

Life in the Son

A Journal of Grace and the In-Christ Message



Life in the Son

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EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING PAUL TO FOLLOW CHRIST

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1, in very plain speech, to follow him as he follows Christ. These words are a stumbling block to many believers who have long been taught to follow no man, and do just as Jesus of Nazareth said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men (Matt. 4:19).

It would be necessary, however, to see the difference between these two statements. First, there is the time element. When Jesus told His disciples to follow Him, Jesus was in the process of bringing about the kingdom of heaven on Earth (Matt. 3:2). This was a kingdom that had been promised to Israel long before. It was to be an earthly kingdom, and Israel would be God's people to oversee the new kingdom. It would be a kingdom that would operate under the Law of Moses based upon God's program laid out in the Old Testament.

Second, it would be an earthly kingdom for an earthly people. Israel was a nation, chosen by God, especially to be His earthly

representatives. It is important to see that they were chosen, not birthed by God.

Third, the kingdom was given a gospel not only based on Moses' Law but also teaching men to do, within themselves, what was right in God's sight. Thus, when Jesus told His followers to follow Him, He was leading them into a way of life that fit Earth-bound people and fit God's plan for Israel.

The death of Christ on the cross changed the process for God's earthly people. No longer was "heaven on earth" in view, but God initiated a new program where believers would be invited directly to the Father's house. This was a radical change in God's plan. This change was not an "off the cuff," last minute change. It had been in God's mind even before He created the Earth (Eph. 1:4).

In choosing Israel to be His people on Earth, His desire was that they could be given a new heart and be what He wanted them to be. Jesus of Nazareth carried this program out

perfectly, but Israel failed to obey; and, finally, God had to stop dealing with Israel and send the gospel to a new group of people, the Gentiles (Acts 28:28).

But with this new group of people there would have to be a new program. The same gospel, based on Moses' Law, would do no different for the Gentiles than it did for Israel. With this new program a new gospel would be given. The Cross of Christ would be the cornerstone of the new gospel. His death would be the salvation of Israel, if they accepted Him as their Savior. But sadly, many did not accept Christ as their new leader because they could not imagine their leader dying on a cross.

But there were two important things making up the new gospel. The Cross would not only be Christ taking away the sins of the sinner, but it would also mean the end of the "old man" life (Rom. 6:6). This meant this new group of people, going to the Father's house, would be perfectly cleansed of their sinful ways and receive a

THE MOST PREVALENT GOSPEL PREACHED TODAY IS STILL BASED ON MOSES' LAW; THE MESSAGE OF THE GRACE OF GOD, IN ITS PURITY, IS NOT PREACHED AND IS NOT RECEIVED BY MOST BELIEVERS.

new life. Christ would be birthed in them. To get this new life, however, they would have to be re-birthed, born again.

This was such a radical change in God's plan, and the new gospel necessary to explain it all must be given to someone who would be able to communicate it properly to the people. God found the man for the task in the Apostle Paul. On many different occasions, Jesus revealed to him truths that would constitute the new gospel, which would be called the "gospel of grace." The revelations Christ gave to Paul were right from the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). This was the final gospel in God's plan and was the only gospel Jesus ever gave devoid of the rudiments of Moses' Law.

This gospel of grace would be based on Ephesians 1:4 and 1 Peter 1:19-20. These are the only two events based on God's eternal plan, and both of them are planned before the Earth was created. It simply means all humans are chosen to be in Christ, re-birthed, the moment they accept Christ as their Savior.

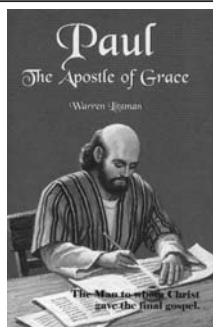
All this can happen to any individual because of what Jesus did at the Cross, but the idea of being placed in Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) was so radical to the Old Testament believers that most of them rejected the truth. This continues to this day. The most prevalent gospel preached today is still based on Moses' Law; the message of the grace of God, in its purity, is not preached and is not received by most believers. The gospel most generally preached is a commingled gospel made up by mixing a little law with a little grace. Many call it "lordship salvation," but it is still a gospel not for believers since the Cross.

This makes the need to understand following Paul as he follows Christ, an imperative for God's people today who are chosen to be in Christ. Actually, this is not something left to theologians to decide. The work was finished at the Cross; salvation was completed. Every sinner saved today is automatically placed in Christ. This means Christ is their only life to God (Gal. 2:20). To be born again is not an option. The only salvation there is today is one where Christ is the life of

the believer. These are the people the Father will have in His house. They all will be birthed by him. This wonderful salvation includes Israel. It is a "whosoever believeth" gospel.

Who knows all about this gospel? Paul, God's chosen vessel to deliver it. No wonder we are told to follow Paul as he follows Christ. Israel followed Moses under God's plan for that dispensation; today we follow Paul as He follows Christ. Ironically, following Paul or doing things like Paul did them is mentioned eight times, in different ways, in Paul's epistles, yet religion still doesn't get it. Religion continues to deny believers their place in Christ.

How simple it would be to read what Paul has to say about the new life in Christ. However, if believers really want to know the truth, Paul's epistles are able to lead them into the plan of God for their lives. Time is short for believers to find out who they are in Christ. Being in Christ is strictly for the earthly journey, and the coming of the Lord and the Rapture are growing nearer every day. How sad it would be not to know who we are in Christ when He appears. †



Paul, The Apostle of Grace

By Warren Litzman

Discover who this man was and why God chose him to deliver the final gospel, the gospel of grace, to the world.

Order on page 32 or online at www.christ-life.org.

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

By Ty Robinson

“Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:25–26).

In Acts 11:23, we find Barnabas arriving for the first time in Antioch, Syria, which is the focus of this study. There are two Antioch’s mentioned in Scripture. Antioch in Pisidia is seen in Acts 13 and 14. When Paul wrote to Timothy of the *“persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch,”* he was referring to Antioch in Pisidia (2 Tim. 3:11).

Barnabas, being a prominent associate of the kingdom apostles and a man well traveled and well respected in Jerusalem, was sent as sort of an ambassador from the assembly at Jerusalem to the assembly at Antioch.

“Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted

them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. Barnabas, led of the Holy Ghost, went to Tarsus to seek out Saul, the future Apostle Paul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.”

Antioch, Syria was, at the time of which we read, the third largest city of the Roman Empire, with a population of around 500,000. It was a link between the trade routes of the Mediterranean, and the overland routes that led east into China. It was a melting pot of different cultures, as are most large cities. Antioch had everything that Roman wealth, Greek culture and Oriental luxury could produce. The citizens there were unique in that they were given the privilege to worship in their own way without fear of repercussion or persecution from the Roman Empire. No doubt this is why so many formerly persecuted Jews of Jerusalem ended up here, and why Christianity proliferated. The church at Antioch became an important and

prominent center of Christian activity. It was from Antioch that Paul was sent on his three missionary journeys, and obviously those of the church there financed these journeys. Furthermore, the man called by Luke, *“most excellent Theophilus,”* was, according to tradition, a prominent man in the church there. Thus, we should see and appreciate the importance of the church where they were first called Christians. This church was the center of Apostle Paul’s activity. In the text verses, we learn that Barnabas and Paul assembled themselves with the church at Antioch for a whole year, and taught much people. Paul and Barnabas were teachers there, along with others (Acts 13:1).

Antioch became the real Christian home and the base of Paul’s operation. As a teacher in this assembly, what would he teach? Paul’s gospel, of course. This is where Barnabas also had the privilege to learn Paul’s gospel first hand! We also learn that

“IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMP; FOR THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, AND THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED” (1 COR. 15:52).

Antioch was the first place where Paul’s gospel was gladly received. Keep in mind that Paul could teach and preach in Hebrew, his native tongue, and in Greek, the language of Tarsus where he grew up, and in Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. No wonder then that we read in Acts 11:26, the fact that Barnabas, and especially Paul, “*taught much people.*” This was one of the few places Paul ever visited where he was allowed to stay very long. The saints in Antioch gladly received him and allowed him to stay as long as he could. After teaching there for a whole year, Barnabas and Paul were sent on a journey to Jerusalem, after which they returned to Antioch where they again taught and ministered for another prolonged period of time. (See Acts 12:25; 13:1–4.) After this, Barnabas and Paul were sent on a missionary trip by the saints at Antioch and by the Holy Ghost. Another two years passed before Barnabas and Saul returned again.

“And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long

time with the disciples” (Acts 14:26–28).

In Acts 15, we find that Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem from Antioch to once and for all resolve the question of whether it was necessary to keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. Paul never taught this, of course, nor did the apostles or elders in Jerusalem. “*False brethren*” had come into the church and were teaching that it was necessary to be circumcised for complete salvation. After this great conference where this issue was resolved, Paul and Barnabas returned again to the church at Antioch, where they continued to teach the Word. Eventually, Paul and Barnabas parted ways over the matter of John Mark, and Paul went on two more missionary journeys, sent by these same Christians at Antioch. Thus, we see that the assembly at Antioch embraced the teaching of Paul, and he spent more time there than any other city, including Ephesus. It seems that the saints of Antioch were like the Berean saints (Acts 17:11) who treasured the Scriptures and searched them daily. They all received Paul’s message with readiness of mind. Can’t we see now that those precious saints of Antioch, whom we know little about, were like-minded with the Apostle Paul as we are, and were also running the race to win Christ? No doubt, many of them will be a part

of the Bride of Christ. A last thought concerning Antioch: the name means “driven against,” which by itself may not seem to make much sense. There is another interpretation of *Antioch*, which is “speedy as a chariot.” Putting these two meanings together, we get the picture of a chariot being driven faster than any mode of transportation of that day. Elisha witnessed the fastest transportation that anyone has ever experienced:

“And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more; and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces” (2 Kings 2:11–12).

This is the time of Elijah’s translation. The “speedily driven chariot” is a symbol of translation. Paul taught of another soon-coming translation, and the rapid speed of this translation is expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:52:

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

(CONTINUED ON P. 28)

THE HOTEL OF RELIGION

By Cliff Gardner

Christianity, as a religion, is like a large hotel complex, such as the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. The hotel has many floors, passageways, staircases and mezzanine levels. There are numerous banquet rooms and conference rooms. Each wing of the hotel has a name, as do all of the rooms.

Religious Christianity is bound by walls that keep the true light—Christ—from shining in. The light inside is artificial, provided by denominations, sects and manmade doctrine. The divisions are easily maintained because the walls are opaque and sound proof so that each group inside the hotel thinks they are the only “true” residents who are worthy to be there.

Now and again, a resident from one banquet room will get disgruntled and end up in another room. Most groups are quite gracious, although sometimes skeptical, about welcoming displaced souls from other rooms. Generally, they are welcomed to help build up

the numbers that are feeding on that particular room’s menu. Some residents are so content with the diet they have been served for so long that they never contemplate that there is food somewhere else or a new menu to choose from. Of those who do venture outside of their group, very few come to realize that the light inside of the religious hotel is all artificial. Once in a great while a resident of the hotel gets a glimpse of the real light that is shining outside of the hotel walls. If they try to explain what they have seen, they find that the only light other residents want to hear about is the artificial light inside the hotel to which they are accustomed.

Some groups in the hotel meet in rooms that are on higher levels. A few of these rooms have translucent skylights that mingle the artificial light with the real light, but the true light is diluted with the hotel’s artificial light. These groups ordinarily feel that they have a much better quality of light; and, on the one hand, think they have attained to some

higher level of worship or practice—perhaps more freedom from the general laws that govern the hotel’s lower levels. On the other hand, many residents at this level mount up campaigns to enlighten the residents at the lower levels through seminars that offer newer and better information as to how the hotel should be run. With the light from above—although diffused and mixed—they feel compunction and compassion toward those residents who have such poor light and are many floors below them.

Most residents of this hotel spend their lifetime there, as did generations before them. Some residents’ families have changed rooms several times to find a new menu, but very few leave the hotel complex entirely. Leaving the hotel is seen to be very dangerous with no protection from the evils that might overtake one who has ventured out. The majority of those who do leave do so because two groups (with dissimilar

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NOT KNOWING

By Dexter Byrd

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

(Rom. 2:4).

Paul has written this verse in a very fitting place. Romans 2 is centered on humanity in its natural state trying to reach God through a dead mind. This is a mind that is hard and set in its ways. It refuses to be rooted from its religious boundary and confinement. It is a mind that judges according to law and not the Christ-life. It is a mind of both Jew and Gentile that has never entered into the stage of being renewed.

I had a sad occasion today of having to visit a long time friend who will shortly leave this world because cancer has taken over his body. Unless God intervenes with a miracle, the doctors have given up hope. This friend and I once shared the pleasures of this world together, drinking and doing whatever. I had visited him once before about a year ago and

talked to him about his soul and God. He assured me that he was ready at that time. I have no reason to not believe him.

I am constantly reminded of what Warren calls the “Big bucket of grace.” I am sure we know very little about God’s grace and mercy. This was the best comment that I have ever heard concerning grace. He didn’t go into detail about what was in the bucket, and it really don’t matter because what is in the bucket is inexhaustible. All that matters is that there is more in the bucket than we will ever use up. Ephesians 2:7 states this truth. In the ages to come, our Father will shine forth the riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through (in) Christ. Throughout eternity there will never be an end of grace through the Son. But as I sat there and talked with my friend, I could see the fear of death in his eyes. He had withered up to almost skin and bones. Then the reality of this fear hit me. It was not the fear of death in him as much as

it was the fear of not knowing. Some of the things that he said to me allowed me to see that he really didn’t know for sure where he would spend eternity. He had spent sixty and more years in church, and he didn’t know.

As we left the hospital, I told my son-in-law that I would hate to lie in my death bed not knowing. This makes me appreciate the hurt and pain of every circumstance and situation that pushed me to knowing that I am in Christ and that He is my only life. I probably will fear death if it comes before our Father sends the Son after His body, but it won’t be the fear of not knowing the Father and what He has finished through His Son. This then is the message that we must give to a world that has been deceived by a gospel that brings forth condemnation and fear. It is Christ in us who is our only life, hope and glory.

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him” (Rom. 6:9). †

MANMADE DOCTRINE VERSUS PAUL'S REVELATION PART 1

By Warren Litzman

Someone is always asking me how I come to understand things concerning Paul's revelation of Christ. I have to tell you that Paul's revelation of Christ it is the key. It is not the key to being saved. The key to being saved is being born again. It is not the key to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Every believer receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.

The key to coming into the message of the Christ-life is the Holy Spirit revealing it. Sooner or later, powerful truths begin to open up to growing believers at some juncture of their individual walk with God, truths that they never knew before, truths that have to do with Christ living in humans, truths that open up a whole new world where another person lives in the believer and has been there since that believer was saved.

I can never forget Normal Grubb's illustration of when he was first struck by the in-Christ truth. It was during one of his early trials in Africa as

he was seeking and waiting before God to know Him. He was having difficulty in corresponding with the black people, and one day the Holy Spirit, to make a long story short, just spoke to him and said, Norman that is Jesus out there running around in black bodies. This was the beginning of revelation knowledge for him.

The revelation of Jesus Christ as the life of the believer comes to everybody differently. It cannot be pinned down to some experience you seek. It is a great experience when it first comes; you may have a feeling that is greater than any feeling or experience you have ever had. Or you may be like many people who, after a long period of time, look back and say, Yes, I can see now where it happened. I didn't know at the time just what was taking place, but now I see this unbelievable thing God has done in me.

Therefore, the real heart of God's message to

believers centers in Paul's revelation. Paul vividly speaks of it in Galatians 1:15 through 16.

My main purpose in dealing with the subject of Paul's revelation is to show the difference between manmade doctrine and the revelation of Jesus Christ as the life of the believer. When John Calvin and Jacobus Arminius received their understanding about doctrine; it came to them based on their searching and studying the Scriptures. They saw many different doctrines. What they didn't see was a person: Christ, upon whom all doctrine was based. All things, meaning all doctrine (1 Cor. 2:10), can only be revealed to us by the Spirit. There is no way, just by studying, that you can come to the knowledge



that there is another person, Christ, in you.

You may say, I believe there is another who lives in me because you said so and I also read it in the Bible. But that is not the same understanding as when the Spirit reveals it to you. Really knowing comes when the Holy Spirit has been able to reveal it. I have preached this truth for many years to many different people, often those on a college and seminary level. The end result is that not one of them came to hold this truth as a life-factor until the Holy Spirit revealed it to them. Sadly, a further fact is that most genuine believers can sit in a soul-winning church for fifty years and never come to a knowledge of Paul's revelation.

So, it is one thing for me to say it, and preach it from the Word; it is another thing for you to come to it on your own. I have always been very cautious in teaching people to come to something on their own. I would rather leave it to your own desire and hunger. Every day you just get before the Lord, with your Bible in hand, digging and digging to come to it. It will not be easy to receive Paul's revelation, seeing that most believers have sat listening for years without seeing it. The digging is not so much to find the truth as it is to get rid of the old erroneous beliefs.

This must not be done by self-effort, not by any pro-

gramming from man's doctrines. It would be better if it came to you in your own walk with the Lord; then it would be a part of your walk rather than a part of your effort. But above all things, you must search the Scriptures to see the Christ-life. There are two important places where the Scriptures use the word search that I lean heavy upon. Jesus said to the Jews in John 5:39, Ye search the Scriptures and do not have life. Yet, He went on to say, All those Scriptures testify of me. Here, we have the difference I want to point out. There is a simple difference between searching the Scriptures to understand doctrine and searching the Scriptures know Christ as the life of the believer.

Now, what would make that difference? At some place, some juncture in life, the believer must have a God-given instinct or desire to know Christ as his life. Throughout the ages, certain great men have said they didn't stop searching until they came to know God. The fact is we can't come to know God except by His Son, Jesus Christ. We must lean heavily on certain New Testament Scriptures where Jesus says, If you see the Father you see me and, if you see me you see the Father. It is Christ who has been given to us as Savior, and it is by seeing Him that we come to see God and His plan.

Also, we search the Scriptures to see whether

or not the things we are being taught are right, and that is where the second important Scripture, Acts 17:11, comes in. Paul says the believers at Berea were more diligent than those at Thessalonica because they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether or not the things that had been taught were of God.

Your searching can be based on these two similar ideas. Some people search the Scriptures to see whether or not everything I say is right. That is okay. I hope you do that, and I hope you never take anything I say without checking the Scriptures. When you find me wrong, tell me, because many people hear me, and I don't want to mislead anyone.

But when we search the Scriptures to find truth or to see error, we are still not getting life. Someone says to me, How can these fellows at the big seminaries be in the Bible all the time and not see Jesus as the life of the believer. I think I can explain it this way: they never search the Scriptures to see Christ who is appointed by the Father to finish and complete the life of the believer. They search Scriptures to find the alliances and the bringing together of all the things they believe.

But there is a great difference between searching the Scriptures to prove your doctrinal points and searching the Scriptures to see

(CONTINUED ON P. 23)

BUT THERE IS A GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES TO PROVE YOUR DOCTRINAL POINTS AND SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES TO SEE WHETHER JESUS IS THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

COMFORTER

By Frank Stigall

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he will not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (John 16:13).

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

In John chapters 14 through 17, Jesus is preparing His disciples for the time He will no longer be with them. He wants to explain to them what is about to happen and that He will not leave them comfortless. He speaks at length on how some things will work after He is gone. He especially wants them to understand the Holy Spirit, who has not yet been given, and spends a great deal of time explaining the Holy Spirit’s ministry to them.

Who is the Holy Spirit? There is no record of Him being born. Where did He come from? How did He get here? What is His purpose? Come to think of it, I don’t recall anyone in Scripture saying they had seen the Holy Spirit, except as a dove

that descended on Jesus. Somehow, I doubt that a dove is the legitimate image of the Holy Spirit, just a type.

Many pictures have been drawn of Jesus, even though they may not depict what He looked like. There are no pictures of the Holy Spirit. No one seems to have any idea what He looks like. Moreover, He does not have a name. He is simply called by what He is. However, the Holy Spirit has a definite ministry to the Church, which is an invisible ministry. He never came to replace Jesus as the predominant authority. He is only here to lift up Jesus and not to speak of Himself.

What is His ministry? He has come to do exactly what Jesus said: to give comfort. It is different from the person and ministry of Jesus who was to be seen. Jesus said, *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”* (John 14:9). The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, has a ministry of teaching and must be heard. Therefore, if we have heard what the Holy Spirit is saying, we have also heard what the Father is saying. The Holy Spirit only speaks of those things which He has seen and heard.

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his

Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10).

Where did the Holy Spirit come from? Like Jesus, He came from God, and out of God. He is separate from God, but He is also God, the Holy Spirit. The Father has not sent us a servant to just serve us, as some suppose. He has sent us a teacher, to teach us about the Christ who lives in us.

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

We have said this statement many times, but it needs to be repeated continually. The Holy Spirit is not your savior. He did not die for you, and He did not take your sins away. He is not birthed in you; Christ is. After salvation, Christ baptizes you in the Holy Spirit; it is His gift to you. The Holy Spirit is not your healer; Christ is. Christ is the only one who bore stripes for your healing. In religion, the emphasis has been put on

the Holy Spirit, pushing Christ to the background.

In John 15, Jesus is explaining some of the effects that spirit-birthing has on a child of God. He illustrates this with a story about a vine, a branch and the husbandman. This is a very interesting story and is very close to me. I have watched the fruit trees in my back yard as they go through their seasonal cycle. Of course, I play the caretaker. At the proper time in the fall of the year, I get out my pruning tools and start to work on the trees. I first remove all the suckers. They stand up four to six feet long, mostly at the top of the tree. They look good, but they will not bear fruit. Other limbs have grown too long and need to be shortened to preserve the over all shape and symmetry of the tree. This means that part of the tree must be sacrificed for its own good. When I am through, sometimes it looks like I have taken down half the tree. However, when spring comes, there is suddenly a host of lovely blossoms all over the tree. Now, there are several parts to a tree. There is a root system, a trunk and limbs. None of these bear the fruit but are most important and cannot be replaced. The fruit is on the small fragile branches. If some branches are allowed to grow and are not carefully pruned they can become a limb, which supports the branches but cannot bear fruit.

IF SOME BRANCHES ARE ALLOWED TO GROW AND ARE NOT CAREFULLY PRUNED THEY CAN BECOME A LIMB, WHICH SUPPORTS THE BRANCHES BUT CANNOT BEAR FRUIT.

In the story in John 15, Jesus is saying He is the vine and we are the little branches which bear the fruit. However, the branch depends completely on the vine for its fruit-bearing and strength to hold up the fruit. The Holy Spirit seems to be almost disconnected from all this, however, he is intimately involved in all that Christ does. He can be thought of as a silent partner. He does not draw attention to himself, yet, He is performing a greatly needed job. The job for the Holy Spirit in a believer's life can be likened to the job that the bees do—pollinating the blooms from which the fruit comes. Each blossom is tenderly wooed by the Spirit. Some blossoms are pollinated by the blowing wind. However, this is accidental pollination. This is built into the system by the Father. It is like Christians who often receive from the Holy Spirit without knowing it. It is the mercy of the Father. However, a good crop takes the bees to assure good pollination, and the crop becomes larger than it would have been otherwise.

Law is the big factor in religion that hinders grace, the polarization process. Also, not knowing who you are in Christ is even a greater hindrance. A believer who has fallen from grace has left the blessings of grace and returned to some aspect of the law or legalism. The Holy Spirit has been reject-

ed in one's spiritual life as a continuing teacher, comforter or "pollinator." I cannot imagine life as a Christian without grace, however, I am inclined to believe many do live without pure grace because most preachers today commingle law and grace, which, in the end, produces a manmade poison.

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Paul says after you heard the Word of Truth and became born again, then you were sealed with the Holy Spirit. It is like receiving a wedding ring. It is a sign that you belong to Christ, the Lord. This is another use of the Holy Spirit revealed only in the epistles.

As indicated in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is like a dove that is easily driven away. The Holy Spirit can also be grieved or distressed.

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). †

GLEANINGS FROM HEBREWS

PART 1

By Don Byrd

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” (Hebr. 1:1–5).

This is how the book of Hebrews begins. There are several things that need to be noted in the first four verses. The first thing to note is how God dealt with mankind in what the writer calls “time past,” which is a

very significant phrase. It states that God did many wonderful things for Israel and those whom He chose in time past. The phrase at “sundry times and in divers manners” means God interacted with mankind at many different times and in many different ways. This is what I call *time past methods*, meaning that it is no longer a valid method but belongs to time past. This statement is made to let the reader know that it is no longer necessary for God to interact with mankind using these methods.

At this point it is necessary to understand what is happening pertaining to God and His eternal purpose. God is ready to reveal Himself as Father, therefore, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. The only way to reveal Himself as Father was to show the world that He has a Son. However, the world rejected, crucified, and killed His Son. This simply means that the world rejected His Fatherhood!

“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill

him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18).

The religious world could not accept our Father’s Son while He was in this world. In essence, this means Jesus Christ, our Lord, was rejected, crucified and died. Simultaneously, the world rejected the Fatherhood of God when this happened to His Son.

The first verse of Hebrews says God did many miraculous things for those He interacted with at many different times. Those with whom God dealt never knew what method God was going to use. They never knew what to expect from God in time past! Time past included everyone from Abel to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, except Jesus of Nazareth. Such notable ones as Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Moses, Ruth, David, Esther, Solomon, and so on, are included in the phrase time past. I based that on verse 2. It is obvious that God is

leaving the methods of time past and introducing a totally new method whereby He will interact with mankind. *"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."* This means God no longer used the methods of time past when it came time to reveal Himself as Father; He went from methods of various times past to the single method of interacting with mankind. The only method He uses in His capacity as Father is that of verse 2: *"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"* (Hebr. 1:2). The previous methods of time past never brought the stability that the single method of verse 2 brings to those with whom God deals in His capacity as Father.

In time past, people never knew how God was going to deal with them. In these last days, you can bet your bottom dollar that God is going to deal with mankind using only one method: His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord! From uncertainty to total stability is what is being stated in verses 1 and 2.

Hebrews 1 very plainly states that God is leaving the methods of time past and is ready to reveal Himself as Father. In essence, this means that the dispensation of grace became a reality on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

Although the dispensation of grace started on the Day of Pentecost, absolutely no one knew it until it was revealed to the Apostle

Paul! The dispensation of grace was first given to Paul. *"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward"* (Eph. 3:2). Many believers were born again on the Day of Pentecost, but not a single one of them knew that our Father's Son had been birthed in them. After the Day of Pentecost, God could deal with His own offspring on the basis of His Father-nature because believers were now His bona fide sons. He could not do this with mankind until the Day of Pentecost. This brings us to the last line of Hebrews 1:5, *"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."* Grace is the only realm in which God will ever deal with mankind on the premises of being Father to them. Grace is the only realm in which a single method is used by God to deal with mankind! This one method is what I call the *"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son"* method. This should bring total stability, peace, joy and rejoicing to the believer who understands this.

Why did God deal with mankind as He did in time past? God has a Father-nature, and those with whom He dealt in time past had a sin-nature. God could not deal with them on the basis of His Father nature but had to deal with them on the basis of their sin-nature. There was no such thing as Christ living in the believ-

er prior to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, except with Jesus of Nazareth. Prior to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, only Jesus could call God *Father* on the basis of the birthing. As great as the characters of Hebrews 11 were, not a single one of them knew God was a Father! Not a single born-again believer is included in the list of the notable characters of Hebrews 11.

I suppose Abraham is my favorite Old Testament character. I recall the days of my youth when I used to pray: "God, make me like Abraham." Of course, this was many years prior to being introduced to the Christ-life message. I knew absolutely nothing about *"Christ in you"* until 1966. Now when I think about Abraham, I think, *If Abraham could see who lives in me, he would say, 'God, make me like Don because he has Christ in him!'* The stage was set. God was ready to reveal Himself as Father, so He sent His Son into the world, and His Son and His Fatherhood were totally rejected. The characters of time past never knew how God was going to deal with them, but in the last days, the Hebrews epistle very plainly states that God only uses a single method in the realm of grace, and that one method is *"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son,"* given to believers by Christ Jesus, our Lord. †

AFTER THE DAY OF PENTECOST, GOD COULD DEAL WITH HIS OWN OFFSPRING ON THE BASIS OF HIS FATHER-NATURE BECAUSE BELIEVERS WERE NOW HIS BONA FIDE SONS.

MODERN PRISON EPISTLE

Dear Mr. Litzman and Mrs. Litzman,

I am so glad to receive your letters and thanks so much for the reading materials. They are truly a blessing to my spirit, and that's where I try to stay. That's where we will have eternal life spiritually, and I was so thankful to be a blessing to Mr. Litzman. I do truly understand his teachings, and it's only by God through the Holy Spirit we are taught this.

By faith, we see Jesus in us and as us. It is then we seek true righteousness that is in Christ Jesus, when He becomes our very life. You see by faith the depth of the love our Father has for all mankind.

There are many who don't have faith to see that this is possible, but from a lonely prison cell where all you have is time to think, you become more aware of God through tribulation. That's why so many people in the Bible had to suffer, to know and understand that God's love is real.

As a prisoner of Christ, as Paul was, I seek to show kindness to others in the

name of Jesus. When you see Him as yourself, you seek the things He wanted, and that was to teach everyone of this Father-love and riches and glory that, too, can be theirs. As Paul said, to die would be gain; and as Jesus said, If I must partake of this cup, thy will be done. I am thankful for both the good and the bad, and I can do this with great joy because I know my Father in Heaven. His love is endless, and Christ lives inside of me. I can call Him *Dad* and be proud to have a dad who is king and ruler of the universe, keeper of all things and more powerful than our very thoughts.

With Christ, we have power over the tongue, heart and our mind. And it's by the washing of the Word we are renewed in mind and spirit; thanks to God's wondrous love also.

I keep you all and the ministry in my prayers that

God will keep you and bless you through the love and peace of Jesus Christ, our Lord. I will pass the reading materials on to other Bible-believing brothers who also need to know the depth of God's love, Christ Jesus in us. Blessed be our Father in Heaven, for He is worthy to be praised and honored. Glory be His forever more and to us by faith a new heart and a renewed mind by the Holy Spirit and Christ in us.

Love, Timothy Jon Pulliam, Sr., Petersburg, Virginia. †

(Christ-life Fellowship offers all our literature free to all prisoners. The prison ministry and the missions ministry, including free distribution of *Life in the Son* magazine, is supported through contributions to our Missions Fund. Donations can be made at our web site bookstore at www.christ-life.org.)



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EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE SON

THE WONDER OF ONENESS

By Alice Scott-Ferguson

Lingering Longing

At a recent concert honoring the late Ella Fitzgerald, not only were we transported back to the music of our younger years, but with hindsight made more aware of the longing in the heart of this icon as her life was recalled in speech and song. The tone and texture of her vast musical repertoire—born out of broken and unfulfilled relationships—reflected her yearning to be connected. It was not only her exquisite voice that captured her fans, but the echo that articulated longings in their own hearts.

There is a thread of longing—an ache—which runs through the tapestry of the human condition that is forever conspicuous by its refusal to blend in with the other shades and hues that constitute the cloth called life. Achievement, accolades and professional pinnacles do not assuage the ache. Even when lovers have consummated their union, when prodigals finally find their way home or the longed-for baby comes to the waiting arms of loving parents, still the deepest long-

ings of our being remain unfulfilled.

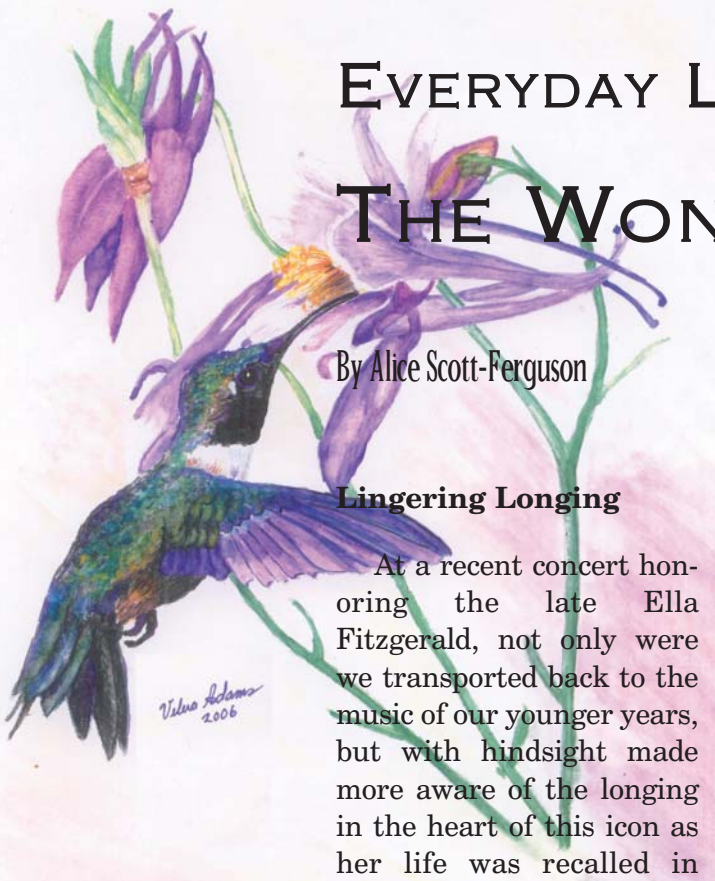
The Father created us for a lasting union, a wondrous oneness that no earthly connection can ever satisfy. If He planned it, then there is an answer. There is a place where we can slake our raging thirst, a table where we can feast and be satisfied. Those of us who have had the revelation that we are in union with Christ know that He is the well of water that never runs dry, and the abundant bread that never grows stale. Yet, over the months and years, we, too, sometimes ache with an unfulfilled longing and succumb to a sense of something missing. How can that be? Three ready reasons come to mind.

Failing to Find Family

Over the centuries, Christendom has gone to great lengths in its many efforts to establish unity in the church. Most of them have failed. Ecumenical councils have collapsed under severe sectarianism and hands across the aisle have disengaged due to denominational dogmas.

So we have gone our own way ignorant of—or perhaps willfully ignoring—the clear mandate of the Lord's injunction, intention and longing that we be one. (John 17). It is so natural and easy to retreat to our places of comfort where everyone uses common language to frame meanings. The Pentecostals like to hear of speaking in tongues and gifts of the Spirit, the Baptists, naturally, baptism and witnessing; and we are suspect of those who do not bandy about phrases like *birthing* and *Christ-as-life*.

As many of you know, I have spent the last two years writing a book in collaboration with another author who holds very different views from mine in the arena of God's roles for women.* It has been, and continues to be, one of the most satisfying experiences of my life. Not just because of the joy of writing and being afforded a huge platform for my convictions (including the premise that Christ is all in all), but because I found oneness with another member of



the Family of God—despite differences.

We intellectually concede that He chose each one to be members of His Body, but our actions often belie our beliefs. Throughout his letters to the churches, Paul implores believers to eschew division and strife, calling “carnal” those who cause separation. Sectarian seclusion is not the path our Father forged in the death of His Son who came to make us one (Eph. 1:10; Gal. 3:28). We are missing out when we fail to connect with other members of the family of our Father.

Following the Messenger

Our beloved—though often enigmatic—Apostle Paul not only calls for unity, but insists that the messenger is not the Message.

“For one says, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos... Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed...I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” (1 Cor. 3:4–6).

The detritus of deception litters the history of the church as believers have swarmed onto the latest bandwagon of teaching spearheaded by compelling and charismatic leaders. How our intellects dance with partners like “fresh insight,” “promised power” or “deep doctrine,” so much so that we are in danger of

committing spiritual adultery. We become harlots hankering after other lovers that lure us into ever more learning, even putting the written Word over the mystery of the astounding truth of Christ in us—rather than falling in love with our Lover.

No matter how sincere, or indeed how good and true some of the messengers may be, we follow them at our peril. They have feet of clay; and we will be, sooner or later, hurt and disillusioned with someone we wrongly considered to have it all together. In many instances, the result is disappointed Christians leaving fellowship altogether and labeling everyone in the church “hypocritical,” “delusional” and “fraudulent.” When we lose sight of the union we have with Christ, we are soon thirsty and hungry and dangerously susceptible to the next “new thing of God.”

Contemplating Christ

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to feeling whole, experiencing union or enjoying satisfaction in our Christian lives is the absence of practicing His presence. I find it terrifyingly easy to become so very cerebral in my experience of Christ. I remember well a seminal moment several years ago when I cried out to know Him, not just know about Him. My Lord’s response was loud and clear. “I will show you, but do not put me into your formulas.”

Formulas, no matter how constructive and conducive to forming a framework for understanding, can do nothing to quiet the hunger of the heart and can hijack intimacy more effectively than anything else I can think of. Formulas may unite us in vocabulary, but leave us isolated, alone, and aching for connectedness to both God and fellow humans. In a Union Life article called “The Divine Love Affair,” Dan Stone says this so beautifully: “It is difficult for most of us to believe that the main objective of God is that we just love Him. This is a love that has no human wisdom to explain it. It is love without blessing, love without any reasonable motivation—it is not a love understandable by the world.”

Remedies for the Rifts

Although we know there is a final consummation that cannot be fully experienced until we see Him face to face, I believe attending to these reasons, which may be contributing to our loneliness, longing and isolation, will go a long way to helping us experience wholeness and unity.

Cultivating connection with those who do not share the finer points of our theology teaches us to love regardless. We learn to respect and value, and even—surprisingly enough—learn from those we deem less enlightened.

(CONTINUED ON P. 28)



THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

By Amy Gracia

This article is a reprint from a previous edition because it was so well received by so many.

“Do your best to present yourself to God an approved workman who has nothing to be ashamed of; who properly presents the message of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15, Williams).

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Sometime last spring I came across a piece written to try to discredit the truth of “*Christ in us*” (Col. 1:27) as a major theme of the epistles. Not having the correct methodology to report truthfully on the issue, the author resorted to drawing upon man’s writings to dispute the Word. The Word always upholds itself and never needs man to give his own interpretation of the Father’s meaning. Unfortunately, because of the purported authority of men quoted, and a lack of their own knowledge, people will be swayed toward man’s opinions rather than the Father’s revealed truth. There are some reasons that we need to “*study to show* [ourselves]

approved.” The cost paid for us to have Christ abiding in us was dear to God, and the responsibility rests upon us individually to know Him who has become our very life. It is a new and living way, and we will have to do more than sit and allow predigested food to pass as good nutrition!

The Latin root for the word *intelligence* means “to gather, pick or choose among.” Yet, experts in human intelligence find many problems and failings with the human mind’s responsiveness. Across the board their findings are pretty sad.

- Human beliefs are resistant to contrary evidence.

- Humans are systematically biased and limited in their attention, memories, and perceptual thought patterns.

- We have a high tolerance for inaccuracy, inconsistency and error.

- Humans are rather poor at formal reasoning compared with computers and robots.

- We do not seem to share adequately useful

information or receive it from others.

These findings seem dismal, but are probably the very reason we were not left alone in our quest to find our new identity in Christ. Jesus told us that we would learn all things by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), and it’s time we started applying His words on the subject. The Body of Christ has become so used to interpreting conclusions from men as “truth” that we need to rethink what is and what is not fact! Any good researcher will start with a few basic facts and some pertinent questions. There is a process to follow when attempting to find information and discerning the Word is no exception. The similarity between the words quest and question is not accidental. They both involve a search to answer something. Your questioning or quest for reality will involve you in an action of some sort. If you are seeking out truth in the Word, your search will also involve trust. You will have to trust that the Holy Spirit will be your

definitive teacher. Colossians 2:2–3; John 14:26; and 1 Corinthians 2:16 are a few Scriptures that teach all wisdom is revealed through the revelation of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

There are four elemental rules, if you will, to follow when searching out truth. We are always collecting data in life's journey, but, unfortunately, we do not necessarily process that data properly to come to a factual end. We accept hearsay, secondhand and third-hand opinions, (and even manipulated offerings) as truth. Obviously, it can become quite deep, but for our purposes we will limit this to a fundamental analysis. A good researcher has a purposeful way in which he finds facts, develops the information, and then comes to a reliable conclusion. The criteria for distinguishing facts from other kinds of information are found in a four-part thought pattern. These same research principles have proven to line up with those found in the Word for discerning knowledge.

In order to begin an intelligent inquiry, we must start with empirically factual material, which simply means having fact, not opinion. Empiricism or reality takes precedence over beliefs, ideas, wishes, or our own thoughts—whether we like the findings or not. So we have to start with an open mind. Presenting ourselves a liv-

ing sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God—this is our spiritual service of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, then you will be able to test and approve what God's perfect will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will! (Rom. 12:1–2). You will have to erase any previously gained knowledge and start with the facts and only the facts! If you are dealing with finding out what the Father says about something, you must start with His thoughts on that subject, not what men say that He says, but what Scripture reveals as His ideas!

Paul writes:

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11–12).

We will have to go into our own desert and find out by the disclosure of the Holy Spirit the wisdom we seek. Jesus explains that the Holy Spirit will lead us to all truth.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed [them] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all

things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:9–10).

Music from the Soul Set Free

This type of inquiry will be difficult at first for most of us. It will involve redefining our truth. It can be painful to set aside the ideas we've held so dear. Sometimes people in whom we have trusted to guide us into truth fail us (usually through no fault of their own). People can only be who they are and reveal what they know. They also have their own agendas and perceptions that hinder them from seeing reality. It is ultimately up to us to turn to the Holy Spirit and away from man to find Christ. Paul says he counted all things as “dung” compared to the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil. 3:8). Dung is another way of saying refuse, garbage, used material. Actually, there are few nutrients left in dung. It is not fresh nourishment for our bodies; it is left as waste material. He felt the “old knowledge” was not useful to his quest in knowing Christ.

Paul sought out a relevant understanding from the Holy Spirit when he went into that desert, not any man's perceptions, not his own gained knowledge, not his degrees or stature in his religious community. Paul said he considered them “dung, that I may gain Christ and be found in

YOU WILL HAVE TO ERASE ANY PREVIOUSLY GAINED KNOWLEDGE AND START WITH THE FACTS AND ONLY THE FACTS! IF YOU ARE DEALING WITH FINDING OUT WHAT THE FATHER SAYS ABOUT SOMETHING, YOU MUST START WITH HIS THOUGHTS ON THAT SUBJECT, NOT WHAT MEN SAY THAT HE SAYS, BUT WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS AS HIS IDEAS!

him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law [religion] but that which is through faith in Christ” (Phil. 3:8–9). He set aside any and all hindrances to his learning and said,

“But this one thing I do, forgetting these things behind me and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize to which God has called me heavenlyward in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13–14).

The word *forgetting* in the Greek means, “to lose out of one’s mind.” That is precisely what we must do to gain the knowledge the Spirit will reveal to us.

Our second criterion for finding truth is to have information that is accurate or directly pertinent to our question. This criterion is very important to finding out total truth. You may have facts, but are those facts vague or general to the material in question? Is the material misleading or inadequate? For instance, if asking yourself what the weather is, you may look outside and make a determination based upon your window’s view of the day’s weather. Your information would be very limited and even deceptive. However, to have a correct reading of the weather conditions you could avail yourself of any number of reports from competent weathermen with the best technology at their disposal, perhaps even finding

that bad weather was coming in the next hour! Using incomplete information can be grossly inept.

Presenting only some of the facts can also be extremely misleading, and has become a very dangerous practice among Christian teachers. I’ve seen many women buffaloed into believing that their lack of jewelry and makeup, and their dressing in certain garments was a means of gaining favor and acceptance with God. Slavery, bigotry, and religious elitism have been upheld as God’s word for us by man’s picking and choosing of certain Scriptures to teach men’s own opinions. Marriages and child rearing have been affected by theories that are incomplete, but presented as ultimate truth. Taking one portion of Scripture from the Bible and creating an entire doctrinal issue of separatism from it is another clear example of how people can twist the Word for their own purposes. Control can be had quite easily as one eliminates Scriptures that won’t uphold his own agendas and theories and thrusts his ideas upon those who trust him.

How many doctrines have been purported to be the way of worshipping God, or the only means of gaining acceptance? The Scriptures can be put together in such a way as to make a case for just about any way of living,

including bigamy, racial prejudice, works as a means to salvation, and even blood sacrifice to atone for sins. Using faulty construction of data to come to a conclusion is something to beware of. This would be putting material together in such a way as to lead people to erroneous answers.

Propaganda and public relations ploys are integrated in such a way to have people come to a certain conclusion. Always check information to make sure it is pertinent and directly related to the issues in question and (precept upon precept) are constructed properly. Vague or misleading data is worse than useless information because it will cause you to form a faulty conclusion. For instance, there is a new book out that was touted to be a great informational look at the words of Jesus—the “inside scoop,” if you will. One of the “facts” that was shared on the commercial for this book was Jesus’ meaning of the story about the rich man getting into heaven and how it was harder for a rich man to get into heaven than a camel to go through an eye of a needle (Luke 18:25). The authors went on to divulge Jesus’ meaning on this parable. Their theory was that it was a literal translation and that Jesus “knew” a rich person would have as difficult a time getting into the presence of God as it would be

TAKING ONE PORTION OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE BIBLE AND CREATING AN ENTIRE DOCTRINAL ISSUE OF SEPARATISM FROM IT IS ANOTHER CLEAR EXAMPLE OF HOW PEOPLE CAN TWIST THE WORD FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES.

to put a camel literally through the eye of a needle.

I'm not a great Bible scholar, but the "eye of the needle" was a type of entrance found in some of the older cities in and about Jerusalem. In Damascus there was such a gate, and the Jaffa gate in Jerusalem is a good example of such an entrance. When the large city gates were closed at night, this was the only entrance available to travelers. It was a very small, short space; and while men could get through alone easily, the merchants who had their camels packed quite high with goods couldn't. So you can see why this camel, heavily laden with his master's belongings, would have a hard time getting through this "needle's eye." The camel would have to pass through on his knees, all the while struggling with his burdens. Well, now we have a clearer picture of what Jesus' teaching was. Why are we satisfied with men's interpretations for us instead of seeking out explanations for ourselves?

The third criterion for seeking out truth is relevance. Is the data you have gathered relevant to your quest? You can apply any number of facts to your search, but sometimes they are irrelevant. For instance, there is a story I love to tell about a multi-generational family. A woman was cooking a Sunday roast when asked

by her daughter, "Mom, when you make that roast, why do you always cut off the end and put it in the fridge for tomorrow's meal?" The mother thought about it and answered that her mother had always done it that way. Well, her mother had arrived for Sunday dinner and was immediately asked why she did the roast in that way. She slowly shook her head and replied that it was the way she had been taught by her mother.

These women were now eager to know truth. They called the great-grandmother on the phone to ask the question. When asked, the matriarch simply answered, "Well, I always cut the end off of the roast because my pan was too small." What was quite relevant for this woman was certainly not for those who came after her. They trusted her in such a way that they followed her every teaching and some was good, some was not intended as a pattern at all. When relating this criterion to seeking out truth from the Scriptures, it is important to remember what you are looking for. If you are seeking out information about who you are in Christ, it is imperative that you know to whom the Scriptures are directed. Although the Scriptures are all good for teaching, and there is much you can gain in common sense and understanding, not all Scripture is directed to the born-again believer.

Relevancy may be the most important point as it relates to dividing the Word. Is it germane to you, a member of the Body of Christ, or is the Word speaking to the Jews? You must understand the importance in recognizing that part of the Word directed toward born-again believers or you might end up having animal sacrifices in the name of Christ! We are new creations in Christ Jesus, and the Father paid a dear price to be able to place us in His Son. The relationship between God and Israel, and the rules and regulations that governed that relationship, belong to the Old Testament. The New Testament was put into effect when Christ died, nailing those rules to the cross and becoming the only acceptable means whereby we could have a personal relationship with God. Let us honor that sacrificial death by living in the relationship He provided for us and not trying to be something we are not. Is your information relevant to your quest?

Finally, the fourth criterion is adequacy. Persist in your search until you have enough information to draw your conclusions. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach us Christ (John chapters 14 through 17). He will give you adequate information and justification for you to come to an understanding. Is there a weight of Scripture

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND ISRAEL, AND THE RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT GOVERNED THAT RELATIONSHIP, BELONG TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

to support your findings? If you do not understand completely, just ask Him for a deeper revelation, and He will provide you with it. Do not settle for anything less than total satisfaction. You may have to be patient and wait a while, but you will find truth. When the Holy Spirit leads you into that truth, you will be able to trust it as reality. Then, finally, you will be set free from man's dictates, ideas and religious doctrines as your truth, and you will be able to come to believe what the Father says as gospel.

If you have come to a point where you are dissatisfied and hungry to know Him, then you are willing to find Him and know Him no matter what the outcome. No matter what the cost, you are ready to know Christ! If you are tired of religious ideas, then you have come to that lonely place known as "seeker." Paul went to a far off place to learn what had happened to him, and many of us find ourselves in the same frame of mind. Dissatisfaction becomes

God's way of redirecting us into another level of understanding. Start with a fresh slate. Rid yourself of any previously acquired knowledge. You can always resubmit it to see if it fits when you have your facts lined up as truth.

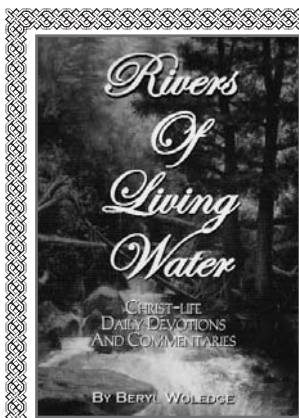
This gospel that Paul calls "my gospel" is the truth of God's intention for men revealed by the Holy Spirit. This plan of God's was so important that He killed His own Son to accomplish that end. How dare we frustrate the Father's purpose for us by holding on to religious dogma instead of living out the life of His Son within us! Religion makes a mockery of the Cross, and if anything we believe interferes with His truth, we should, like Paul, consider it dung. Our minds cannot ever be controlled fully by Christ as long as we make idols of knowledge gained by men. This is only our "reasonable service of worship" to offer up our mind, will and emotions to the authority of Christ (Rom. 12:2). We are commanded to "destroy speculations [imagination, reasonings, thoughts] and

every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Beloved, guard your heart and your minds as you journey on in your quest for Him. In Him you will find truth, and that truth shall set you free from the bondage of all that has held you captive and separated from Him. Seek and you shall find! Don't trust my word for it though; seek His!

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

"My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, I tell you this so that no one may deceive you through fine-sounding arguments" (Col. 2:2-4). †

HOW DARE WE FRUSTRATE THE FATHER'S PURPOSE FOR US BY HOLDING ON TO RELIGIOUS DOGMA INSTEAD OF LIVING OUT THE LIFE OF HIS SON WITHIN US!



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(MANMADE—CONT. FROM P. 10)

whether Jesus is the life of the believer. A hungry person is going to get past all that religious baloney. What we want to do is to get our minds renewed so that when we take our Bibles in hand, we are holding the Word made flesh in this book form. We are holding a person. I never pick up the Bible without the sense that it is a person. I am holding God's precious Word.

Now, not everything in this Bible is an intricate study of Christ, but everything that is in this book goes to constitute Christ's person and purpose. I am well aware that there are many places in the Scriptures where some people will have a hard time finding Jesus, especially the Jesus I am writing about. It is as John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God." This speaks of Christ, the Word of God. Instead of looking at reading the Bible like you would read Shakespeare, just reading a few lines and falling asleep, imagine you are talking to a person or a person is talking to you and

you are seeing Him in these verses. This will change your Bible-reading habits. You don't have to have a long, drawn out conversation with Christ or the Father. I have a friend that picks up the Bible every morning and says, Lord, what have you got to say to me?

Now, in some places in the Scriptures it is easier to see Christ than in others. Obviously, if you read Ezekiel it would be hard to see Jesus there unless you have a real prophetic mind because so much of what he wrote is in the prophetic area of understanding. But you could go to John's gospel, Colossians or Ephesians and find Christ.

Some people always search the Scriptures to build their faith. Others search the Scriptures for special promises to help them get something from the Lord. But these people will never see Christ as their life. If you see Christ as your life (Gal. 2:20), you stop trying to build your faith, you stop thinking about yourself, you begin to see that Jesus is the healer of all our diseases. He lives in you, and you

have His faith now working through you.

A study of the many biblical promises can lead you to a relationship with the Lord. Even a study of the Law can lead you to Christ, for it is the school master to bring us to Christ. But you still won't see Jesus as your life until He is all you see—the all in all of your attention—until He is the focal point Himself, not just what He says, or what he does, but who He is in you. Real Christianity is all about Jesus, just Jesus.

If you are sincerely earnest about searching the Scriptures to know Christ as your life, I have a listing of Scriptures that will help you. If you daily live in these Scriptures, reading them over and over again until your mind is renewed, you will enter into the relationship with the Christ in you that the Father intended when He re-birthed you. I call these key chapters "life chapters": Romans 5, 6, 7, 8, 12; 1 Corinthians 1, 2, 3; 2 Corinthians 1, 2, 3, 4; Galatians 1, 2, 3, 4; Ephesians 1, 2, 3, 4; Philippians 1, 2, 3; Colossians 1, 2, 3. †

IF YOU SEE CHRIST AS YOUR LIFE (GAL. 2:20), YOU STOP TRYING TO BUILD YOUR FAITH, YOU STOP THINKING ABOUT YOURSELF, YOU BEGIN TO SEE THAT JESUS IS THE HEALER OF ALL OUR DISEASES. HE LIVES IN YOU; AND YOU HAVE HIS FAITH NOW WORKING THROUGH YOU.

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WARREN AND ROBBIE LITZMAN



TESTIMONY

By Al Haig

Forty years ago, I heard Warren Litzman teach on Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and he talked about the importance of every believer having a revelation of Jesus Christ. I had no idea what he was talking about. At 23 years of age, I had a born-again experience. Christ was born in me, but I didn't know it, so I did not go on to get to know the one who is in me. He was in me, but I didn't know it.

I enrolled in a very liberal theological college where most of the professors did not have a clear understanding of the importance of the work and the person of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, one of my professors did not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. So, the wonderful person of Jesus was in me, but I was not giving Him first place. It was as if He was asleep on a pillow in the back of my boat for the next forty years.

After five years of theological training, I became an Anglican priest and preached almost every Sunday until I was 70 years

old. I found it very hard work trying to find something to preach about every Sunday. At 70 years of age, I retired from ten rather fruitless years in seven Anglican churches in the Caribbean. I was a worn out old man. I had nothing to live for anymore. I had had seven hip operations, and my body was pretty well used up.

One morning, as I sat in my reclining chair, it crossed my mind to go to our bookcase and get down our old large print Bible. I prayed, "God, if you are real, and if what is written in the New Testament is actually true, and if the promises of abundant life are not just wishful thinking—if there is any hope for a sick and tired, sinful old man like me, I will get up every morning early and search the Scriptures to see if I can find answers in this old book."

That promise of mine was made six years ago. This morning, as I write this, I am 76 years old; and every morning I have kept my side of the bargain. And Jesus' Father has gloriously, albeit slowly, led me to the source of new

life, His triumphant Son, Jesus Christ. As I could bear it, He revealed, bit by bit, His Son to me.

When I first began to seek the truth, Psalm 51, David's prayer for forgiveness of sin, suited me to a "T." I committed it to memory because I had layers and layers of sin to confess, 70 years of it. So, I prayed Psalm 51 every morning for approximately four years.

At the same time, I began to read the gospel of John; and slowly, but surely, the Father unveiled his Son, Jesus, to me. The words Jesus spoke in the gospel of John slowly became spirit and life for me. I was a slow learner, but the Father didn't give up on me.

John chapters 5 and 6 began to feed me. Jesus began to emerge from the pages of that large print Bible. It was as if all I needed to do was go to the back of my boat where Jesus was asleep on a pillow. I needed Him; He was my only hope.

Jesus didn't need much urging; He rose up and rebuked the wind and the waves. He revealed himself to me as the Son of God with power, and I began to have an insatiable hunger

for Him. My love affair with Jesus had begun.

As I continued to read John's gospel, the Holy Spirit glorified Jesus. With a joyful heart, I called all the way from Ontario, Canada to Warren Litzman. I said, "Warren, I think I've had what I heard you talk about 40 years ago. I think I've had a revelation of Jesus Christ. All I want is more and more of Him."

Warren replied, "Praise God, Al. I'll send you some of my books. Maybe you'll find them helpful." No maybe about it! I've read Warren's books *Paul, the Apostle of Grace* and *Free At Last* at least five times. I've practically memorized them. Every morning, I have found, I need to refresh my mind on the measureless grace that comes to me through God's Son, Jesus. The Holy Spirit has begun to renew my mind, and He does His wonderful work daily. I am no longer a slave to sin because I know that Christ in me is victor and has delivered me and made me an overcomer. Jesus has redeemed my life from destruction. Christ is my life, and now I know that nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Revelation has become almost a daily experience as I focus more and more on Jesus and look for Him in the writings of John and the letters of Paul.

The understanding of what Paul meant by the

grace of God in Jesus Christ has dawned. It took a while for me to believe that Jesus actually lives right inside me, but His words have convinced me. "*Abide in me, and I in you*" (John 15:4). I now know that my only hope of glory is Christ in me.

As I devoured Warren's books and searched the Scriptures, it was as if I crossed an invisible line, and I have that blessed assurance Jesus promised when he said, "*On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you*" (John 14:20). In my life, Jesus has saved the best wine for the last. One of my favorite verses is John 6:53, "*Except you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.*" So I feed on that living bread every day.

The Greek word for "feed" is *trogon*, one of its meanings is "to gnaw or chew" such as a dog gnawing on a bone. I'm that dog.

What a joy my morning times with Jesus have become! Because I have the Son, I now have life (*zoe*). If my life on Earth in Jesus is this good, what is Heaven going to be like? It's all grace. The Father put in me six years ago a hunger for truth. He drew me to His Son, Jesus.

There's no end, no limit, no boundaries, to the grace of God in Jesus. "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him*" (Matt. 17:5). If God was thrilled with his Son, Jesus,

am I a fool because I, too, am thrilled with Him?

So, Christ is in; Satan, the old Adam nature, is out. After 70 years of wandering in the wilderness, I am complete in Him. Christ, the Day Star, has arisen in my heart. I don't have to debate and argue about theological issues anymore. It's amazing, how, when Jesus is revealed and becomes the centre of our life, our theological beliefs get all straightened out. I know in whom I have believed. Because He is the truth, the truth about who He is and what He accomplished on the cross becomes vividly clear: "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself*" (2 Cor. 5:19). The cross of Jesus is my focal point.

The Holy Spirit has helped me to believe that I am so absolutely united with Jesus that I was in Him when He died, in Him when He was buried, in Him when He was raised from the dead and in Him when He was exalted to the right hand of the Father.

Do I still sin? Absolutely! In this life I will always need the blood of Jesus Christ, as I have this treasure in an earthen vessel. The limitless grace of God has helped me to believe every single word of my old large print Bible. I am complete in Him. Everything is settled. The sacrifice of Jesus was a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice. I can enter into His rest because my "*life is hid with Christ in God*" (Col. 3:3). †



OUR POWER SOURCE

By Teresa Ferraro

In a church, I picked up a pamphlet about the power of a positive mom, but the author says our power and the fruit of the spirit comes from the Holy Spirit. So many times I hear Christians displace Christ with the Holy Spirit in their testimonies and teachings. It saddens me to envision Christ being pushed aside after all He went through to be our sacrifice out of perfect love for His Father so that we could be joint heirs with Him.

I know when I hear someone attributing Christ's characteristics to the Holy Spirit it is merely a symptom, a sign of the real problem: they don't know Christ lives inside the born-again believer. They need the truth, by the Holy Spirit, in God's time.

They need to know that when a person is saved, God places His seed, His Son, in the believer, making God our Father and the believer a joint heir with Christ. God sees Christ in us, which is the only reason we are acceptable to God. Christ is the perfection, the righteousness in the believer

(Ephesians 3:16–17). Galatians 4:6–7 says:

“God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

The fruit of the Spirit comes from the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the believer, living out through the believer. He is everything. *“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”* (Col. 2:9). This spirit is not the Holy Spirit. In John chapters 14, 15 and 16, Jesus says the Holy Spirit will come after Jesus is gone and explains what the Holy Spirit will do. Also, read 1 Corinthians 2:7–16, which speaks of the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of God, who teaches us spiritual things. The Holy Spirit is not here to give us power or to speak of Himself but to point people to Christ and to teach us Christ, to renew our Adamic minds to *“put on the mind of Christ.”* See Ephesians 3:3–6, *“...as it is now revealed unto his holy apos-*

ties and prophets by the Spirit” (v. 5). One simply must go back to the King James Version to get very important wording critical to the true gospel, which is Christ in the believer as the believer's only life and hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

Research the frequency “in Christ” phrases are used throughout the King James New Testament. These are phrases such as *in Christ*, and *in him*, and phrases referring to Christ in the believer. Paul writes extensively about Christ living in the believer. Many of these phrases are removed from modern Bible versions. Modern versions also change verses referring to the faith of the Son of God (or the faith of Christ), turning it into faith *in* the Son of God. By making these two changes, modern Bibles turn believers from completely depending on the perfect righteousness, the steadfast faith, the perfect love of Christ within us to depending on our own efforts, our own wavering faith, our own human capacity to love. It is His

faith that is steady, perfect and dependable, not ours. The King James Version shows over and over that Christ is the spiritual life in the believer. In John 14:20 and 17:21–23 Jesus foretells in His prayer to His Father of how He will dwell in believers, saying, “*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in*

one...” (v. 23). In Galatians 2:20, Paul says:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God....”

We must differentiate between Christ in the believer and the Holy

Spirit. The Holy Spirit facilitates communicating Christ and the gospel to mankind. Christ, the center of the gospel, is our only spiritual life, our strength to live through life’s circumstances, and our righteousness in the eyes of our heavenly Father. To Him goes the praise and glory. †

(HOTEL—CONT. FROM P. 7) menus) have encountered each other on a staircase or hallway that has room for only one group at a time. Sometimes a great scuffle occurs and many harsh words are exchanged and accusations are made about one group having a bad odor because of their menu or a problem with their standards of practice.

Residents who are wounded in these exchanges and need immediate attention usually are forced to leave the hotel, especially if they begin to ask questions about the menu or those who are serving it. They may ask, This stuff is making me sick. Where did it come from in the first place? It is fascinating that some groups of residents find a measure of glory in these scuffles and look for opportunities to impose the fundamentals of their menus on other groups of hotel residents. They see themselves worthy of this because of the supposed “doctrinal light” they found in their particular menu.

The greatest exodus from the religious hotel is by resi-

dents who are passing from adolescence to adulthood. Exit polls at the hotel doors indicate dissatisfaction with the artificial lighting, the differences in servers and menus, and the lack of safety in the hallways and on the staircases where the scuffles occur. Also cited are the questions about those who are in charge of the rules and programs. Often, they are heard saying, “If the leaders can’t get along, well, what’s the point?” Furthermore, some of these young residents have sneaked out of the hotel on the sly, and don’t think life outside the hotel is so bad after all. “Who wants to be cooped up in there all their lives? Like, you know, the adults aren’t even able to live up to all the rules; and, besides, it’s such a drag. I want to live a little before I die. Maybe later on, when I’m older (way older) and want to settle down, I’ll come back.” Statistics say that seventy percent or more of these young people are leaving the hotel. It is a long distance from the center of the hotel to an outside door. It takes a long time, and there are many

paths to choose from along the way. If a person gets lost in the solarium, they could walk in circles for quite a while.

The religious hotel is like that, too. One could have encountered many halls, staircases and rooms along the path on the way out. Very few people actually get all the way out. They are so conditioned to stay that if they ever do find themselves outside, it will probably be by accident. Once outside, they feel very insecure and alone. What helps is that now they are in the real light, although it will be foreign to their immediate understanding, because they have been blinded by the hotel’s artificial light. A number of these dear people still lose their way and become involved with other (more cultic) religious groups that are outside of the large hotel complex.

Sometimes delegations from the religious hotel are sent to find these wandering souls to bring them back into the walls of the hotel of religious bondage again. Depending on what

motivated them to find their way out, a small number are finally brought by God, the Father, to know what His plan is about. They begin to hunger to know Jesus Christ, who is their salvation in person, and what that means in real life. These pilgrims no longer have a desire to organize God's plan. After all, isn't that the very thing that held them in bondage? They just want to know and love God who is their Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, who is their life in them. Some of these rescued ones may make attempts at going back into the religious hotel to bring light to it. Eventually, they will have to deal with the fact that religion thrives on the bondage of law, not true freedom in Christ; darkness, not light; man-

made doctrine, not the living Word (Christ); and fear, not love. In the end, these well meaning brothers and sisters will have to see that God is not the author of religion—Satan is. There is no way to fix religious Christianity or to reform it without getting into another snare.

The fiasco religious Christianity is in at the present hour has to do with the shades of darkness—the absence of light—that are in its regular operation producing a whole lot of manmade doctrines and schisms. This seems to be caused by truth taken out of context, and/or not rightly divided. The Apostle Paul taught that the ones who believed were a whole new race of people, “new creatures in Christ,” thus setting these believers

apart from all those of the Old Testament era who never knew God as Father personally, or Christ in them as their all in all.

Although, we—who, by the Holy Spirit's revelation, have been brought to know Christ in us as our only real life to God—may need to see the hopelessness and bondage of religion, we trust God, our Father, to lead us on in the continuous revelation of light—Christ, who is our only true life. Truly, we must be careful not to strive with our brethren, or return evil for evil, but rather be gracious—by Christ's grace in us—when dealing with those still trapped in the hotel of religion, religious Christianity. Perhaps, in God's timing, we will see them set free in the Life that is in the Son! †

(ANTIOCH—CONT. FROM P. 6)

Do you want God's best and be an overcomer, found in the highest heavenly company called the Bride of Christ? If so, then follow the Apostle Paul and learn his gospel, like

those of Antioch. Paul's message will take you higher and higher and draw you close to Jesus! This then, is how to remember the saints at Antioch. They were race course runners who fol-

lowed and supported Paul's gospel. Thank God for their prayers for Paul, for their acceptance of his gospel, and their concern for those beyond their borders! Yes, that even includes you and me! †

(EVERYDAY—CONT. FROM P. 17)

No messenger has a wrap on the things of God. How clever of God to make us a Body, each part needing the other.

When we spend time contemplating the Christ within, when we cultivate the habit of acknowledging the infinite love of our Father, we need never feel disconnected from our

true selves, one another or our Source. The Father's fixed gaze of love beams on everyone, and those ever-open arms of our God embraces us all. No exceptions, no favorites, no one left out. There is, after all, only one Bride and one Groom. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and

through all and in all (Eph. 4:5-6).

The song of the believer is a celebration of union. May the echo of that intimacy resonate with all who hear, that they, too, may be drawn to the Lover of their souls. †

*Alice's book, *Reconcilable Differences*, is available on amazon.com or from Cook Communications Ministries.

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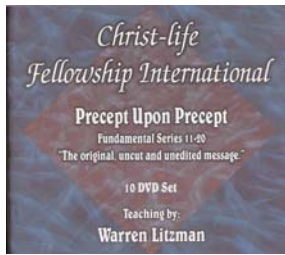
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