

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

October-December 2016

“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” (2 Timothy 1:2). “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,... That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;...” (Ephesians 3:14, 16).

Apology: I want to apologize for the long delay in getting this newsletter out. A lot has happened since our last publication. The Lord is good, and He has kept us close to Him. We will be getting back on our monthly schedule within the next few months, and we plan to stay on that schedule. Thank you for your prayers.

Thriving in the Last Days

by Lynnford Beachy

The Bible tells us about events that will happen in the last days, many of which are happening right now. What does the Bible say about this time, and how should we be prepared for it? These are the questions that we will examine in this article.

The Bible says, “And as he [Jesus] sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus

answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:3-5). Notice that Jesus began His response to this question by warning us that men will deceive many people about the end of the world. This is one of the few cases where Jesus began His answer with such a strong caution. We should pay special attention to what He says next, for it is of vital importance. Be especially diligent to study the Bible for yourself on this particular topic.

Jesus continued, “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Kids' Korner..... Center
The Gospel to the Gentiles..... page 7
by Ellet J. Waggoner

ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:6-13).

Friends, we are seeing some of these events happening now. Christians are being brutally afflicted and killed as you read this. How will you react if and when you are confronted with the possibility of losing your life for Christ's sake? The Bible says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). If you are faithful to the Lord, especially during the last days, you will likely experience persecution. Jesus said, "But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them" (Mark 13:9).

You may think you are ready, but you could be mistaken. The night be-

fore Peter denied His Lord, Peter told Jesus, "I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (John 13:37, 38). Peter thought he was ready to give up everything for Jesus. When angry men surrounded them, Peter, even though he was outnumbered, pulled out a sword and began to fight for Him. Peter was intending to fight to the death for Jesus if that was what it would take. Yet, Peter's expectations of what would happen were mistaken. He was caught off guard and when his Lord was taken away captive his faith was severely tried.

We may be caught off guard by the events of the last days, because we may have been deceived about what to expect.

We, too, do not know how we will react when we are faced with the possibility of losing all that is precious to us. We may be caught off guard by the events of the last days, because we may have been deceived about what to expect.

Jesus had told His disciples many times that He was going to Jerusalem and would be killed. The disciples were so sure that would not happen that they did not grasp the reality of it. Notice Peter's response: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from

thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:21-23). Jesus gave His strongest rebuke to Peter for His reaction when he was told about Christ’s death. Peter was not ready mainly because he was expecting something other than reality.

Reality Versus Imaginary

Jesus’ disciples were imagining that He would overthrow their enemies and setup an earthly kingdom right then. The reality of what took place was very different from their expectations. The reality of the last days will be very different from what most people expect. The Bible says, “Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.

If you know a challenge is coming, it is wise to prepare for it ahead of time so you will be ready.

As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him” (Amos 5:18).

Jeremiah prophesied, “For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of

it” (Jeremiah 30:5). God’s people will go through a very difficult time, worse than anything that has ever come upon this earth. If you are expecting to sail through with no trouble, you will be incredibly surprised.

One day, the mother of James and John asked Jesus, “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father” (Matthew 20:21-23). “We are able.”

What a response! They had no idea what they were committing to. The cup Jesus was talking about was the experience He would go through in the Garden of Gethsemene to the cross, the same cup Jesus later asked His Father to take away (Mark 14:36).

(For a thorough study on the cup of trembling, request a copy of our study entitled, *Jacob’s Trouble*. *Editor*)

If you know a challenge is coming, it is wise to prepare for it ahead of time so you will be ready. God said,

“...prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12). There is a preparation that needs to be done before we are ready to stand in the last days.

I am a firefighter, and I have had to train to be ready to know what to do when I go inside of a burning building. I have to know how to use my safety equipment. I have to know how to break through walls, doors, and other life saving responses to give me and others the best chance of survival. Your likelihood of success dramatically increases the more you have trained. Even so, as we approach the last days of earth’s history, we need to know all we can about what to expect and how to be prepared when that time comes.

At times of peace, it is easy to get worked up over small things. The Bible says, “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” (Jeremiah 12:5). If you think times are difficult for you now, just wait. This old world is not going to get better, and the last events will be rapid ones.

According to the Bible, many will be called on to lay down their lives for their faith in Christ. Yet, those who do, have not lost. They have gained more than anything this world can offer. “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose

his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:35). Jesus said, “...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:6-13). In His message to one of the seven churches in Revelation, He said, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). No matter how bad things get, be faithful unto the end and you will inherit eternal life.

Remember not to go after or blindly follow anyone who teaches you about the events of the last days. Find out for yourself what the Bible says. There are grave consequences for being wrong about these things.

Incredible Promise

Luke gave an account of Jesus’ instruction about the last days that included an amazing promise: “And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them” (Luke 21:7, 8). Remember not to go after or blindly follow anyone who teaches you about the events of the last days. Find out for yourself what the Bible says. There are grave consequences for being wrong about these things.

Continuing, “But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first

come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:7-19).

That is an amazing promise. Some will have to lay down their lives, but there will be thousands who will be protected through these trials. Psalm 91 gives us a similar promise.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover

thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habit-

The secret to thriving in the last days is to abide in Christ, and let Him abide in you.

ation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation" (Psalms 91:1-16).

These are some amazing promises for those who make the Lord their habitation. Jesus explained, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). The secret to thriving in the last days

is to abide in Christ, and let Him abide in you. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28).

The promise of Psalm 91 tells us it is for those who set their love upon God and know His name. This is a critical point to grasp. God wants to win our hearts to Him. This is the true key to success in life. When we are rooted and grounded in love, regardless of what happens on the outside we will have peace and confidence on the inside. This is what we need to survive and thrive in the last days. To set our love upon God, we must grow in our appreciation

The mark of the beast crisis will revolve around worship.

of His love for us, for "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Knowing His love for us is equivalent to knowing His name, for His name is His character. Moses asked God, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee" (Exodus 33:18). Knowing God's name is knowing His goodness. The more you see how good God is, the more you will love Him in return. Your love for Him will never be greater than your perception of His love for you. May you grow in that each day. "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). "And the Lord direct your

hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

(For deeper insight into the amazing love of God, request the free book, *God's Love on Trial*. *Editor*)

The Mark of the Beast

One of the biggest challenges we will face as God's people in the last days will be the mark of the beast as described in Revelation chapter 13. Here it describes a beast power that will cause "...all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (Revelation 13:16). Keep in mind that the angel Gabriel explained that beasts in Bible prophecy represent kingdoms (Daniel 7:23; 8:20, 21; Revelation 16:10). The mark of the beast will be enforced by a kingdom, or government, not an actual animal.

The mark of the beast crisis will revolve around worship as demonstrated in these other verses in the same chapter: Revelation 13:4, 8, 12, & 15. Worship is something we owe to God, not to man. Jesus said, "Render to Caesar [the government] the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17).

The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts. The first four commandments deal with worship to God, the last six deal with our relationship to our fellow man (Exodus 20:3-17). Since the mark of the beast crisis will revolve around worship,

Continued on page 11

The Gospel to the Gentiles

by Ellet J. Waggoner

It is quite commonly supposed that until several years after the ascension of Christ nothing had ever been done for the Gentiles, and that the carrying of the Gospel to them was something in the nature of an afterthought, even with the Lord. Without realizing how dishonoring to the Lord such a thought is, men have rather taken it for granted that the Lord loved the Jewish people more than He did any other people, and that all of His plans for centuries were with reference to them alone. Yet the whole teaching of the Bible is contrary to such an idea, as the following points will in part show.

We may note, in passing, that more than two thousand years of the world's history passed before there were any such people as the Israelites. In this period we may note Enoch, the faithful prophet and teacher, and Noah, the "preacher of righteousness," whose message was to the whole world. Coming to Abraham, the head of the Jewish race, we find that God called him when he was a Gentile, in the midst of heathen people. His faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. "How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that

righteousness might be imputed unto them also" (Romans 4:10, 11).

So we see that in the very call of Abraham the Lord showed that He is no respecter of persons, but that "in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:35). Abraham was to be the father not simply of a certain race, but of all them that believe, no matter of what nationality. In the very days of Abraham there was Melchizedek, a king in the land of Canaan, and a priest of the Most High God, who was a greater man than Abraham, and whose greatness Abraham recognized in receiving his blessing, and paying tithes to him (Hebrews 7:1-10).

That God did not cast off the Gentiles in choosing Abraham, is shown not only by the fact that Abraham was himself a Gentile, but also by the fact he would not give Abraham and his seed an inheritance in the promised land until the present occupants of it had been proved to the full (Genesis 15:16). As in later times He bore with the Jews until they should fill up the measure of their iniquity, and as He gave the people before the flood a probation of one hundred and twenty years after the flood was threatened, so to the inhabitants of Canaan He gave a probation of four hundred years. This is an illustration of the truth that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). It

is an instance of the longsuffering of God, who is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

We come to the time when God sent Moses to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel from bondage. In doing this God did not doom to destruction all the rest of the inhabitants of the world. His wonderful works for Israel were that His name might be declared throughout all the earth (Exodus 9:16). Therefore in delivering the Israelites, it was for the purpose of making them missionaries to the whole world. The only reason for making His name known throughout the whole earth was that people out of every nation might believe on Him. Evidence of this is seen in the fact that when the plagues came on Egypt, warning was given, so that any among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the Lord might save themselves and their cattle. (See Exodus 9:18-21). The blood upon the door-post would have saved the lives of Egyptians as well as the lives of Israelites, if they had believed. The only advantage of the Jew was that to them were committed the oracles of God (Romans 3:1, 2). To them was given the high honor of carrying the Gospel to the nations.

We find that the purpose of God in bringing the plagues upon the obstinate Egyptians was fulfilled, because His name was declared throughout all the earth. When the spies entered the house of Rahab, forty years after, she said to them: “I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror has fallen upon us, and that all

the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed, and as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Joshua 2:9-11). All the inhabitants of Canaan had heard of the Lord and His power. Rahab believed, and “by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31). All the other inhabitants of Canaan might have been saved, as well as Rahab, if they had only believed, as she did. The opportunity was given them.

It is true that the Israelites were forbidden to make any league with the inhabitants of the land. And why? Because the Israelites were the congregation, or church, of the Lord, and He would not have His church in alliance with the world. The union of Church and State is a thing that is utterly abhorrent to the Lord, since it destroys the life of the church, and makes the world no better. But all who had faith might in those days, as well as in these become identified with the church, and thus come out and be separate from the world. See in the case of Rahab.

It is a sad fact that the Jews did not accept the high commission given them, and did not proceed to evangelize the

“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

(Exodus 20:11)



Creation Maze

Help Adam and Eve Find Rest

Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Word Search

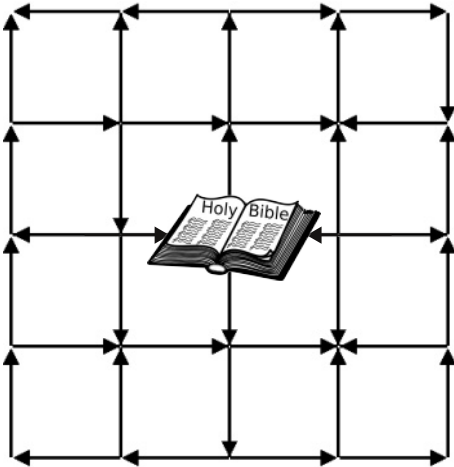
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“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

(Exodus 20:11)

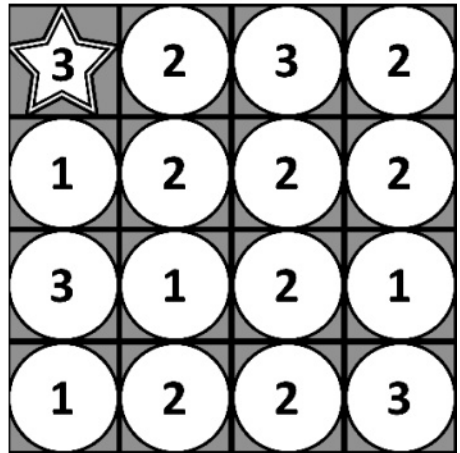
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Arrow Maze



Follow the arrows from and back to the Bible.

Number Maze



Begin and end at the star. Using the number in your space, jump that number of blocks in a straight line to a new space. No diagonals!

Bonus

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

www.presenttruth.info/kidskorner

Answer for the Last Issue:

“Testimony” 2

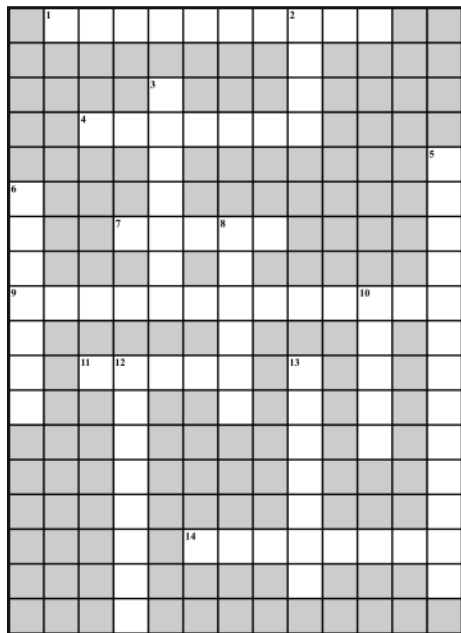
Oct.-Dec. 2016

Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Study Crossword - Creation

(The King James Version is required.)

- "In the beginning God ____ the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:1—**13 Down**
- "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our ____: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Genesis 1:26—**14 Across**
- "So God created man in his own ____, in the ____ of God created he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 1:27 (1 word)—**10 Down**
- "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he ____ on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." Genesis 2:2—**8 Down**
- "And God ____ the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Genesis 2:3—**4 Across**
- "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the ____ day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:11—**6 Down**
- "By the ____ of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Psalms 33:6—**2 Down**
- "For he ____, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Psalms 33:9—**11 Across**
- "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things ____ ____ ____." Ephesians 3:9 (3 words)—**9 Across**



Christ. See Hebrews 1:1-3; Colossians 1:12-16; and John 1:1-3, 14.

- "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy ____ they are and were created." Revelation 4:11—**12 Down**
- "Create in me a clean ____, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalms 51:10—**7 Across**
- "For, behold, I create new ____ and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isaiah 65:17—**3 Down**
- "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth ____." 2 Peter 3:13—**5 Down**
- "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were ____; and there was no more sea." Revelation 21:1 (2 words)—**1 Across**

You may want to remove this sheet for your children!

Note: All things were created by God, the Father, through His Son, Jesus

In the Beginning God Created

On the 1st day God created Day and Night.

On the 2nd day God created the _____.

On the 3rd day God divided the _____ from the _____ and filled the land with _____.

On the 4th day God created the _____ for the day, and the _____ and _____ for the night.

On the 5th day God created _____ for the oceans, lakes and rivers, and _____ for the air.

On the 6th day God created _____ then God created _____.

On the 7th day God rested.

See Genesis chapters 1 and 2 for the answers

Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden.

- Corrie ten Boom

When *life* gets too hard to stand, *kneel*

God wants full custody,
not just weekend visits.

I may not be perfect, but Jesus thinks I am to die for.



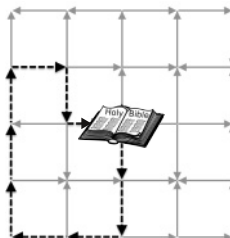
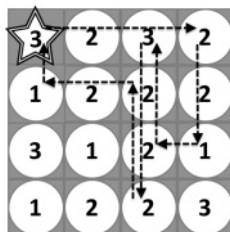
My child,
You worry too much.

I've got this, remember?

Love, God

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Answers



world. Once in the land of Canaan, they settled down to their ease. They assumed that what the Lord had done for them was because He thought more of them than of any other people in the world, and so they began to trust in themselves that they were righteous, and despise others. This spirit was shown in the case of Jonah, which also shows God's care for other people besides the Israelites. How strange it is that with the case of Jonah before them, men will think that God had no care for any people but the Jews! It is far more strange then that the Jews themselves should have thought so.

Throughout the prophecies of Isaiah we find many references to the Gentiles, and there are prophecies addressed especially to them. The same is true of other prophets. At length, because the Jews would not make known the truth of God to other people, they were carried into captivity, God Himself delivering them into the hands of their enemies, in order that in captivity they might do that which they refused to do in freedom. And so God's name was made known throughout the world. Nebuchadnezzar himself was given a wonderful dream, and its interpretation. Through the three friends of Daniel the truth of God was made known to all the rulers of the kingdom. In all the history of the captivity we find that six hundred years before Christ, as well as in the days of Paul, God was desirous of having His name borne before kings.

We come to the birth of Christ. When the angel appeared to the shepherds on the plain, he said, "I bring

you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). When Jesus was presented in the temple, six weeks after His birth, the aged Simeon took Him up in his arms, and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, that Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). So there was no reason in the world for the exclusiveness which the disciples of Christ manifested. What Simeon knew they might all have known. For through the prophet Isaiah the Lord had said of Christ, "I have put My Spirit upon Him; and He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," and had said that He was to be given "for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isaiah 42:1, 6, 7).

In the presence of His disciples Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). To them, together with the assembled multitudes, He said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). This shows the position that He wishes His people to occupy. And this is what He designed them to be from the beginning. The disciples might have known and ought to have known, that the mission of the Gospel was to the whole world. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,

but have everlasting life” (John 3:16) And when was Christ given? “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:18-20). God changes not; therefore from the beginning, and all the time, He has been working for the salvation of the whole world. Ever since the fall it has been as true as it is now, that Christ “is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

Take the instance in which to the superficial reader Jesus seemed to be the most indifferent to suffering, and regardless of any but the Jews. “Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:21-24). Yet He granted the woman’s request, and healed her daughter, thus showing that when He said, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” He did not mean that He was not sent to every one that would believe on Him. By her faith the woman showed that she was one of the house

of Israel. The fact that Jesus granted her request should have taught the disciples that He was not exclusive in His work.

All this is only a beginning of the evidence that from the first God’s plan has been the same. When Peter went to Cornelius, and, after hearing the whole story of how God had brought him there, he said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but to every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:34, 35). This was the first time that Peter had perceived that truth, but it was not a new thing. God did not at that hour cease to be a respecter of persons. He had never been one. God was at that time just what He had always been. And thus it will be that before the throne of God will stand at last a multitude “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9). The closing message of the Gospel, which is “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6), is but the last note of the song which was begun in Eden, after the fall, and which the angels echoed to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem. As Christ was sent “that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17), so are His disciples sent to all the world; not aside from the Master, but together with Him for the assurance is, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). >>

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Continued from page 6

then it must intrude upon our responsibility to God found in the first four of the Ten Commandments. These Commandments are:

- 1) Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- 2) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- 3) Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- 4) Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:3-11).

There will be a push by governments of this world for people to viol-

ate one of these four commandments. Those who refuse will not be allowed to buy or sell, and some will be punished with death.

This type of enforcement was enacted many years ago, when the king of Babylon passed a law trying to force people to worship something other than God. He set up a large golden image, and commanded, "To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (Daniel 3:4-6).

Here a king was attempting to force people to worship an image, something that is strictly forbidden in the Ten Commandments. The king was intruding upon what men should only render to God. This forced God's people who were there to

You see, there is no person on the earth who has the right to pass laws enforcing worship.

choose to obey God or man. Three of God's people refused to worship the image, and they were thrown into a fiery furnace. To prove that they were right in their

refusal, and that no king has the right to enforce worship upon men, God performed a miracle. The three men who were thrown into the fiery furnace were privileged to have Jesus Himself go with them into the fire and keep them from being hurt (Daniel 3:19-27). Praise God!

You see, there is no person on the earth who has the right to pass laws enforcing worship. Anytime a law is passed that seeks to force men to render to man the things that belong to God, he is out of line. When this happens, it is our responsibility to “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

There will be laws of men that will seek to cause people to worship the beast and his image in violation of at least one of the first four of God’s Ten Commandments. When this happens, do not yield! Stay strong! Be faithful unto the end!

(For a study on identifying the beast and his mark, contact us and request our free booklet, *The Mark of the Beast*. For a free booklet on the second coming, the two resurrections and the millennium, please request the booklet, *The Millennium*. Editor)

Moral Decay

One of the identifying characteristics of the last days is described by Paul; “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ... Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1-7).

This is a sad state of affairs. In the last fifty years we have seen a drastic downturn in morality in this world. What was considered taboo years ago, is considered normal and acceptable today. This is true in just about every area of morality. This is not only true outside of the church, but also among those who claim to be followers of the Lord. Some of the most abominable practices are being accepted among God’s professed people. In the description above, Paul was not just describing the condition of the world, but of those who “have a form of godliness” but deny “the power thereof.” Churches today are becoming less and less distinct from the world. This is a sign that we are living in the last days.

Atheism

Another characteristic of the last days is atheism. Peter wrote, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in 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 3:3-7).

Knowing God

Notice that there are two specific things that scoffers in the last days will be willingly ignorant of. 1) that by the word of the Lord the heavens were made. 2) the world was overflowed with water. These are the two primary features of atheism. The Bible says they are ignorant on purpose. This is sad! It is amazing to see how far many scientists go to deny that the world was covered with a flood. There are sharks teeth at 7,000 feet above sea level in

Knowing we are loved, forgiven, created for His glory, that God is filled with thoughts of peace about us, and that He is willing to give up everything for us; this makes us strong, and gives us the ability to thrive in the last days.

Speaking of the last days, Daniel prophesied, "...the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32). Knowing God's love for us will give us strength in the last days. Knowing we are loved, forgiven, created for His glory, that God is filled with thoughts of peace about us, and that He is willing to give up everything for us; this makes us strong, and gives us the ability to thrive

New Mexico, there are seashells on the top of Mount Everest. There are seashells on the top of mountains in Antarctica. There are many, many large canyons and other formations that were clearly made by huge amounts of water. There are giant boulders on mountains in Washington that were clearly rounded smooth by water, and there are many more such evidences of a worldwide flood. Yet, there is consistently a barrage of supposed scientific minds that promote some other explanation of these things. The theories disagree with each other, but they are united in denying the flood.

Evolutionists still cannot provide proof of where everything came from, nor how non-living things became living things. The theory of evolution is a recent development, and was prophesied in the Bible nearly two thousand years ago. It is a sign we are living in the last days.

in the last days. There are several identifying characteristics of God's people who live to the very end of the last days. Some of them are that they will:

- 1) Know God (Daniel 11:32).
- 2) Have God the Father's name [character] in their foreheads (Revelation 14:1).
- 3) Genuinely love others (John 13:35; 1 Peter 1:22).
- 4) Not speak lies (Zephaniah 3:13).
- 5) Have no guile [deception] in their mouths (Revelation 14:5).
- 6) Not do iniquity [sin] (Zephaniah 3:13).
- 7) Be without fault (Revelation 14:5).
- 8) Keep the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).
- 9) Follow the Lamb [Jesus] wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4).
- 10) Have the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 12:17; 19:10).
- 11) Have the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12).

12) Not be defiled with women [false church teachings and practices] (Revelation 14:4; 17:4, 5).

Friends, these qualities will identify the true followers of God in the last days. These are symptoms of a relationship they have with God that far surpasses common Christianity of today. You and I very likely will be alive when the Lord returns for these faithful people. I pray that we will be faithful and endure unto the end, so we will rejoice to see Jesus return for His people.

The beginning of this amazing relationship with God starts with getting to know how deeply God cares about you individually. This is the core, the root, of your relationship with God. When you are “rooted and grounded in love,” amazing things will happen (Ephesians 3:16, 17).

Seeing God

Recently I have been drawn to a couple verses that I have come to really appreciate. The Bible says, “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” (3 John 1:11). “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him” (1 John 3:6). Here we learn that those who do evil have not seen God. This gives a direct connection between our actions and seeing God. Doing evil is a side effect of not seeing God. Doing good is a side effect of seeing God. Let us

make sure we have this straight, so our focus will be where it needs to be.

Now, don’t get confused here. The Bible says, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). He dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Timothy 6:16).

Seeing God in 3 John 1:11 is not seeing Him physically, it is seeing His character as it really is, full of love and compassion. This is precisely where our first parents failed in the Garden of Eden. Satan tricked Eve into thinking the forbidden fruit was good, and therefore God must be a liar and a bad guy for keeping it from her.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6). When Eve saw that the fruit was good and God was bad, then she committed the first sin of mankind. This identifies clearly where our problem is. If you are struggling with any sin or addiction, that is not the problem. Your real problem is not seeing God correctly. Your addictions and sins will take care of themselves when you get this correct. Otherwise they will just keep popping up in different forms.

When they were nailing Jesus to the cross, Jesus prayed for the soldiers, “Father, forgive them; for they

*Doing evil is a side effect of not seeing God.
Doing good is a side effect of seeing God.*

know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Their actions were hurting people, yet their problem was not that they hurt people, but that they did not see God’s character of love. The revelation of God’s character of love will be the last message of mercy to be given to the world. I pray that you are ready to receive it, be changed by it, and share it with others (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Conclusion

If you want to be ready to meet the Lord in peace when He comes, don’t just say a sinners’ prayer and hope to go to heaven. That is not what Jesus said to do. He said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). Following Jesus is about Jesus living inside of you, and you thriving because you are connected to the source of all goodness. Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). You are the branch! What is the job of the branch? Is it to produce fruit, or stay connected to the vine? Jesus told us that if we are connected to the vine we will bear much

fruit. Being connected comes first, bearing fruit is a natural result.

Suppose you need to cut a piece of wood, but when you pick up an electric saw and switch it on the motor fails to start. What would be your first response? You would, no doubt, check all of the connections to make sure it is plugged into power. Any amount of

tinkering with the saw and the switch will do no good at all if it is not connected to power. Even so, when we see failures in our lives, focusing on the failure will not fix the problem. Every sin or addiction problem in our lives can be traced to not seeing God correctly and not being connected to the source of our power, Je-

sus Christ. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

I pray that you will take seriously your relationship with God, and actively, purposefully, do all you can to strengthen that connection, for He “is our life” (Colossians 3:4). Get alone with God every morning and ask Him to make you more like Him. Surrender your life to Him and sincerely ask Him to guide your every thought, word and action. May God’s love fill you so fully that it will overflow to all those around you. >>

If you want to be ready to meet the Lord in peace when He comes, don't just say a sinners' prayer and hope to go to heaven.

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