

EXALTING CHRIST · EQUIPPING BELIEVERS · EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

# CORNERSTONE

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## **Are You Following Christ?**

The Cross of Christ  
How I Became a Follower of Christ  
...and more

TO YOU WHO BELIEVE, THIS STONE IS PRECIOUS · 1 PETER 2:7




The year 2020 as with other notable years in recent times, will not be soon forgotten—at least by this generation. The first editorial of Cornerstone Magazine this year was titled “2020 Vision.” It was an exhortation to the Body of Christ to sharpen our spiritual focus. I for one, felt my spiritual vision needed to be better than it was. Little did I realize that in just a few short months the pandemic helped to accomplish this goal (my guess is that worldwide pandemics have a way of doing this!). For many, life was turned upside down, routines shattered, and a new vocabulary was on everyone’s lips. We were introduced to terms such as social distancing, CDC guidelines, masking up, COVID-19, and other health-related phrases. How quickly our lives were changed! It proves just how we do not know what a day may bring forth, much less a year. Fortunately, biblical Christians have the benefit of holy Scripture that shines as a light in a dark place (2 Pet. 1:19), confirming the veracity of God’s Word and shedding light to some degree of how the stage is being set for future events. (See Cornerstone Magazine’s YouTube webinars that addressed this topic). We do not have all the details, but at least we do have the big picture, and it helps to make sense of what is happening in the world around us. A world pandemic, further steps toward a cashless society, instances of the breakdown of law and order, people’s hearts failing them for fear – all significant components of end time events. It is an affirmation of the reliability of God’s Word and an inspiration for us to be busy in the work of the gospel and to wait for the Son from heaven.

### **How Can We Give Thanks?**

With all that has transpired during this past year—the negative nightly news, a strained economy, failed businesses, family tensions, and worries about the coronavirus—what good can we find in a year whose end cannot come soon enough? It has been tough year for so many people in so many ways. Much has changed in our lives and many have gone through some very deep waters. We are told to “remember them... that suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb. 13:3). Our hearts go out to our brethren (and others) who have been adversely affected during this challenging time. Is there anything for which we can give God praise, especially as we approach the time of year when are reminded to give thanks? The answer to this question is “yes,” there have been bright spots for which we can praise God. When I think back over this year, I can see how many of us were forced to think “outside the box.” We have all taken a giant leap forward technologically. Though various video conferencing formats were already in place before the pandemic, I certainly was

not utilizing them, even though they were readily available. But due to recommended CDC guidelines (or should we say restrictions), we were forced to find alternative ways to connect and to encourage one another in Christ. The result has been a preponderance of virtual Bible studies, webinars, YouTube messages, and hybrid meetings to help those who are unable to physically attend services. All of them have been used of the Lord in some way to multiply the ministry of God’s Word. And it looks like it will be here for the foreseeable future. Like it or not, virtual meetings have been the major means of keeping Christians connected during this time. Many seniors who had previously not felt the need to utilize these resources now had new motivation to stay in touch with their family and friends. Despite the techno glitches here and there, it still has provided great opportunities for us to connect relationally—a second great benefit.

### **A Place For Praise**

Further, we have also benefitted spiritually. Despite being separated for a long period of time, many Christians have had more time to engage in personal Bible study and in online prayer meetings. During this time of worldwide trial, it has been possible for those ministering the Word to go from one meeting to another by simply walking into another room and connecting online, (sometimes within the same hour!) though separated by hundreds or even thousands of miles. Though travel was severely restricted, it did not prevent virtual conferences from occurring from around the globe making it possible to join from the convenience of their homes, or anywhere else. Despite the horrific headlines, the Word of God is not bound (2 Tim. 2:9). There really is a place for praise and a lot of reasons why we can find “songs in the night” (Job 35:10). The Lord truly does inhabit the praises of His people. Like Jehoshaphat, who when surrounded by adversity on every side, made praise his primary instrument in the battles he faced, singing to the Lord in the beauty of holiness with the words, “Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever!” And so can we. This truly is the power of praise. 



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**by Mark Kolchin**



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TO YOU WHO BELIEVE, THIS STONE IS PRECIOUS • 1 PETER 2:7



# ARE YOU FOLLOWING CHRIST?

The book of Acts begins with 120 frightened and powerless believers. But ten days later the promised Holy Spirit came in a demonstration of power (wind) and light (fire). Peter preached the gospel, many were saved, and began to assemble to be taught the Word, fellowship, break bread, and pray. Peter and John continued to preach the gospel, which drew the attention of the religious leaders with the predictable persecution (Acts 4:1-12). Today it would be a huge mistake for us to believe that the enemy of souls has ceased persecuting and deceiving the Lord's people (Gen. 3:1).

Many years ago, our family moved from England to Canada and we made friends with some dear folk who had some different views on scripture. One of the more startling differences was their refusal to say they were "saved." They would say that they "hoped to see us in heaven," but had no firm assurance that they would.

The word "saved" is not popular in some quarters and

is under attack in others. Rather than using the word "saved," a popular teaching today speaks of being "Christ followers." This term is popular among those who reject the teaching of eternal security. But should we replace "saved" with "Christ follower?" Is there a difference between being a follower of Christ and being saved?

## *Tenses*

Clearly there is a difference in tenses. Saved speaks of a past completed action (Luke 7:50; Eph. 2:8), while following speaks of ongoing action. Following speaks of doing, saved speaks of done. In fairness, one may say that because they are saved they are following Christ, but avoiding the word "saved" raises very serious questions. How does the Word of God use these two words?

## *Follower*

By definition, the word "disciple" is literally "a learner" or one who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ. The



Bible does speak of being followers of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1) and of God (Eph. 5:1). But the word is also applied to followers of John the Baptist (Matt. 9:14), and the Pharisees (Matt. 22:16). The disciples of the Pharisees certainly were not believers in Christ, and in fact some of the followers of Christ do not appear to have been either. John 6:66 says, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." One may say that the Lord instructed His disciples to follow Him, and most did. However, before Pentecost they were afraid, fearful, and powerless. That is until they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, receiving the very life of Christ which equipped them to serve Him.

Acts 11:26 says, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." It is significant that the word "disciple" isn't used after Acts 21:16. The focus in the epistles is on believers being "in Christ," rather than being followers of Christ. Followers can stop following but those who are saved cannot become unsaved. Many times, in the gospels we see the Lord urging people to follow Him. In the epistles those who are in Christ are encouraged to follow after: peace; charity; good; righteousness; faith, etc. Since believers are in Christ, and He in them, the emphasis is on the life of Christ being lived in and through them.

### **Saved**

The doctrine of salvation is called Soteriology. It is an examination of how Christ's death and resurrection secures the salvation of those who believe and seeks to explain the doctrines of redemption, justification, sanctification, propitiation, substitution, and eternal destiny.

Acts 4:12 says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The Greek word for salvation (soteria) means "the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted immediately by God to those who accept His conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, in whom alone it is to be obtained..." (Vines). The word "saved" is used no fewer than fifty-seven times in the New Testament. Not all occurrences apply to being saved from eternal punishment, but many very clearly do (Rom. 5:9; 1 Cor. 1:18; Titus 3:5).

Perhaps the best illustrations of being saved are shown in the Old Testament. In Exodus 12, the children of Israel were in bondage to the Egyptians. Their position was hopeless until the Lord intervened. Having given Pharaoh many opportunities to let His people go, God gave the final instruction for their salvation. God spared all who put the blood of the sacrifice on the door posts and lintels, a clear picture of Calvary. The Lord led the people to the Red Sea while they were pursued by Pharaoh and his army. God protected them and led them through the sea on dry land. After they had passed through the Red Sea, God closed the waters and the enemy was destroyed. They were saved. They were safe.

Another clear illustration of what it means to be saved is shown in the case of the deadly snake bites during Israel's wilderness wanderings. The people had rebelled against God and His corrective punishment was to send fiery serpents amongst them. Numbers 21:8-9 says, "And the LORD said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." The Lord's solution to their sin problem was simply to look and live.

The Lord Himself confirmed this simple truth. John 3:14 says, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

There is no following in either of these accounts but simply believing and being saved.

We are in a vicious spiritual warfare with an enemy who will use all and any levels of subtly, cunning, and craftiness to deceive the saints. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 says, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." Again in 1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

Sadly, many today are easily deceived and led astray because they fail to spend adequate time feeding on the Word of God. It is easy to say one is following Christ, attempting to follow His precepts, attending church, and spending time with other believers. However, before we can follow Christ we must be saved and we can only truly follow Him by the power of the indwelling Spirit. ☩



Ray and Carol Jones lived for many years in England and were involved with youth work, beach missions and establishing a local assembly. Serving with New Tribes Mission for 35 years, they taught New Testament Church principles to prospective missionaries preparing to reach remote people groups with the Gospel. They were commended by the Wallenstein Bible Chapel in 1981. Ray serves as Vice Chairman of Guelph Bible Conference Center, and is currently engaged in itinerant ministry, shepherding, bible studies, and conferences.

**by Raymond Jones**



# THE CROSS OF



Given the centrality of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, it is interesting that He never refers to it as His cross.<sup>1</sup> He spoke of the disciples' individual crosses, but that referred to their identification with persecution for His sake, as well as death to the old life (Matt. 10:38; 16:24-26; cf. Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14). Rather, He used five different expressions to depict His sacrificial death. Collectively, they describe the wonder of the Lord's work for His Father's glory and His people's good.

## ***His Cross's Height***

To Nicodemus, the Lord Jesus spoke of His suffering in terms of height: *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up"* (John 3:14). The mention of the serpent recalls mankind's fall (Gen. 3:1). Reptiles are associated with the ground, signifying humiliation and death—a ubiquitous reminder of the curse. But in the flood's aftermath, after Noah's sacrifice the Lord promised to remove the curse (Gen. 8:21).

In Numbers 21, God's judgment arrived in the form of "fiery" serpents. Their deadly bite was incurable by human means, but God provided an antidote: the bronze serpent on the pole—the image of that which was killing them provided their deliverance. Similarly, 2 Corinthians 5:21 explains Christ's substitutionary death: *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* This "lifting up" would eventually result in many people being drawn to the Savior—phraseology

uniting His death with His ascension (John 12:32).

Initially, the cross does not seem to be an elevated state. After all, this was a shameful place, the final end for humanity's worst criminals. Nonetheless, it was God's intent to use it as the centerpiece of His great plan of salvation. Only God's own Son was found a completely sufficient propitiatory sacrifice for the world's sins (1 John 2:2). Throughout His life, human examination found Him to be sinless in His person, demonstrated by His impeccable words and deeds. Truly, we may marvel at His challenge to His enemies: *"which one of you convicts me of sin?"*, drawing only stunned silence (John 8:48). His worth's greatest proclamation came from heaven itself: *"this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matt. 3:17). Thus, only He could ascend to the height of Calvary's cross, with the requisite sinless perfection, to fulfill the *"determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"* in the saving of mankind (Acts 2:23).

## ***His Cross's Depth***

His crucifixion's depth is manifested by His statement: *"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"* (Luke 12:50). He called it a baptism: something that submerged Him in suffering under divine wrath. Prophetically, Psalm 69:1-2 graphically describes this: *"Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."* Another psalm speaks of deep calling unto deep, using the rushing rivers




# CHRIST

has no markings visible to us that we may measure His suffering, loss, and pain. His agony was far greater than the sum of all human pain. His offering fully and justly satisfied God's wrath during the three hours of darkness. Now, no other sacrifice is required: "...every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:11-12).

## **His Cross's Glory**

Since our Lord first referred to His cross as a "height," His final reference to it fittingly speaks of Glory: "...Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1). Just as we may not initially see the cross' height, we also may miss its glory. Was it indeed glorification for the Son of God to suffer, bleed, and die on a cross? Praise God, indeed it was! With the cross just days away, our Lord focused on His return to glory (John 13:1). He spoke of His death, resurrection, and ascension as all part of one work for the good pleasure of His Father (John 14:1-31). This great paradox of suffering is seen as glory, when one understands that the cross accomplished reconciliation. This was the culmination of His obedient work for the Father (John 18:37), and through it He would be able to "reconcile all things unto Himself" (Col. 1:20). Thus, He saw the cross not only as the means by which He and the Father would reunite in a previously known glory, but also as the method of bringing "many sons to glory," those who would come to Him by the cross!

Small wonder that from henceforth, all true believers join Paul in glorying in the cross. Like him, our boast is in His identity and work on that Roman tree. With him we may say: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). Rightly viewed, the cross is the eternal demonstration of God's incomparable character. 

### *Endnotes:*

1. This refers to the noun "cross." He does use the verb "crucify" in describing His suffering; see Mt. 20:19, 26:2



Sam Mikhael was raised in Canada and studied engineering and medicine at the University of Ottawa in Ontario. He now resides in Nassau, The Bahamas, where he maintains a busy medical practice. Dr. Mikhael also serves as an elder at the Shirley Heights Gospel Chapel in Nassau and is on several secular and Christian ministry boards. He is also active in itinerant ministry at camps, conferences, and local assemblies. He is married to Patricia and they have one daughter, Annie.

**by S. B. R. Mikhael**

and waterfalls near Mount Hermon as a metaphor for the relentless pounding of God's wrathful waves against the Lamb of God (Ps. 42:7). His propitiatory death brought the Man of Sorrows into unfathomable depths of suffering.

## **His Cross's Bitterness**

Christ's cross was the divinely appointed location where He drank the cup of judgment to its dregs (Ps. 75:8). When a well-meaning Peter erringly arose in the garden, sword in hand, to prevent Christ's capture and ultimate crucifixion, we hear His settled intention: "the cup which my Father gives me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). After venting their hatred against the Messiah, men sat down to callously watch Him expire. But the worse suffering occurred when He willingly died as a sacrifice for sins (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

## **His Cross's Duration (Agony)**

As His earthly ministry neared closure, He said: "...The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23). Though He spoke of it as an hour—a drop of time drawn from eternity's endless well—how horribly long it was. Both at the beginning and end of this hour He would cry to His "Father." But during the darkness of His agony His language changes and we hear that great and awful cry – "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" Justice demanded that people suffer throughout eternity for their sin; thus, Christ suffered through the infinite depth of agony for my sin. Though we may measure His time on the cross by hours, we cannot plumb its agony, for that yardstick





**GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS** *Lamentations 3:23*

## *How I Became a Follower of Christ* *The Testimony of Dennis Wagner*

I grew up as a child in a fundamental “churchy” family. We went to church together, were always involved in church-related activities, and were usually present whenever a meeting was scheduled. Every year our fellowship would have a “Decision Day” on a Sunday in September. The Decision Day was when the gospel was preached, and an altar call was given to come forward to receive Christ as Savior.

At the age of 13, I remember clearly coming to the realization that my perfect attendance in Sunday School was not enough to get me to heaven. I responded to one of those altar calls and received Christ as my Savior. However, from age 13 to age 20, I lived a very hypocritical





life. I knew that I was a Christian, but I did not know how to grow in my relationship with Christ. Because of that, I got away from the Lord. When I was at college, no one would have ever known that I was a Christian, but when I was at home I was still very involved in our meeting.

At age 20, the Lord challenged me to walk more closely to Him. I asked Him if He was real to somehow show me. At that time, I was a student at Millersville University in Lancaster County, PA. I went to a friend's dorm room to invite him to come home with me that weekend for a youth group retreat. As the Lord would have it, when I got there, my friend was having a Bible study with one of his friends. Out of politeness, I invited them both to come with me to this retreat. As it turned out, my friend did not come, but his friend did. It was ironic, but God was at work. When we got back to campus that weekend, this new friend named Dick shared the gospel with me and was surprised when I told him I was a Christian. After that, he and I were inseparable. He was instrumental in showing me how to grow as a Christian which is what I needed. We studied the Bible, got involved in evangelism, and spent time praying together. He could not have gotten away from me if he wanted to. I knew that I had found what I needed spiritually and did not turn back from that point on.

The first time we witnessed to someone in the dorm, that person trusted Christ as his Savior. What a thrill that was! Then I had an opportunity to witness to a young lady in one of my classes and when I asked her if she had ever trusted Christ as her Savior she said no. I said would you like to trust Him and she said "Yes." The first question

that came to my mind was "Now what?" My answer was "I know, we will go find Dick." But he was not around. So, we talked further, and she prayed and trusted Christ as her Savior. I prayed and rejoiced with her in her new life in Christ. Then I found out later that night that she was a dorm counselor on a wing in one of the female dorms that was mostly occupied by Christians who had been praying for her salvation. To think that the Lord chose to use me in that situation was just amazing. She went on to marry a Christian man and together they served the Lord in Bonaire with Transworld Radio.

Later, I met a woman at Millersville by the name of Eleanor who would eventually become my wife, and through her was introduced to New Testament assemblies. The Lord has blessed us with 4 children, 11 grandchildren, and 45 years of serving Him together at Harrisburg Bible Chapel in Harrisburg, PA. To Him be all the honor and glory forever!  



Dennis Wagner has worked in the insurance field in a family business for over 40 years. He has also been actively involved in prison ministry in the Harrisburg, PA area for over 21 years. He and his wife Eleanor fellowship at Harrisburg Bible Chapel and have four grown children and eleven grandchildren.

by **Dennis Wagner**



# Report: Good News Club: Taking the Gospel to a Public Elementary School

Fueled by earnest prayer and the support of believers willing to take time off from work, the New Hampshire Avenue Gospel Chapel (Silver Spring, MD) started a Good News Club (GNC) with 5 children from our Assembly. Our goal was “to go”<sup>1</sup> teach the Gospel to children in a neighborhood school. We had 20 children attend our first meeting in 2011.

We soon recognized that the harvest is truly plentiful and we needed more laborers! Within a few weeks we grew to about 40 children. County regulations mandated that we split the group and occupy two classrooms given our high enrollment. Since GNC takes place in a public school we had not only to abide by this and other regulations but also had come to embrace these rules. They are not to be grudgingly complied with but wholeheartedly supported and followed. We were initially nervous about the challenge of splitting into two groups—Pre-K to Grade 2 and Grades 3 to 5—but the split enabled us to better adapt the Bible lessons, stories, songs and questions to fit the intellectual level of the children. Using two classrooms also allowed us to take in more children as news of GNC spread.

Enrollment has grown every year: from 55 children in year 1 to 75 in year 2, 90+ in year 3, 100+ in year 4, and 110+ in year 5.<sup>2</sup> Fairland’s student population is about 650 and GNC has about 15% of them. This number of children is more than double the size of our assembly’s Sunday School and AWANA program. In October 2020, our 10th GNC year, due to the pandemic lockdown and school closure, we shall begin for the first time to conduct our GNC on a virtual basis using Zoom. We are encouraged by other virtual GNCs, particularly in Georgia, which have experienced an increase in enrolment, even the participation of kids in China, beyond our borders!

GNC takes place after school, 3:45 pm to 5 pm every Thursday. It is action packed from the start to finish. To

attend, a student has to obtain written parental permission. Although this initially appeared to be a bureaucratic hurdle, we have since discovered that this rule forced us to fully disclose upfront what GNC is about: we tell Bible stories, teach kids to memorize Bible verses, sing Christian songs, play games, hear missionary stories and much more. It also

enabled us to obtain vital information about the children: their names, addresses, parents’ names and phone numbers and, of course, the parents’ express written consent for their child to attend GNC, and to disclose if their child had any medical concerns. The permission slip further informed us if the child needed a ride to get home and, if so, to provide an acceptance of risks and waiver of liability.<sup>3</sup> Far from being an onerous compliance burden, the permission slip has proven to be a tremendous promotional tool and gathering of much useful information.

The GNC curriculum is well thought-out and improved yearly by Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF). Our routine is: snack time,<sup>4</sup> opening prayer, singing action-oriented choruses,

memory verse, Bible story, games, small group session, closing prayer and dismissal. Each segment rapidly follows the other and everything is finished in an hour. In the early GNC years, it took a real effort to keep order. Children often talked regardless of the program, resulting in apparent chaos. We often wondered if anyone was paying attention. But the Bible lessons and the gospel message did get through; when we asked questions, many children eagerly volunteered to answer questions—they were listening in spite of appearances. We have since learned techniques from experienced elementary educators to maintain better order. Most importantly, when we asked who would like to receive the Lord Jesus into their hearts as their Savior, many tiny hands go up without hesitation! We have called for a show of faith many times and have been humbled and warmed by the response. At times, we have done the reverse to verify their understanding by asking those who have not trusted





the Lord Jesus to raise their hands. Hardly a hand went up. So how did we get to “go” teach the gospel in an elementary public school? There was a clear judicial path through a number of Supreme Court decisions. Important cases included: *Lamb’s Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free District* 508 U.S. 384 (1993), *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia* 515 U.S. 819 (1995), and *Good News Club v. Milford Central School* 533 U.S. 98 (2001). Although these important decisions received scant media coverage, the Supreme Court rulings allowed GNC to bring the gospel into public schools.

maintains a web-based training resource and we had our volunteers not only for GNC but for all our chapel ministries and activities take the training.

GNC is a tremendous blessing and encouragement to our assembly, and we pray that many more assemblies will take advantage of this opportunity. We do not have to wait for neighborhood children to come to our Sunday School. We can “go” to them at their school and a lawful path is clearly available. The field of young children is truly whitened unto harvest.<sup>5</sup>



Even with backing from the Supreme Court decisions, we did not take the cooperation of the Fairland Elementary School for granted. We hosted a Staff Appreciation Breakfast and served a home cooked hot meal. This event has worked wonders for our relationship with the school as a whole. Other chapel members assisted our regular GNC volunteers to pull it off. In addition to the meal, we distributed Bibles, CDs, gospel tracts and other Christian literature to all who came to the breakfast. The welcome and warmth for GNC we feel from the facilities’ staff, teachers, and administration, is palpable.

Running such a large Club was not without its operational issues like occasional accidents e.g. a child falling. We responded to these challenges with prayer and scrupulous compliance with school and county safety and health protocols. We have learned that these procedures are helpful in not only pointing to what we need to do when an accident happened, but, showing us how to prevent problems in the first place. We quickly adopted the Montgomery County’s Recognition and Prevention of Child Abuse protocols for all our chapel activities and programs. Montgomery County (at <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/childabuseandneglect/>)

*End notes*

1. “Go ye, therefore” Matthew 28: 19
2. Since 2017, we have in cooperation with the school restricted the number of children desiring to attend GNC due to the limited number of adult volunteers.
3. Since GNC is after school hours, there is no school bus service. Most of the parents elected to pick up their children after GNC.
4. A healthy snack is provided at the start to tie the children over the afternoon since GNC is after hours.
5. John 4:35. Inquiries about how to start a GNC may be directed to Jijo Anthony or Smitha Antony at [jijoantony@gmail.com](mailto:jijoantony@gmail.com) or [smithaantony17@gmail.com](mailto:smithaantony17@gmail.com). This article was written with helpful inputs from Smitha.




PT Tan and his wife Juio fellowship with the New Hampshire Avenue Gospel Chapel in Silver Spring, Maryland where he serves as an elder and President of the board of trustees. A retired attorney, PT practiced law as a partner of a few large international law firms for over 30 years in Washington, DC. He is currently on the boards of Bible Conferences Corporation and Cornerstone Magazine, Inc.

**by P. T. Tan**



# FOUNDATIONS

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST



**“FOR WE SHALL  
ALL STAND BEFORE  
THE JUDGMENT  
SEAT OF CHRIST.  
FOR IT IS WRITTEN,  
AS I LIVE, SAITH  
THE LORD, EVERY  
KNEE SHALL BOW  
TO ME, AND EVERY  
TONGUE SHALL  
CONFESS TO GOD.  
SO, THEN EVERY  
ONE OF US SHALL  
GIVE ACCOUNT OF  
HIMSELF TO GOD.”  
ROMANS 14:10-12**

**B**elievers will not face the judgment of condemnation for their sin at the Great White Throne. Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). But we will be judged by the Lord, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This should tell us how seriously He takes the way we live. Our lives are not our own. We have been bought at a great price, the blood of Christ, and we should live to please Him, not ourselves (1 Cor. 6:19-20). This in a nutshell establishes the criteria for the judgment of Christians.

All church-age believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ for our character and life is important to Him. Romans 14:11 quotes Isaiah 45:23 and applies it to Christians, *“every knee shall bow to me.”* We will stand before the bema, bowing and verbally acknowledging His Lordship. As our Lord He has the right to judge our lives, and we should live to please Him, not ourselves.

Today the world emphasizes individual rights and personal freedom. Like in the days of the Judges, each one does what is right in his own eyes, and often believers do the same. Who among us would not admit that the assemblies have changed in the last fifty years? And the same applies to marriages and families. Often these changes have not resulted from a careful study of Scripture with a keen desire to please the Lord. Instead they are a declaration of independence and do not acknowledge His Lordship.

Verse 12 says, *“So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”* This indicates that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. He is Lord of the Church and each individual believer will stand before Him and give an account of themselves. This should make us think about how we’re living. What did the Lord say to Peter when he asked what John was going to do? *“What is that to thee? Follow thou me”* (John 21:22). Do we please ourselves, or the Lord? Do we seek the approval of men



or of God? (Gal. 1:10). Are we contemporary, or biblical?

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord”* (1 Cor. 4:3-4). He was aware of the Lord’s judgment, and lived to please Him. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, it won’t matter what others thought of us. The standard for judgment is God’s Word. Have we done all things according to the pattern given us?

**1. Our words:** Matthew 12:36-37 warns us that we will give account of every idle word. The Lord hears everything, and remembers it all. James 3 is an entire chapter dedicated to the tongue.

**2. Our works:** We were created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10). *“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”* (Gal. 6:7).

**3. Christian service:** 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 highlights the importance of doing Christian work in a scriptural way. Wood, hay and stubble are easy to find and work with, but will not survive the fire. Gold, silver and precious stones are harder to find and work with, but will endure judgment. There are fast and easy, worldly methods of church growth, but gospel preaching, sound doctrine, and holiness of life produces lasting results.

**4. Biblical preaching:** 1 Peter 4:11 makes it clear that the only way to preach is *“as the oracles of God,”* according to the ability that God gives, so that God is glorified. The Lord will judge preachers and teachers by whether or not they followed Scripture and glorified Him.

**5. Stewardship:** *“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God, the things that are God’s”* (Matt. 22:21). To Caesar belongs very little: taxes, honor and obedience to laws. Everything else belongs to God: our bodies, capacities, abilities, and very lives. Our time is a gift from Him as well as our money? Are we laying up treasures on earth in spite of the fact that He forbade it? (Matt. 6:19-20). *“It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”* (1 Cor. 4:2). We are stewards of everything we have, both time and resources are from the Lord and to be used for Him.

**6. Marriage and family:** Marriage is a divine institution and instruction for husbands and wives is clearly taught in Scripture. The Lord gives children and teaches how to raise them. Yet today divorce is widely practiced. Role reversal is common in marriage due to the pervasive values of feminism and the undervaluing of the Word of God. *“Disobedient to parents”* (Rom. 1:30), is in the same category as fornication and murder. Scripture teaches a different version of child raising from that of society. The Lord will have the final word?

**7. Our affections:** The last days are marked by self-love, avarice and pleasure seeking even in the churches, those with


a form of godliness (2 Tim. 3:1-5) *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”* (1 John 2:15). Better to heed this exhortation now than to have to face it before the Lord on judgment day. The psalmist said, *“O, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day”* (Ps. 119:97). Is it so with us?

**8. Our friendships:** The Spanish have a saying: *“Better to be alone than in bad company.”* 2 Timothy 2:22 teaches young people to *“follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”* The psalmist said, *“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts”* (Ps. 119:63) Are our friendships according to Scripture?

**9. The church:** In Revelation 2 and 3 there are seven letters from the Lord to seven different churches. He judges the good and bad in each church, and five of the seven are told to repent, or else...What will He say to assemblies today that are so different from the apostolic assemblies?

**10. Elders:** These men are the exception to the rule that each one will give account of himself. They also will give account of themselves, but additionally, Hebrews 13:17 says that they will give account to God for the assembly and their pastoral care of the Lord’s flock. Are they following the divine pattern (Heb. 8:5), or being negligent or even tolerant of sin in their household or the assembly? Are their decisions biblical?

Christ’s judgment seat is not only a warning to wayward Christians. It is a tremendous motivation and encouragement to the faithful saint who lives as a pilgrim in this world, seeking to please the Lord. The Lord knows the life and service of each one. How wonderful it will be to hear the Lord say, *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”* (Matt. 25:21).

But the wayward, worldly and wavering believer needs to apply Jeremiah’s words to themselves: *“Thus saith the LORD, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls”* (Jer. 6:16). Prepare now to give account at the Judgment Seat of Christ. 



Carl and his wife Ruth have served as missionaries in Spain since 1986, and now live in the Seville area. Carl takes part in the oversight and teaching ministry at Asamblea Biblica in Seville, and frequently visits Latin American countries for ministry. He works extensively in Spanish literature, translating, writing and publishing. He has authored 16 books in Spanish, and several in English. The assembly website is <https://bereallibros.wixsite.com/asambleabiblica/books> and has a tab for English readers.

by Carl Knott



# RESTORE THE YEARS THE LOCUST HAS EATEN



Money can be restored. Property can be restored—broken-down cars, stripped painting, old houses. Relationships can all be restored. But the one thing that can never be restored is time. Time flies by and it does not return. Years pass and we never get them back.

Yet God promises the impossible: *“I will restore the years that the locust has eaten”* (Joel 2:25). The immediate meaning of this promise is clear. In the days of the prophet Joel, God’s people had suffered the complete destruction of their entire harvest through swarms of locusts that marched like an insect army through the fields, destroying the crops, multiplying their number as they went.

William MacDonald writes:

“The severity of the locust plague was such that the elders could not remember anything like it. The

plague was in four stages (or year), the four stages in the growth of the locust: The chewing locust, the swarming locust, the crawling locust, and the consuming locust.”<sup>1</sup>

The harvest was completely wiped out. God’s people were brought to their knees in more ways than one. But “the Lord became jealous for His land and had pity on His people.” God said, *“Behold I am sending to you grain, wine and oil, and you will be satisfied”* (Joel 2:18-19). God said that in the coming years their fields would yield an abundance that would make up for what had been lost: *“The threshing floor shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil... You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied”* (Joel 2:24, 26). This wonderful promise for those people meant that years of abundant harvests would follow the years of desolation



brought about by the locusts. But God has also put this promise in the Bible as an application for us today.

### **Lost Years of Our Lives**

What do “lost years” look like for us? Lost years (or locust years) are years that we cannot get back, and they come in many varieties.

**Lost years are fruitless years.** A lot of hard work was done in the years the locusts had eaten. After everything was destroyed, the people must have thought, “All this work and what do I have to show for it?” Some of you know this pain in the world of business—a failed venture, a bad investment, a misguided policy. All the effort that you put in day-by-day, month-by-month, year-by-year led only to massive disappointment. You think, “What has come of all my time and all my effort?”

**Lost years are painful years.** It has been said, “A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams.” You had plans, but now you fear the coming years may be empty. I’m thinking of those who perhaps have lost a loved one. I’m thinking also of those who live with illness in the body or the mind. You assumed that you would always be able to do what you used to do. You must find a way to live with the disappointment that you cannot change.

**Lost years are loveless years.** A division comes to a family, alienating loved ones. Children grow up, and those years cannot be recovered. A marriage quietly endures in which love has been burning low for many years. You see a couple who are really in love, and you say, “I wish I could be loved like that.” Or you have not yet met the person you would like to meet. It feels like the years are moving on. You can never get them back. The locusts have eaten them.

**Lost years are Christ-less years.** All Christ-less years are locust years. This point is worth thinking about if you have not yet made a commitment to Christ. Ask anyone who came to faith in Christ later in life, and they will tell you that they wish they had come to Christ sooner than they did: “How much foolishness I would have avoided. How much good might have been done for Christ through my life.”

### **How God Restores Lost Years**

Take heart! There is hope because God can restore your lost locust years. He does so in three ways.

**God can restore lost years by deepening your communion with Christ.** The prophet Joel reminds Israel, “*You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and that there is no other*” (Joel 2:27). The Jewish nation had endured so much, yet afterwards they would enjoy a communion with the Lord that is far greater than anything they had ever known before in their spiritual lives. Christ can restore lost years by deepening your fellowship with Him.

Why not ask Him for this? Tell Him, “Lord, I have spent too many years without You, too many years at a distance


from You. Fill my heart with love and gratitude for Christ. Let the loss of these years make my love for Christ greater than it would ever have been. Restore to me the years the locusts have eaten.”

**God can restore lost years by multiplying your fruitfulness.** The harvests for these people had been wiped out for four years, but God restored the years that the locusts had eaten by giving bumper harvests. There is still time to dedicate yourself to the work of the Lord. Why not ask Him for this? “Lord, the locusts have eaten too many years of our lives. You have called us as Your disciples to bear fruit that will last. Too many fruitless years have passed. Now Lord, we ask of You, give us some years now in which more lasting fruit will be born than in all of our years of small harvests.”

**God can restore lost years by bringing long-term gain from short-term loss.** The effect of these great trials in your life will be that “*the tested genuineness of your faith... may result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet. 5:8). The praise, glory, and honor go to Christ because His power guarded you and kept you through the hardest years of your life.

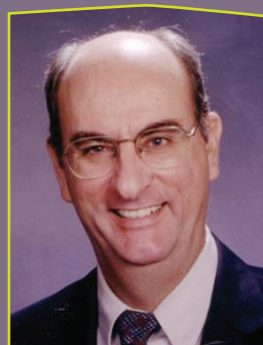
The Lord Jesus Christ was “*cut off*” (Isa. 53:8) while He was in the prime of His life, only after three years into His ministry, at 33 years old. You would think that a man launching a new enterprise at the age of 33 has everything in front of him. But Isaiah says, “*He was cut off.*” He was cut off because He came under the judgment of God, not for His own sins—because He had none—but for ours.

### **Conclusion**

Our sins, our grief, our sorrows, were laid on Him. Our judgment fell on Him. The life of God’s tender shoot was “*cut off.*” Then, on the third day, the Son of God rose in the power of an eternal life. He offers himself to you, and He says what no one else can ever say: “*I will restore the years that the locust has eaten.*” 

### **Endnotes**

1. William MacDonald, *Believers Bible Commentary, Joel* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1995), p. 1109

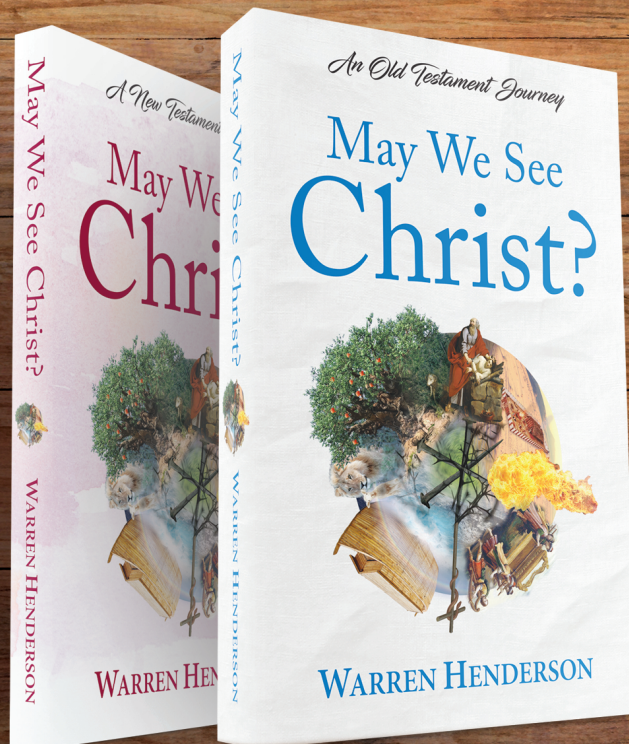


David Dunlap is president of Cornerstone Magazine. He has been a full-time worker for over thirty years. He is in fellowship at Land O’ Lakes Bible Chapel, in Lutz, FL. He and his wife Faith live in Land O’ Lakes, FL.

**by David Dunlap**



Scripture discloses God's ultimate revelation to mankind in a person: God's incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, is God's message and Messenger to humanity. God the Father loves His Son and desires for us to know, appreciate, and love Him too. By the illuminating assistance of the Holy Spirit, we are able to understand that all of Scripture speaks of Christ to some degree. The New Testament superbly declares to us the meanings of numerous Old Testament types, symbols, and allegories of Christ. Hence, the best reason to embark on this one-year journey is to more clearly see, know, and love Christ. We will not value Him at all until we esteem Him above all! May the Lord richly bless your daily contemplations of the Savior as you eagerly peer into God's oracles and witness the glory of His Son.



Both books explore Scripture sequentially in a daily devotional format: *May We See Christ - An Old Testament Journey* contains 366 two-page devotions (758 pages). *May We See Christ - A New Testament Journey* has 366 one-page devotions (382 pages). Books are available in print or in Kindle eBook format via online retailers worldwide. For a limited time the Old Testament devotional can be delivered to a US address for \$30 and the New Testament devotional for \$22 or both for \$50 (includes shipping). To place an order please contact [warrenahendersonpublishing@gmail.com](mailto:warrenahendersonpublishing@gmail.com).

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# ISSUES and ANSWERS

“Search The Scriptures...” John 5:39

## Question: What does it mean to be “baptized for the dead?” 1 Corinthians 15:29

In this chapter, Paul defends the doctrine of resurrection, describing in verses 13-19 the consequences of no resurrection. If Christ is not risen then our preaching is meaningless (v. 14), the believer’s faith is futile (v. 17), they are still in their sins (v. 17), the dead in Christ have perished (v. 18) and all believers are to be pitied (v. 19). This theme is picked up again in verses 29-32. Connecting verse 19 to 29, it reads, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. Otherwise, what will they do **who are baptized for the dead**, if the dead do not rise at all? **Why then are they baptized for the dead?**” (NKJV).

If there is no resurrection, Paul asks why he or any other believer would get baptized, putting themselves in jeopardy of martyrdom (vv. 30-32). Water baptism pictures the believer’s identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Under the water, it pictures the death of their old life with the death and burial of Christ. As the believer is raised up out of the water, it pictures their new life in Christ because of His resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4). Nowhere does the Bible teach believers to be baptized on behalf of those who have died. Instead it is solely a personal choice believers makes for themselves in obedience to the Lord’s command. It does not save but instead proclaims that we are already saved and want to testify to it.

Then what does it mean to be baptized for the dead? The Greek “*huper*” translated “for” in the context of verse 29, means “on account of.”<sup>1</sup> The church is like an army continuing the gospel battle from generation to generation. Each generation has new recruits of believers to replace those who have gone home to be with the Lord. Baptism testifies to our faith that we are saved and that both we and departed believers will someday be resurrected. It expresses our willingness to receive the baton from them because we are confident of ultimate victory. If there is no resurrection, the battle is lost and why keep fighting? One writer says, “... in the passage of time believers died, others were converted and being baptised, and so are viewed as filling up the ranks of testimony, and so the conflict of the gospel is maintained and continues. But there would be no point of continuing in this

way, if the dead do not rise. It would be like an army, constantly replacing its dead with fresh recruits, continuing to fight a lost cause... Thus those who are baptised for the dead by their action are stating firmly their belief in the truth of resurrection.” They were like soldiers in an army taking the place of those who had died before them. If the dead believer will not rise again, why take their place and suffer for the cause of Christ?<sup>2</sup>

Baptism signifies our complete identification with Christ. This includes His bodily resurrection. Why would believers continue to be baptized if there is no resurrection? It would make the ordinance a meaningless ritual. As one commentator says, “If Christ’s resurrection is not a fact, and ours consequently not a living hope, then what purpose is there for the rite of Christian baptism?... If there is no resurrection, and really no divinely authenticated Saviour and gospel of salvation, might they not better give up a rite that portrays their identification with such a Saviour and such a salvation?”<sup>3</sup>

It is the truth of our identification with Christ and His resurrection that inspires continuing generations of believers to take the place of believers who have gone on before them and like them be willing to be identified with and suffer for Christ. **CM**

### Endnotes

1. Complete Word Study Dictionary (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2013), electronic version
2. What The Bible Teaches - 1 Corinthians (Kilmarnock, Scotland: John Ritchie Ltd., 1986), p. 193
3. The New Unger’s Bible Handbook (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1984), p. 500

If you have a question for this column please submit it to [gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org](mailto:gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org)



George Ferrier is a commended full-time worker who fellowships at Bridlewood Bible Chapel in Ottawa, ON. In addition to itinerant preaching and teaching in North America and overseas, he is a regular contributor to Choice Cleanings Calendar. He is on the board of Cornerstone Magazine Inc. and also serves as assistant editor.

by **George Ferrier**





## Casting All Your Care Upon Him Caesar Malan

How sweet, my Saviour, to repose  
On Thine almighty pow'r!  
To feel Thy strength upholding me  
Thro' every trying hour!

### CHORUS

Casting all your care upon Him,  
Casting all your care upon Him,  
Casting all your care upon Him,  
For He careth, He careth for you.

It is Thy will that I should cast  
My every care on Thee;  
To Thee refer each rising grief,  
Each new perplexity.

That I should trust Thy loving care,  
And look to Thee alone,  
To calm each troubled tho't to rest  
In prayer before Thy throne.

Why should my heart then be distress  
By dread of future ill?  
Or why should unbelieving fear  
My trembling spirit fill?



## New Assembly in Houston

We are a new assembly in the Houston area. Meetings are Breaking of Bread Sunday 9:30 am, Sunday evening service 7:00 pm, Wednesday night prayer and Bible study 7:00 pm. It is a pleasure to welcome all in fellowship with a commendation letter from the assembly you have previously been with. For more information contact E. Frank Detwiler at (979) 922-3837.

## Ministry Opportunity

Full-time camp workers needed to serve at Camp Horizon in Central Florida. We are looking for couples or individuals with a heart to serve the Lord in Christian camp work. The positions are paid and provide housing. Interested candidates for maintenance or food service (this one could be part time) positions should contact Billy Skelton (Search Committee) at 352-536-3781 or doubleportion2@outlook.com.

## Service Opportunity: Church Planting in Goldsboro

Around 1954 Christians in Goldsboro, NC began meeting for breaking of bread, fellowship, the apostle's doctrine, and prayer. The work continued until recently with many of the saints going home to be with the Lord, leaving only Dale and Issi Harris. Pembroke Family Fellowship, which is approximately 110 miles away, would like to partner with someone willing to lead this church plant in Goldsboro and come alongside for spiritual help. The building and a home are available for someone exercised for this work. If any brother is interested please contact Dale Harris of Goldsboro at dukeblue.1@netzero.com or 919-734-8786, or Ron Locklear of Pembroke at Ronlocklear@bellsouth.net or 910-740-7782.

### Attention Canadian Donors

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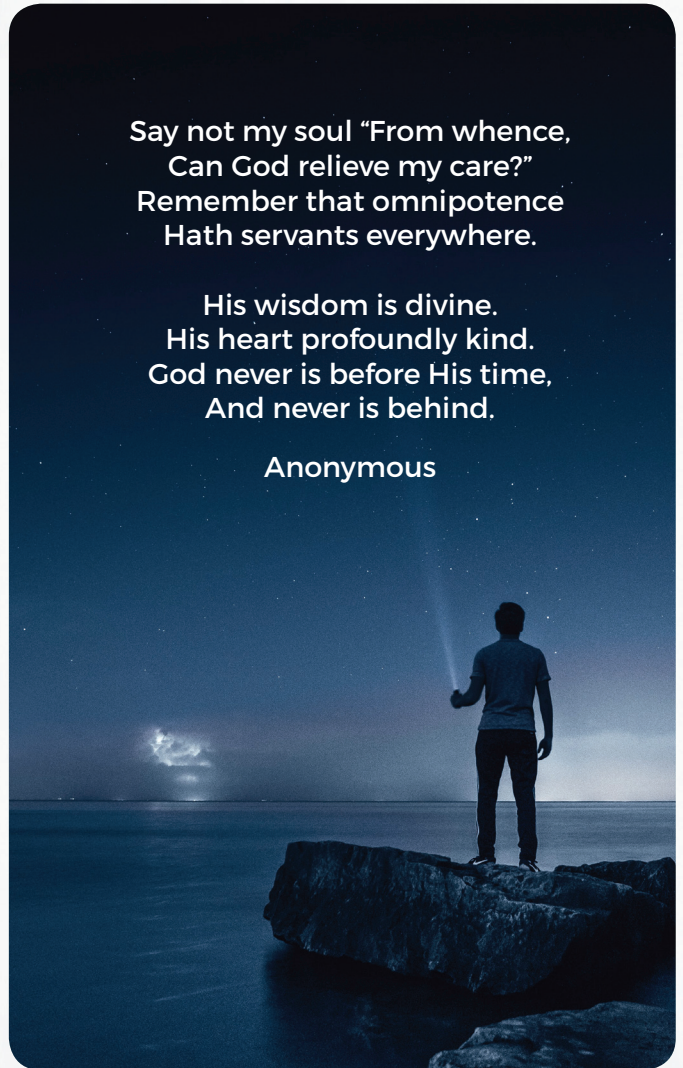
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Say not my soul "From whence,  
Can God relieve my care?"  
Remember that omnipotence  
Hath servants everywhere.

His wisdom is divine.  
His heart profoundly kind.  
God never is before His time,  
And never is behind.

Anonymous



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God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs  
And works His sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

*William Cowper (18th century)*

