsake these things, if we forsake things for His sake we will get manifold more in this time, right now. We will get much more than what we have given up, even right now, before we die, before we enter heaven.

A lot of times it’s hard for people of the world, and even Christians sometimes, to think about the world to come, because they can’t see it. It’s something ahead of us, it’s something we look forward to, and we read about

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Fundamental Principles of Health page 7

by Curtis Kline

Upcoming Meetings in Your Area page 7

The Consecrated Way (Part 7) page 8

by Alonzo T. Jones

Be a Berean page 11

by Greg Forde

it, but it's something we can't see. You have heard the saying, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." In other words, what you can see right now, what you can have right now, is worth more than what you may get later.

This reminds me of the prodigal son who did not want to wait for his inheritance. He said, "I don't want to wait until my dad dies; I want to get it now." That's the way a lot of people think; they want to get something now. But look what Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time." (Luke 18:30) You can receive more right now!

My idea about Christianity was that I had to give everything up, and I wasn't going to get anything in return. I found out that I was dead wrong, because I can distinctly remember what happened to me and what I was experiencing and feeling when I gave my life to the Lord. I felt like I was walking on air. I was just so high, spiritually and mentally. I felt free, I felt like the sun was shining every moment of every day. I remember just being so excited that I was finally free.

When I gave my life to the Lord I was happier than I had ever been. I had much more than I had before, and I had peace and joy along with it. I had everything that I didn't have before. So, I thought that I was giving everything up and I was not getting anything in return, but I found out that I was completely wrong. Everything that I was giving up was bad and everything I was getting was good. So, in this life, I had more. I wasn't rich, I didn't have a Mercedes Benz in the driveway, but I had much more, I had something better. It was in this lifetime, and it is still there. It is still much better than the time I had before.

Biblical examples

Let's just think about a few examples in the Bible. Jesus said if we forsake everything then we will get much more in this lifetime. If we think about it literally, in the Bible we find a lot of examples both ways. Like Abraham, he was asked to leave his father's house, to leave his kindred, his country, and to just go out to a place, not knowing where he was going. The Lord told him that He would show him where to go. He was told to just forsake everything and go, and that's what he did. Did God bless him? Yes, He blessed him abundantly! Abraham became very rich. So, there is an example of somebody who did receive many literal things in this life. There are also other examples, like Job. Job was very rich, and he lost

everything, his children, his possessions, and his health. But the Bible says that the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. We may think of Joseph also. Joseph remained true to God no matter what happened. He was put in prison but, in the end, he became a powerful and rich man. He was greater than all his brethren, even richer than his father.

Daniel is another example. He purposed in his heart to stay true to God no matter what, and he was blessed with a very exalted position in the kingdom and anything that this life could offer. But then there are other examples in the Bible, people who didn't get these things.

Let's turn to Matthew 19, verse 27. Look what the disciples said here, "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Here is the attitude, "What's in it for me, what are we going to get out of this? We have forsaken everything for you, now what do we get?" Notice how Jesus answered them. He replied, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:28, 29)

Jesus didn't say, "You are going to have a new horse, a big farm, many cattle, etc." He said they were going to have a very good position in the kingdom of heaven. He didn't point them to this life; he didn't say in this life you're going to have many good things. Did the disciples have many earthly possessions in this earth? No, they weren't rich! In fact when there was a man begging for money. Peter and John went by and said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee" (Acts 3:6), and they gave what they had. Did they have something? They had something better, far exceeding riches and gold, they had Jesus Christ in their lives and in their hearts. They had a relationship with God that surpassed everything else.

Did you know that many of the rich people in this world are depressed? They live a really miserably life because they are so concerned about the things that they have. It takes up their time and they have a lot of problems because of it. But the most content, happy people are those who have Jesus Christ in their lives. Isn't that true? They are the most content people in this world.

Paul was a man who had a fairly good position in the Jewish church. But he gave that all up in exchange for a

life of hardship and toil. Let's look at what Paul said about this. He said, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one." (2 Corinthians 11:24) Thirty-nine stripes, that's a pretty severe beating from what I understand. He said that He was beaten like this five times, and "thrice [he was] beaten with rods." (v. 25) He said, "Once was I stoned..." (v. 25) This experience was recorded in the book of Acts. The Bible says, "And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead." (Acts 14:19) They stoned him so severely that they thought they had killed him. Paul recalls, "Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." (2 Corinthians 11:25-28)

Did Paul have an easy life? In this lifetime it seems like he had a pretty difficult life, but Jesus said if we forsake all for Him He's going to give us manifold more in this present time. Did Paul have manifold more? He surely did! He had something more, he had manifold more in this time. So, when Jesus tells us that we are going to get manifold more in this time, He's not necessarily talking about earthly riches, but He is talking about something that is much more valuable than riches. It is something within.

Manifold more

Jesus promised that His disciples would have "manifold more in this present time." On the day of Pentecost the Spirit came down in power on the disciples and then they went out and preached. Did they meet resistance from the Jewish people? Certainly! In Acts chapter five it says that Peter and the other disciples were commanded not to preach any more in Christ's name. But they did, and then they were brought before a council, and Gamaliel got up and said be careful what you do to these people. Then in verse 40, it says, "When they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." Look what happened next. The Bible says, "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." (v. 41) Were they sad and despondent? No! They

were rejoicing that they were allowed to suffer shame for His name's sake.

What a transformation! Just a short time before Peter said "I don't know this man, I don't know Jesus." Three times he denied the Son of God, but there was a change that took place in Peter's life. There was a change that took place in all of the disciples. They went out and spoke boldly for Jesus. And it didn't matter to them what the Jews did to them. Look at what it says in verse 42: "Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." They were commanded not to do it, they were beaten and sent out and told not to do this again, but they ceased not to go and preach about Jesus Christ. Why did they do it? What was different about them? They had something inside of them, didn't they?

We can have something inside too, can't we? We can have something inside that no matter what is going on outwardly, we can have peace and joy, we can have manifold more than the rest of the people around us who do not have Christ.

When I was in the world the Christian life was not appealing to me. I just thought that Christianity was a "do good" religion, that you had to give everything up that was fun. That was the kind of attitude I had. Why would I want to do that? It wasn't appealing to me; I didn't see that it would be fulfilling or that I would enjoy such a thing. But one thing I found out since I've become a Christian, and I've given my life to the Lord, is that I was sadly mistaken. I thought that the Christian life was dull and boring and there was nothing in it for me. I had the selfish attitude, "What is in it for me?" What I found out, though, was that when I gave my life to the Lord, when I asked Him to forgive me of my sins, there was a joy, there was a peace in my life that I had never known before.

In the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the main character, Christian, started to read a book and pretty soon he noticed there was a huge weight on his back. He became doubled over with this weight, barely able to walk because he had this burden that he hadn't known was there before. That is what happened to me. When the Lord opened my eyes I could see that I was weighted down, that I always had this burden. But when I was in the world I didn't know it was there, even though it was there all along. And then, when I finally asked God to forgive me of my sins, it was like a huge weight just rolled off my back. Because for the first time I had peace, I had joy. I remember I felt like I was on top of the world, on cloud nine. I remember singing, "I'm free, I'm free." I was just so excited to be free from my sins and that burden had really just rolled off my back, just like it did in

the *Pilgrim's Progress* story when Christian came to the foot of the cross and the burden rolled away.

What I found is that I had manifold more than I had before. I thought I would be exchanging all of these good things for something less. But instead I found out I was exchanging all these terrible evil things for something much, much better, much greater than I had ever imagined. That is what God promises us, in this life. He's not necessarily saying, "You're going to be rich, you're going to live on easy street, and you're not going to have any troubles." That's not what He promises us, but what He does promise is something much better, something manifold more than we had before. That's what you can have today, that's what each of us can have right now. We can have manifold more! That's what I want to emphasize in this study.

Manifold more in the Bible

We can think of people in the Bible who found something better. When we read these stories we think, "This is what I want, I want to have this." Think of Stephen! The Bible says he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was somebody who loved God with all his heart. He went before the Jews and boldly said, "You're the ones who crucified the Son of God." And it says they were so angry that they closed their ears and rushed upon him, and "gnashed on him with their teeth." (Acts 7:54) Then they took him out and stoned him. But what did Stephen do? "He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts 7:60) This is just like what Jesus did when He was being nailed to the cross. He pleaded, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

You see, Stephen had something more. He had something better than those around him, than the people who had the stones in their hands. They didn't recognize what Stephen had. Stephen had great peace when he went to the grave. He saw heaven opened to him.

I have read some of the stories in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. These people endured all kinds of hardships. One thing that is consistent all the way through, is that they had something special in their lives. They had peace and joy. Most of them were singing when they went to the stake to be burned alive. They were praising and rejoicing, just like the disciples did, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ. If you have something better, if you have something more, then you can endure all things for Christ's sake.

The blood of martyrs was actually seed for the gospel. When those martyrs were burned at the stake, people

around could see that they had something so special that when they went to their deaths they had smiles on their faces and joy in their hearts, praising God. This caused people looking on to want to have that too. They compared them to the priests and the executioners and they wanted to have what the martyrs had.

That's what God wants each one of us to have, and when we have it, other people are going to notice. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Romans 8:22) "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Romans 8:19) The whole creation is waiting for the manifestations of the sons of God. They want to see something better. They want to see something that will draw them, something that is going to cause them to want to have what you have. Paul said, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." (2 Corinthians 3:2)

When I was in the world I did not have that desire; I didn't have a desire to have something more, because I didn't see it in others. But God wants people of this world to see what we should have as Christians.

The Psalmist wrote, "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Psalms 84:10) In other words, what he is saying is, "I'd rather take the lowest position serving God than take a high position with the wicked. I'd rather be poor and needy and have *something better* in my life than to live with the wicked and have all the things the world can offer. That is the attitude David had. That is the attitude of all the people we are talking about. This is what they had, they had something better. They knew the value of having a relationship with God; they knew how valuable it was to have that peace and contentment that only God can give.

Paul wrote, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Timothy 6:6) Jesus said we are going to have manifold more, and that's what Paul says we are going to have when we have godliness with contentment. This is something better than all the world can offer.

Isaiah wrote, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." (Isaiah 26:3) Do you want perfect peace? That is what I experienced for the very first time when I gave my life to the Lord. It was such a wonderful experience that it cannot be explained. You just have to experience it for yourself. There is nothing better. When we have our minds fixed on God and His love for us then we will have that perfect peace.

Isaiah also wrote, "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." (Isaiah 48:22) Isaiah says we are going

to have perfect peace if our minds are stayed on the Lord, but if we are wicked it says we are going to have no peace at all. When I was in the world I had no peace. The Bible says, “Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.” (Proverbs 14:13) That is the way I was. Mirth is laughter, happiness and partying. Even in that condition, when everybody is smiling and everybody seems happy, inside there is emptiness and loneliness, there is that lack of peace that needs to be filled. There is no peace for the wicked, but with the righteous there is great peace, even perfect peace.

Do not worry about anything

Jesus said, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:25-33)

What is the most important thing to find? The kingdom of God and His righteousness. The most important thing is that *something better*, that *manifold more* that God promises to us. Let’s find that first and then it does not matter what happens around us. The Psalmist wrote, “Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” (Psalms 46:2) If we have that peace with God, if we have that joy and contentment inside then it doesn’t matter what is going on around us, we can still have peace. We will have a trust in God so complete that we will know that He is going to take care of us no matter what. That is why we don’t have to seek and worry about what we are going to eat tomorrow. Don’t you know your Father is watching out for you?

I really like the story of Elisha, when there was a whole army that came out after him. The only purpose of that army was to take Elisha captive. A whole army

coming out for one man, because Elisha was giving intelligence to the king of Israel, so they wanted to take him out of the way. So this whole army comes out to capture Elisha, and his servant was a little worried, and came to Elisha asking him what to do. Did Elisha seem to be troubled? No. He replied, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” (2 Kings 6:16) Then he asked God to open his servant’s eyes, “And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” (2 Kings 6:17) There is something interesting about this story. There is no record that Elisha saw the angels. He prayed for his servant to see the angels, but Elisha didn’t have to see them, because he already knew that God was taking care of them. He didn’t have anything to worry about. He had that perfect peace and contentment, and we can have that same thing.

Elisha had something more, didn’t he? What about Elijah? Do you think he had something more? Elijah went to heaven without seeing death. Remember when he went up to Mt. Carmel, and all the servants of Baal gathered around. All day long the servants of Baal were trying to get their imaginary god to burn up a sacrifice, but it wasn’t working. Then, “Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.” (1 Kings 18:27)

Finally Elijah rebuilt the altar of the Lord; “And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.” (1 Kings 18:33-35) After this He prayed to God, and what did God do? Instantly, fire came down, fire so hot that it burned up the wood, it burned up the sacrifice, and it burned up the rocks, and even lapped up the water at the bottom. God answered very mightily. It took great faith for Elijah to do that, because what would happen if God didn’t answer the prayer? Elijah would have been in trouble. Elijah had something more, just like what Jesus promised, something manifold more. And we can have the same thing at this present time.

Now Elisha, Elijah’s servant, who was watching after him, saw what Elijah had, and he wanted it. Just before Elijah was translated, Elisha followed him and wanted to go with him wherever he went. Elijah asked him, “What

do you want of the Lord? If you see me when I depart then you will have it, whatever you ask for.” Did Elisha ask for riches, for gold and silver? No! You know what he asked for? He said, “I like what Elijah has. He has something inside of him that is beautiful, that is valuable, and wonderful.” He said, “I want twice what he has, I want a double portion of what Elijah has.” Did he get it? He surely did! God gave him a double portion. You know, He wants to give that same thing to you, but you must desire it like Elisha did. We need to have a desire for it and seek after it. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33) We can have that something more if we seek for it, and ask for it.

Psalms 91 is one of the most valuable chapters in the Bible. It says,

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation. (Psalm 91:1-16)

Isn't that wonderful? He is going to give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways, just like He did for Elisha. Elisha had something more and God sent His angels to protect him. The Bible says that God sends His angels to encamp about those who fear Him. (Psalm 34:7) If you have that something more, you can be sure that God is watching out for you. You can be sure that you are the apple of His eye, and He is going to take care of you.

You can have something more today

We've seen a little bit of this manifold more that God wants us to have. Now the question is, Do you have that right now? Do you have what we have been looking at, what we have been reading about? The Bible says, “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” (Psalm 119:165) Was Stephen offended when men picked up stones to stone him? Was Elisha offended when the army came out to get him? They had something more, didn't they? They had that perfect peace, because they knew that God loved them. They knew that God was watching out for them and nothing offended them. That's what we can have today. But, how does it come, how do we get that great peace? Where does it come from? It comes from Christ alone. It is a fruit of Christ taking His abode, making His home, in our hearts.

Paul wrote, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22, 23) So, where do these things come from, where does this great peace come from? From the Spirit of God. Where does this joy come from, this love? It comes from the Spirit of God living in our hearts. When we have the Spirit of God living in us we have love, joy, peace, and all of these things. And if we have a little bit of these things then what is that evidence of? If we have a little peace, a little joy, then we have a little of God's Spirit, don't we? The more of God's Spirit we have the more of these things will naturally come, it cannot be avoided. The more of God's Spirit we have, and God gives His Spirit by portions doesn't He? Elisha got a double portion of what Elijah had. How much of a portion did Jesus get? The Bible says “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” (John 3:34) You know, that's what each one of us can have. The Bible says that Christ was filled with “all the fulness of the Godhead” (Colossians 2:9), and it also says that you and I can “be filled with all the fulness of God.” (Ephesians 3:19)

God is eager to give you His Spirit without measure. You can have it if you ask for it. Jesus said, “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:11-13) Won't you ask Him just now? He is longing for you to come to Him. You will never regret it if you do. You will have more than you ever thought possible. ✍

Fundamental Principles of Health

by Curtis Kline

Trust in Divine Power

Hello again dear friends. This month I'm excited that we get to talk about the most important law of the eight laws of health: trusting in God. Considering we live in a fallen and polluted world, even when we do the best we can, it is still only the power of God that can keep us healthy. Trusting in God fortifies the mind and assists the body in keeping all the proper hormones and electrical currents running through the system. When we trust in the Lord it is an acknowledgment on our part that we are not trusting in our own works or ourselves. Although our works are important, God wants his children to understand that it is only His mighty hand that can keep us from evil and sickness in the world.

The world has been marred by sin, yet when we look at nature and have our understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit we can comprehend something of God's loving character. Look at fruit for example; every time you cut open a watermelon and see all those seeds, this should speak to your heart concerning our heavenly Father's desire to give us good things. Every beautiful flower, every blade of grass, and every bird that warbles through the sky and sings his beautiful song is a testimony of a God of love. Most importantly, we can see God's loving, giving nature in the gift of all gifts, His Son Jesus Christ. For our Heavenly Father to allow His Son to be torn from His bosom to come to a world filled with sin and suffering should leave a vivid impression on our minds. For Him to allow His only begotten Son to die a cruel and miserable death, separated from his loving Father, all so that we might regain a right to the tree of life is beyond comprehension. Dear friends, let us not, for a moment, trifle with such a gift. What more could He have done to save us? Let us, at once, come into a saving relationship with

our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. As stated by the prophet Jeremiah, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23) In closing, let's truly learn what it means to trust God and stop trusting ourselves. This will bring the rest spoken of in Hebrews Chapters 3 and 4 that many of us have not yet experienced. True health is a result of "Trusting in God."

(The above article was provided by Curtis Kline, Director of Bible Health Solutions. For more in-depth information he can be contacted at (814) 676-3141 or curkli@yahoo.com. While we believe the principles in this article can be helpful, we are not responsible for any negative effects resulting from the use of remedies or recommendations herein. Use them at your own risk. *Editor*)

Upcoming Meetings in Your Area

Here is the currently-planned 2006 itinerary for Lynnford Beachy:

Oct. 6, 7 . . . Dunlap, Tennessee, contact John Felts, 423-238-4779.

Oct. 14 . . . Stonefort, Illinois, contact Merrit Mills, 618-988-8860.

Oct. 16 . . . Cedar Hill, Missouri, contact Virgil Tow, 636-285-0606.

Oct. 20, 21 . Kansas City, Kansas, contact Tim and Alicia Kritzell, 419-217-2994.

Oct. 27, 28 . Mountain View, Arkansas, contact John Mark Brown, 501-681-8370.

Oct. 31 . . . Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, contact John Smith, 405-691-5771.

Nov. 3, 4 . . . Crawford, Colorado, contact Chuck Clifford, 970-921-5519.

Nov. 10, 11 . Moab, Utah, contact Doug Carroll, 435-259-6380.

Nov. 17, 18 . Lookout, California, contact David Sims, 530-294-1115.

Nov. 24, 25 . Grass Valley, California, contact Emil Maghiar, 530-268-2661.

Dec. 7-10. . . Southern California Camp Meeting, contact Don and Dee Hager, 951-677-0726 or Steve McClaren 513-288-8746.

Dec. 15, 16 . Yuma, Arizona, contact John Brown, 501-766-2386.

Dec. 22, 23 . Yuma, Arizona, contact John Brown, 501-766-2386.

Dec. 29, 30 . Tucson, Arizona, contact Lynnford Beachy, 304-633-5411.

Feb. 28-Mar. 4 Florida Camp Meet-ing near Orlando, contact Jim or Jerri Raymond, 407-291-9565.

Between these meetings we will be available to visit people in their homes and to have additional meetings. Check upcoming issues of *Present Truth* (available on our website) to keep informed about these meetings and others in your area. Please contact us (see contact info on page 12) if you would like to host meetings in your area.

The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection

by Alonzo T. Jones

(Part 7)

(We are continuing a series of studies on God's plan of salvation as revealed in the sanctuary. We pray they will be a blessing to you. *Editor*)

Chapter 11—"That I May Dwell Among Them"

When the Lord gave to Israel the original directions for the making of the sanctuary, that was to be a figure for the time then present, he said, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8)

That He might "dwell among them" was the object of the sanctuary. This purpose of the sanctuary is more fully stated in the following: "And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle [margin, "Israel"] shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God." (Exodus 29:43-46; also Leviticus 26:11-12)

This purpose was not that He should dwell among them simply and only by the tabernacle's being set up in the midst of the camp of Israel. This is the great mistake that Israel made in the use of the tabernacle and so almost wholly lost the true purpose of the sanctuary. When the tabernacle was made and was set up in the midst of the camp of Israel, many of the children of Israel supposed that that was enough; they supposed that to be the way in which God would dwell in the midst of them.

It is true that by the Shekinah, God did dwell in the sanctuary. But even the sanctuary with its splendid furniture, standing in the midst of the camp—this was not all of the sanctuary. In addition to the splendid building and its furniture, there were the sacrifices and offerings of the people and the sacrifices and offerings on behalf of the people. There were the priests in their continual services and there was the high priest in his holy ministry. Without these the sanctuary was for Israel practically an empty thing, even though the Lord did dwell in it.

And what was the meaning and purpose of these things? Let us see: When any of the children of Israel had "done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done," and so was "guilty," then "of his own voluntary will" he brought to the door of the tabernacle his sacrificial lamb. Before the lamb was offered in sacrifice the individual who had

brought it laid his hands upon its head and confessed his sins and it was "accepted for him to make atonement for him." Then he who had brought the lamb and confessed his sins slew it. Its blood was caught in a basin. Some of the blood was sprinkled round about upon the altar of burnt offering, which was at the door of the tabernacle; some of it was put "upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation;" some of it was sprinkled "seven times before the Lord before the veil of the sanctuary;" and all the rest of it was poured out "at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." The lamb itself was burnt upon the altar of burnt offering. And of all this service, it is written in conclusion: "and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him." The service was similar in case of the sin and confession of the whole congregation. Also there was a similar service, a continual service morning and evening, in behalf of the whole congregation. But whether the services were individual or general, the conclusion of it was always declared to be "The priest shall make an atonement for him [or them], and it shall be forgiven him." (See Leviticus chapters 1 to 5.)

The course of service of the sanctuary was completed annually. And the day of the completion of the service, the tenth day of the seventh month, was especially "the day of atonement" or the cleansing of the sanctuary. On that day service was concluded in the Most Holy Place. That day was the "once every year" when "the High Priest alone" went into the "Holiest of all" or Most Holy Place. And of the high priest and his service that day it is written, "He shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation." (Leviticus 16:2-34; Hebrews 9:2-8)

Thus the services of the sanctuary, in the offering of the sacrifices and the ministering of the priests, and of the high priests alone, was for the making of atonement and for the forgiveness and sending away of the sins of the people. Because of the sin and guilt, because of their having "done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done," atonement must be made and forgiveness obtained. Atonement is literally at-one-ment. The sin and the guilt had separated them from God. By these services they were made at-one with God. Forgive is literally give-for. To forgive sin is to give for sin. Forgiveness of sin comes

alone from God. What does God give, what has He given, for sin? He gave Christ, and Christ “gave himself for our sins.” (Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:12-16; Romans 5:8-11)

Therefore when an individual or the whole congregation of Israel had sinned and desired forgiveness the whole problem and plan of forgiveness, of atonement, of salvation, was worked out before their faces. The sacrifice which was brought was in faith of the sacrifice which God had already made in giving His Son for sin. In this faith sinners were accepted of God, and Christ was received of them for their sin. Thus they were made at one with God, and thus God would dwell in the midst of them; that is, He would dwell in each heart and abide in each life to make that heart and life “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” And the placing of the tabernacle in the midst of the camp of Israel was an illustration, an object lesson and suggestion, of the truth that He would dwell in the midst of each individual. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

Some of that nation in every age saw in the sanctuary this great saving truth. But as a body in all ages Israel missed this thought, and stopping only with the thought of His dwelling in the tabernacle in the midst of the camp, they came short of having His own personal presence dwelling in their individual lives. Accordingly their worship became only outward and formal, rather than inward and spiritual. Therefore, their own lives continued unreformed and unholy, and so those who came out of Egypt missed the great thing which God had for them and “fell in the wilderness.” (Hebrews 3:17-19)

The same mistake was made by the people after they had passed into the land of Canaan. They put their dependence on the Lord only as He dwelt in the tabernacle and would not allow that the tabernacle and its ministry should be the means of His dwelling in themselves through faith. Consequently their lives only increased in wickedness. Therefore God allowed the tabernacle to be destroyed and the ark of God to be taken captive by the heathen (Jeremiah 7:12; 1 Samuel 4:10-22) in order that the people might learn to see and find and worship God individually and so find Him to dwell with them individually.

After the absence of the tabernacle and its service from among Israel for about a hundred years, it was restored by David and was merged in the grand temple that was built by Solomon. But again its true purpose was gradually lost sight of. Formalism with its attending wickedness more and more increased until in Israel the Lord was compelled to cry out: “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs;

for I will not hear the melody of thy vials. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.” (Amos 5:21-24)

Also in Judah, by Isaiah, He was compelled to make a like plea: “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can not away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 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 1:10-18)

Yet His pleas were not regarded. Israel was therefore carried captive and her land was left desolate because of their wickedness; and the like fate hung over Judah. And still this danger to Judah was from the same great cause that the Lord had been striving always to teach the nation and which they had not yet learned: the holding of the temple and God’s presence in that temple as the great end, instead of holding that as only the means to the true end which was that by means of the temple and its ministry in accomplishing forgiveness and atonement, He who dwelt in the temple would dwell in themselves. And so again the Lord pleaded with His people by Jeremiah that He might save them from this mistake and have them see and receive the great truth of the real meaning and purpose of the temple and its service.

Thus He said: “Behold, ye trust in lying words, that can not profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.

“But go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for

the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee.... Oh that My head were waters, and Mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of My people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave My people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not Me.” (Jeremiah 7:8-16; 9:1, 3)

What were specifically the “lying words” in which these people trusted? Here they are: “Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these.” (Jeremiah 7:4) Thus it is made perfectly plain that the people though going through the forms of worship and of the temple service, went through all this merely as forms, missing entirely the purpose of the temple and its services, which was solely that God might reform and make holy the lives of the people by His dwelling in them individually. And missing all this, the wickedness of their own hearts only more and more made itself manifest. For this reason all their sacrifices, worship, and prayers, were only mockery and noise, so long as their hearts and lives were unreformed and unholy.

Therefore the word “came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever.” (Jeremiah 7:1-7)

Instead of allowing God’s great purpose of the temple and its services to be met in themselves, the people utterly perverted that purpose. Instead of allowing the temple and its services which God in His mercy had planted among them, to teach them how that He in truth would dwell among them by dwelling in their hearts and making holy their lives, they excluded all this true purpose of the temple and its services and perverted it all to the utterly false purpose of sanctioning grossest wickedness and cloaking deepest, darkest unholiness.

For such a system there was no remedy but destruction. Accordingly the city was besieged and captured by the heathen. The temple, their “holy and beautiful house” was destroyed. And with the city and the temple a heap of burnt and blackened ruins, the people were carried captive to Babylon, where in their sorrow and the deep sense of their great loss they sought and found and worshiped the Lord in a way that so reformed their lives that if they had done it when the temple stood, it would have stood forever. (Psalm 137:1-6)

God brought them back from Babylon a humbled and reformed people. His holy temple was rebuilt and its services were restored. The people again dwelt in their city and their land. But apostasy again ensued. The same course was again repeated until, when Jesus, the great center of the temple and its services came to His own, the same old condition of things again prevailed. (Matthew 21:12, 13; 23:13-32) In their hearts they could persecute and pursue Him to the death and yet outwardly be so holy that they could not cross the threshold of Pilate’s judgment hall “lest they should be defiled”! (John 18:28)

And the Lord’s appeal to the people was still the same as of old—that they should find in their own personal lives the meaning of the temple and its services and so be saved from the fate which had overtaken their nation through all its history, because of this same great mistake which they were repeating. Accordingly, one day in the temple Jesus said to the multitude there present, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body.” (John 2:19-21) When Jesus in the temple spoke thus to that people, referring to “the temple of His body” he was still endeavoring, as through all their history, to get them to perceive that the great purpose of the temple and its services always was that by means of the ministry and service there conducted, God would dwell and walk in themselves as He dwelt in the temple, making holy His dwelling-place in themselves, as His dwelling in the temple made that place holy so that their bodies should be truly temples of the living God, because

of God's dwelling in them and walking in them. (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Leviticus 26:11, 12; 2 Samuel 7:6, 7)

And still they would not see this truth. They would not be reformed. They would not have the purpose of the sanctuary met in themselves, that God should dwell in them. They rejected Him who came personally to show to them this true purpose and the true Way. Therefore again there was no remedy but destruction. Again their city was taken by the heathen. Again the temple, their "holy and beautiful house," was burned with fire. Again they were taken captive and were forever scattered, to be only "wanderers among the nations." (Hosea 9:17)

Again let it be emphasized that the earthly sanctuary, the earthly temple, with its ministry and services, was as such only a figure of the true, which with its ministry and services was then in heaven. When the thought of the sanctuary was first presented to Moses for Israel it was stated by the Lord to him, "See... that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." (Hebrews 8:5; Exodus 25:40; 25:30; 27:8) The sanctuary on the earth was therefore a figure of the true, in the sense of its being a pattern of the true. The ministry and services in the earthly were "figures of the true" in the sense of being "the patterns" of the true—"the patterns of things in the heavens." (Hebrews 9:23, 24)

The true sanctuary of which this was a figure, the original of which this was a pattern, was then in existence. But in the darkness and confusion of Egypt, Israel had lost the true idea of this, as they had also of many other things which were plain to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; and by this object-lesson God would give to them the knowledge of the true. It was therefore not a figure in the sense of being a type of something to come that did not yet exist, but a figure in the sense of being an object-lesson and visible representation of that which then existed but was invisible, to train them up to such an experience in faith and true spirituality that they should see the invisible.

And by all this God was revealing to them and to all people forever that it is by the priesthood, ministry, and service of Christ in the true sanctuary or temple which is in heaven, that He dwells amongst men. He was revealing that in this faith of Jesus, forgiveness of sins and atonement is ministered to men so that God dwells in them and walks in them, He being their God and they His people, and thus they be separated from all the people that are upon the face of the earth—separated unto God as His own true sons and daughters to be built up unto perfection in the knowledge of God. (Exodus 33:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1)

(To be continued)

(This article was taken from pages 62-75 of the book, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, by Alonzo T. Jones. Some editing has been done for this publication. Editor)

Be a Berean

by Greg Forde

There is a woeful lack of critical thinking in the world in general and the nation and church in particular. Notice that I didn't say there was lack of knowledge. As we all know, we live in an age where there is an abundance of information wherever you turn. You don't even have to turn around, just turn on your computer. If you don't have a college education or even a library card, all you need is the Internet. So then, what do we do with the information that we have? Notice that the word critical in the first sentence of this article is closely associated with the word critique. To critique something means to compare it to an established pattern. That pattern can be about conduct, shape or size. What is our pattern as believers?

The apostle Paul was blessed with deep and penetrating insights into the things of God. He was renowned throughout the region as a great writer and communicator of the gospel of Christ. The Bible also speaks of the Bereans. These Bereans, however, were a group of believers who did not even accept what Paul said just because it was Paul who said it. They examined what he

asserted by comparing it to Scripture. They said, in essence, "that was great Paul, thanks for coming, but we need to double-check this." How did Paul respond to this? He called them *noble*! (Acts 17:11) He also emphasized the point further when he said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) This is a lesson that is lost to many of us.


Too many Christians have a propensity to look down their noses at individuals in other denominations as "my bishop says," "my pastor says," "my reverend says," or even "my priest says," types of people. Unfortunately, many of us are quickly acquiring the same type of mentality. More and more of us are hiding behind the words of our ministers to mask our own lack of understanding. We feel and believe that because we have "the truth" we can safely 'cruise' as individuals. We accept, uncritically, whatever comes from the pulpit, the quarterly, and the top leaders. Truth, however, does not originate in any of these places. These three examples should be conduits of the truth but not the source of it. God says, "my doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." (Deuteronomy 32:2) This is *the* standard for truth and doctrine. What God says is truth. "Thy word is truth." (John 17:17) Too often, we are mentally and spiritually

lazy and we fall into a snare. Christ warned, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matthew 15:14) Critical thinking needs to be employed when it comes to weighing what God's word says to each of us. No one renders a verdict in a court of law without being privy to the evidence. That is the responsibility of being a juror. And no one sits on a jury and then allows someone outside of the jury to form the verdict. We are to be a jury of one where our spiritual understanding is concerned.

God will not ask any of us in the day of judgment if we believed what our pastors, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts believed. He will ask us how we weighed the truth that was available to us. If someone were to ask you what you wanted to eat at a restaurant, would you leave that decision in the hands of another? Is your salvation less important than satisfying your appetite?

So, in a nutshell, what do I hope to leave with you after reading this article? Learn to make your decisions based

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on the weight of evidence, and what you understand for yourself. Learn to be honest about what information and evidence you really have a grasp of before you make any decision. This is not a license to sin. An uninformed choice is as bad as letting someone else decide for you. Go to God, get informed, pray earnestly, and then make an honest decision from your heart and mind. This is a principle that needs to permeate our lives in politics, in dress, in diet, in behavior, and most importantly, in matters of the spirit and the conscience. **Be a Berean!** May God bless you. 

(Brother Greg Ford writes from his home in Atlanta, Georgia. If you would like to contact him, please send your correspondence to us, and we will see that he receives it. *Editor*)

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