

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

February/March 2016

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Colossians 1:2). May the grace of God, His divine influence upon your heart, be with you continually.

Dominican Republic Seminars: My son and I will be joining some brethren in Dominican Republic for a series of meetings at the end of March. Please pray for the people there, and for us that God will give us His grace to speak His words.

OUR ETERNAL HOME

by Lynnford Beachy

God has a perfect plan for us that far exceeds our wildest imaginations. “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” (1 Corinthians 2:9). You are going to want to be one of those who enjoys those things God has prepared for you! Jesus said, “I go and prepare a place for you” (John 14:3). God has an eternal home for you. Where is this home, and when and how can we enjoy it?

God’s Original Plan

The Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). When He did this, “God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

God made this earth with a purpose in mind. He said, “For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:18). This earth was created so that it could be inhabited,



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specifically by humans. “The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men” (Psalms 115:16).

God’s original plan for this earth was for man to live here. After He created Adam and Eve, “God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish** [fill] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Unfortunately, man sinned and gave up his dominion to Satan, who is now called, “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). This hindered God’s plan, but He still intends for us to inhabit the earth.

Righteous Rewarded in the Earth

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shared these beautiful words, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). This was actually a quote from Psalms, where it says, “For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalms 37:9-11).

The righteous will inherit the earth after the wicked are removed from it. David continued, “But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. The wicked borroweth,

and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off” (Psalms 37:20-22).

It is sad to think about, but there will come a time when the wicked, along with Satan, will be as stubble and burn up so completely that they will turn into ashes and smoke (Ezekiel 28:12-19). This is a necessary part of cleansing the universe from sin. It is not something God will enjoy. God said, “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11). When God destroys the wicked, the Bible says that He will “...do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act” (Isaiah 28:21).

Wicked Punished in the Earth

When the wicked are destroyed, God will not bring them somewhere else to accomplish it, but it will take place on this earth. “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner” (Proverbs 11:31).

The Bible says, “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall

tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 4:1-3).

The day that shall come that will burn as an oven is described by Peter in this way, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3:10-14).

This earth will be burned up, and when it is, the wicked will be burned with it. Afterwards, God will make a new earth, which is the one the righteous will inherit. (For a thorough study on the destruction of the wicked, please request our booklet entitled, “God’s Love Revealed in Hell.”)

NEW EARTH

God foretold the new earth in this way, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17). He also said,

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain” (Isaiah 66:22). The new earth will be our eternal home. You may have heard it said that heaven is our home. That is not entirely true. God promised to give us the new earth as our eternal home. In fact, God will move His headquarters here, which is awesome!

John wrote, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:1-4).

It is absolutely amazing that the God who created the entire universe, with all its billions of galaxies, will move to our earth to dwell with us for eternity.

THE PORTABLE NEW JERUSALEM

The Bible says that “the holy city, new Jerusalem” will come “down from God out of heaven.” This means that the city is portable. This is amazing, because it is huge (Revelation 21:15, 16). The biblical description of its size (1,500 miles long, deep, and high) is so remarkable that many scholars view its

measurement as symbolic. However, when you consider how gigantic the universe is a city fifteen thousand miles high is not very big. It would clearly demonstrate that God has room in His mansion for you along with everyone who ever lived.

Don't confuse this enormous city, New Jerusalem, with old Jerusalem in Israel. They are completely different cities. Since the death of Christ, that old city with its temple and sacrifices has been desolate (Matthew 23:38, 39). God's plans for our future are not centered in the old Jerusalem, but in the New

When Jesus left this world, He told His disciples that He was going away to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). I believe the mansions He went to prepare for us in His "Father's house" will be moved to the new earth when God will establish it as His headquarters.* Read Revelation chapter 20 and Isaiah chapter 24 to identify the facts in the timeline on the next page.

The description of the new earth in Revelation 21 immediately follows the description of the destruction of the wicked by fire in Revelation 20. This coincides perfectly with what the Bible explains about the old earth and the wicked being destroyed by fire, followed by a new earth where the righteous will dwell.

Revelation 20 depicts the New Jerusalem on the old earth, and Revelation 21 shows the New Jerusalem descending from heaven onto the

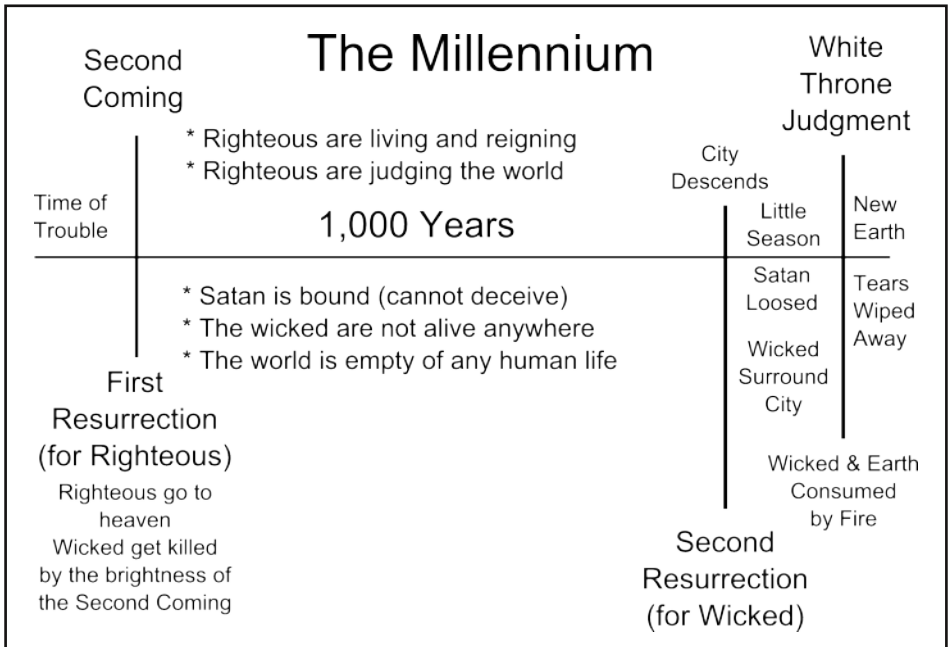
New Earth. The New Jerusalem will be on the old world for a "little season," but will be removed until the old world is destroyed by fire and the new earth is created, then it will again descend to earth, but this time the earth will be new. (For a thorough study on these events request our study entitled, "The Millennium.")

The Only Way

Jesus encouraged us, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:1-6).

Jesus is the only way to the Father, and the only way we can live in the mansions prepared for us. Friends, there is an awesome place with unimaginable things awaiting those who love God. Do you want to see those amazing things? Jesus is knocking on your heart right now (Revelation 3:20), please invite Him in, and let Him transform you into His image. It is the best decision you will ever make. >>

* Keep in mind that our home in the city will not be our only home, for we will inherit the new earth where we will "build" and "inhabit" homes (Isaiah 65:17-21). We will come to our city mansion at least once a week (Isaiah 66:22, 23).



What is the Gospel?

by Ellet J. Waggoner

This question is answered in a few words by the apostle Paul, in Romans 1:16, 17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST; for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth;... for therein is the righteousness of GOD revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” But, although the question is answered in so few words, the answer comprehends so much that it will take all eternity to unfold the depth of its meaning.

The above text sets forth two points for our consideration: 1. Salvation from sin; and 2. The power of GOD exerted to accomplish that salvation. We will briefly consider them in order.

The apostle says that the gospel is the power of GOD unto salvation,

because therein the righteousness of GOD is revealed. This shows that it is the revelation of the righteousness of GOD, that brings salvation. That salvation has reference solely to sin, is shown in the fact that it is the revelation of the righteousness of GOD that saves. Now, since unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17), and sin is the transgression of a law (1 John 3:14), it is evident that righteousness is obedience to the law of GOD. The following text also shows it: “Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for He shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Since sin is the transgression of a law, it is evident that to save one from sin, or from the transgression of the law, is the same thing as making and keeping him obedient to law. Therefore the gospel is the revelation of the power of GOD to work righteousness in man—to manifest righteousness in their lives. The gospel, therefore, proclaims GOD’S perfect law, and contemplates nothing less than perfect obedience to it. Let it not be overlooked that it requires no less a power than the power of GOD, to exhibit righteous acts in the lives of men. Man’s power is wholly inadequate. This is easily seen when we recognize what the righteousness is, that is to be revealed in the life. The text says that it is “the righteousness of GOD.” The righteousness of God is set forth in His law (Isaiah 51:6, 7). Now who can do the righteousness of GOD? That is, who can do acts that are righteous as those that GOD does?—Evidently only GOD Himself. The law of GOD sets forth GOD’S way (Psalm 119:1, 2). But the LORD says, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 4:9). Therefore man’s effort to keep the commandments of GOD must fall as far short as the earth is lower than the heavens.

Man is fallen; the work of the gospel is to raise him to a place at the right hand of GOD. But can man lift himself from earth to heaven? A man can as easily raise himself from the ground to the sun, by placing his hands under the soles of his feet and lifting, as he can raise himself by his own actions to the height of the requirement of GOD’S commandments. Everyone knows that when a man

tries to lift himself by placing his hands under his feet, he is only holding himself down, and that the harder he lifts, the more he presses downward. So with all of a man’s effort to make himself what GOD’S law demands. He is only adding to his guilt, for “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). That which man does himself is from self; that is, it is selfishness; and selfishness has no place in the plan of salvation. That which is of self is of Satan; it is wholly evil (See Mark 7:21-23).

The gospel proposes to save man from himself; therefore the man who proposes to do, either wholly or in part, by himself the work that GOD requires, proposes to thwart GOD’S plan. Many do this ignorantly, but the result is the same. It was because the Jews were ignorant of GOD’S righteousness that they went about to establish their own righteousness (Romans 10:1-3). Whoever realizes the infinite depth and height and breadth of the character of GOD, which is summed up in His law, will readily see that nothing short of the power of GOD can produce that character in man. Only GOD Himself can do the works of GOD. For a man to assume that he himself is able to do GOD’S righteous works, is to make himself equal with GOD; and that is the very “mystery of iniquity” itself.

The Work of the Gospel

The work of the gospel is to put GOD’S righteous works in the place of man’s unrighteousness. It is to work in man the works of GOD, and to cause him to think the thoughts of GOD. It is to cleanse him “from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9), to deliver him from

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s
sake hath forgiven you.”

(Ephesians 4:32)

Coloring Page :)



You may want to remove this sheet for your children!

3 Nice Stories

1. Once, everyone in the village decided to pray for rain. On the day of the prayer, everyone gathered together, but only one boy came with an umbrella.

THAT’S FAITH! :)

2. When you throw a baby in the air, he laughs because he knows you will catch him.

THAT’S TRUST! :)

3. Every night when we go to bed, we do not know if we will wake up alive the next morning, but we still set our alarm clocks.

THAT’S HOPE! :)

Find the underlined words...

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”
(Philippians 4:8).

B	O	N	D	L	O	V	E	L	Y	X	T	P	T	X	J
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P	Z	J	C	X	Z	W	H	A	T	S	O	E	V	E	R

Unscramble the Old Testament

Books of the Bible (part 1)

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 SODEUX _ _ _ _ _
 ILEVIUSTC _ _ _ _ _
 UMERBNS _ _ _ _ _
 EEUOMYRTODN _ _ _ _ _
 SHAUOJ _ _ _ _ _
 JDUEGS _ _ _ _ _
 URHT _ _ _ _ _
 USALME _ _ _ _ _
 ISNKG _ _ _ _ _
 RLCESHCINO _ _ _ _ _
 ERZA _ _ _ _ _
 ENAIEHMH _ _ _ _ _
 RETHES _ _ _ _ _
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 OSVPERBR _ _ _ _ _
 TASESSLCEEIC _ _ _ _ _

Without God

our week would be...

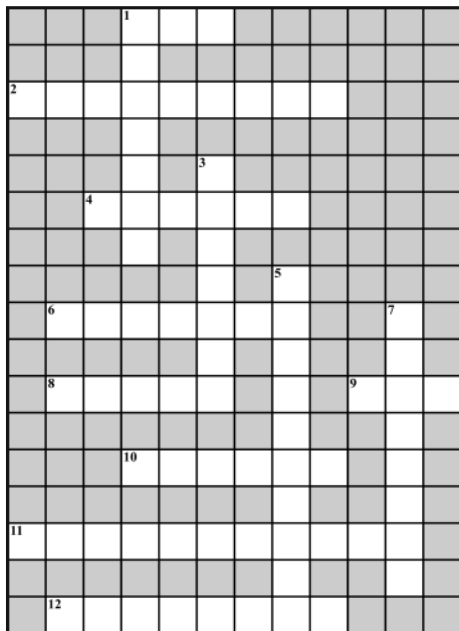
SinDay
MournDay
TearsDay
WasteDay
ThirstDay
FightDay
ShatterDay

7 days without God makes
ONE WEAK!

Bible Study Crossword - Repentance by Josiah Beachy

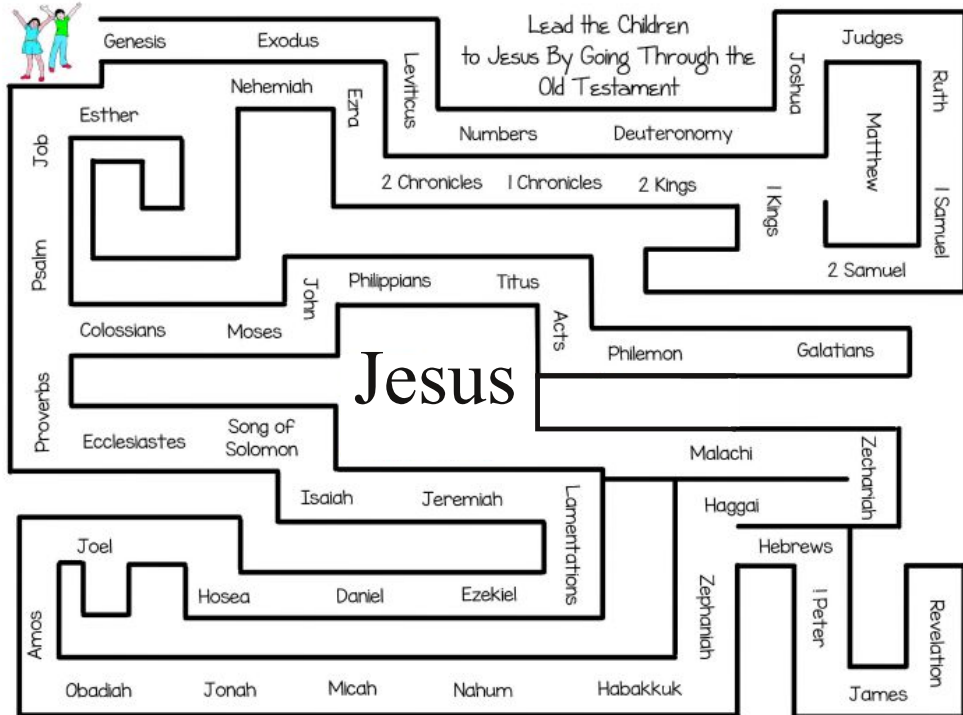
This crossword is not split into Across and Down sections—KJV is required.

- John the Baptist said, "Bring forth therefore ____ worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say to you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Luke 3:8—**10 Across**
- Jesus said, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of ____ for the remission of sins." Mark 1:4—**5 Down**
- Jesus said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but ____ to repentance." Mark 2:17—**3 Down**
- "And he came into all the country about Jordan, ____ the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Luke 3:3—**2 Across**
- "I say to you, that likewise ____ shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Luke 15:7—**9 Across**
- Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and ____ of sins." Acts 5:31—**11 Across**
- After the Lord poured out His Spirit upon Gentiles, men exclaimed, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles ____ repentance unto life." Acts 11:18—**1 Down**
- "Then said Paul, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should ____ on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Acts 19:4—**6 Across**
- Paul went about "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward ____, and faith



toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21—**1 Across**

- "Or despisest thou the riches of his ____ and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4—**7 Down**
- "For the ____ and calling of God are without repentance." Romans 11:29—**8 Across**
- "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye ____ to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing." 2 Corinthians 7:9—**12 Across**
- "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should ____, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9—**4 Across**



Bonus

How many times can you find the word “earth” in the first article? _____

Extra Credit: How many times can you find “heaven”? _____

Answers for the Last Issue: Resurrection 62; Resurrected 9



“this present evil world” (Galatians 1:4), to redeem him “from all iniquity” (Titus 2:14); that is the result; by what means is it to be accomplished?—By the power of GOD. We must know, then, what that power is, and how it is applied.

Immediately following the statement that the gospel is the power of GOD unto salvation, the apostle tells us how we may know the power. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1:20). That is, GOD’S power is seen in the things that He has made. Creation reveals the power of GOD, for His power is creative power. The fact that GOD creates is that which distinguishes Him as the one true GOD. The Psalmist says: “For the LORD [JEHOVAH] is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols [nothing]; but the LORD made the heavens” (Psalm 96:4, 5).

Again we read: “But the LORD is the true GOD, He is the living GOD, and an everlasting king; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When He uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures” (Jeremiah 10:10-13).

Psalm 33:6, 9, tells us how the LORD made the heavens and the earth: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” “For He spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.” It was made by His word. When GOD speaks, the very thing itself exists in the words which describe or name the thing. Thus it is that He “calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). If man should call a thing that is not as though it were, it would be a lie; but not so when GOD so speaks, for his very word causes it to be. When He speaks the word, there the thing is. “He spake, and it was.”

The same word that creates also upholds. In Hebrews 1:3 we read that CHRIST, who created all things, upholds all things “by the word of his power.” Also the apostle Peter tells us that “the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in [through, margin] the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:5-7).

The creative power of the word of GOD is seen in the preservation of the earth and the heavenly bodies, and in the growth of all plants. To the same effect are the words of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah: “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names

by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth” (Isaiah 40:25, 26).

The reason why this is so is found in the fact that the word of GOD is living; being the breath of GOD, it has the incorruptible nature of GOD, so that its power never diminishes. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is wholly devoted to showing the power of GOD, a sample of which we have just quoted. The word by which all these things are upheld is spoken of in verses 7, 8: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our GOD shall stand for ever.” The apostle Peter quotes these words, and adds: “This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:25).

Thus we are brought around again to the statement that the gospel is the power of GOD unto salvation. But the power of GOD is shown in creating and upholding the earth; therefore the gospel is the creative power of GOD exercised for the salvation of man from sin. So the apostle says: “If any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of GOD” (2 Corinthians 5:17, 18). “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). The work of redemption is the work of producing a new creation—new men, new heavens, and new earth—by the same word that created all things in the beginning.

The Power Given to God's People

What greater encouragement can GOD give us than this, namely, that the power that works in us that which is well-pleasing in the sight of the Lord, is the power that made the heavens and the earth, and which upholds them! Need there be any discouragement? To carry out this thought, as set forth in the Scriptures, would require a volume; but we will read a few texts that will set us on the track of contemplating GOD’S power in creation, and rejoicing in it.

The psalmist says: “GOD hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto GOD. Also unto Thee, O LORD, belongeth mercy” (Psalm 62:11, 12). Here we see the mercy of GOD coupled with his power. Now read through the whole of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, and as you read the description of GOD’S wonderful power, bear in mind the first verse: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your GOD.” And then at the close read: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” By what power?—By the power that created the earth from nothing, and which preserves it. What is the comfort of GOD’S people?—It is the knowledge that their GOD is mighty in power, even to creating and upholding the universe.

Read also Colossians 1:9-18, and note how redemption and the creation of all the universe are linked together.

We have redemption through the blood of CHRIST, because “by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church.” Surely the church ought to be strong, when it is connected with so powerful a head. It is only as men cherish unbelief that they become disconnected from the head and become weak.

Verse 11, of the passage referred to, reads thus: “Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” In the revision this is more literally rendered thus: “Strengthened [margin, made powerful] with all might, according to his glorious power.” Now read Psalm 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of GOD; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” That is, the heavens declare the power of the glory of GOD, by which we are strengthened in the conflict with sin and Satan.

Now turn to Psalm 111:2-4, and read: “The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.” Yes, the LORD is gracious and compassionate according to the power exhibited in the works of his hands. “He that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about” (Psalm 32:10). And that mercy is equal to the

power that made the heavens and the earth. Yea, it is that power; for GOD Himself, the mighty GOD, is love.

But what shall we say more? Time would fail us to recount the power and the mercy of GOD. When we meditate on the law of GOD, as we are exhorted to do day and night, and find therein such wondrous things that our soul faints at the thought that all that righteousness must be exhibited in our lives, let us also lift up our eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath, and then with rejoicing say: “Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:8). Yea, let all who suffer according to the will of GOD, “commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:19). Remember that He who upholds all things by the word of His power, is “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24).

“Beneath his watchful eye
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard his children well.”

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21). Surely, “happy is that people, whose GOD is JEHOVAH” (Psalm 144:15). >>

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Editor)

Life and Death—Opposite Terms

by Ellet J. Waggoner

In the last words which Moses at the command of the Lord spoke to the children of Israel, he said:

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:15-19).

In this text we have the most positive evidence that life and death are exactly opposite states. It should be unnecessary to quote anything to prove such a self-evident proposition, yet it is well known that in the face of the statement that “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23), many claim that the wicked, as well as the righteous, will have eternal life. If it be true that both righteous and wicked are to have everlasting life, then life and death must mean the same thing, for the

Bible says that life is for the righteous and death is for the wicked.

We do not say that it is claimed that the wicked will have life under the same conditions as the righteous, but that they will have as long life as the righteous. But this we say is contradictory of Scripture. The Scripture promises life to the righteous, and death to the wicked. These terms are unqualified except as to duration,—both are eternal. Therefore, if it be claimed that the wicked will live eternally, it must be claimed that life and death are identical in meaning.

But the scripture just quoted shows that they are not identical. They are as widely separated as the antipodes. They are no more alike than are blessing and cursing. “See,” says the Lord, “I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” Who will claim that good and evil have anything in common? No one certainly who has any regard for God’s word. Well, death and life are just as far apart as are good and evil. Life follows good, and death follows evil. Again the Lord says: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.” Who will say that blessing and cursing are identical terms? There is no question but that they are as far apart as the east is from the west. But life is the blessing where-with God blesses those who love him, and the curse pronounced upon the disobedient is death.

Notice a clause in the last verse of Deuteronomy 30. After admonishing

the people to cleave unto the Lord, Moses says: "For he is thy life, and the length of thy days." Question, If God is the life of his people, and the length of their days, what will become of those who do not cleave to the Lord? It must be that they will not have life nor length of days. This is what the Bible teaches. Paul says that those who "know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," shall "be punished with everlasting destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9). He says again that Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10), which leads to the conclusion that all who do not accept the gospel will know nothing of life and immortality.

Again the apostle John says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). So far will the unbeliever be from having life, that he shall not see life. And this is literally true. This life amounts to nothing, unless it is used as a preparation for eternal life. It is hard enough at the best. In childhood even, when the world seems brightest and when the spirit is buoyant, there are troubles as great as the child can endure. As age comes on, cares

increase, and the words of the patriarch, that "man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7), are proved to be true. The life which we live in this earth is not real life. There is not a man who knows, even at his best, anything of the freshness and vigor of that life which will be felt by those who drink of the river of the water of life, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life. One moment of that life will contain more of vigor and joyous energy than threescore and ten years of this present life. And so the man who rejects God and the gospel, and who consequently is punished with destruction, may truly be said to have never seen life.

Christ is the life-giver. He came to earth and died for no other purpose than that men who were doomed to death might have life. "I am come," said he, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). To say that we can have eternal life without Christ, is to rob him of his highest honor. Who that loves Christ can refuse to worship him as the giver of our life, as well as of all good things? »

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