

EXALTING CHRIST · EQUIPPING BELIEVERS · EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

CORNERSTONE

MAR - APR 2023

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Builders Wanted: Apply Within

**The Road to Effective Leadership
Before God's Throne
...and more**

...JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF **CORNERSTONE** · EPHESIANS 2:20

Crowns for the Christian

*"If anyone's work which he has built on it endures,
he will receive a reward." 1 Corinthians 3:14*

Editorial

We often sing the hymn, "Glad day, glad day! Is it the crowning day? I'll live for today, nor anxious be; Jesus, my Lord I soon shall see; Glad day, glad day! Is it the crowning day?" Depending upon the song leader, we may sing that song as a congregation with real gusto, but do we sing it with personal conviction? Do we sing "with the spirit and...with the understanding also." (1 Cor. 14:15)?

When it comes to a study of eternal rewards for the believer, the crowns figure predominantly in the New Testament scriptures. Five are listed, if the imperishable crown is considered as one of the five and not just the conditions that exist in my life to earn the other four (1 Cor. 9:25). There is the martyr's crown as some call it (Rev. 2:10), the soul-winner's crown (1 Thess. 2:19), the shepherd's crown (1 Pet. 5:4), and the crown of righteousness for loving the Lord's appearing (2 Tim. 4:8). Beside the commendation of our Lord (Matt. 25:21), there are other references to eternal rewards, such as administrative privileges during the millennium (Matt. 25:21; Luke 19:18) as well as others (e.g., Rev. 2:17). But the spotlight seems fixed clearly on the crowns as a primary means of reward for faithful service to the Master.


For many years, I thought that crowns were somewhat of an "automatic." In other words, my thinking was that I would stand in line and receive the crowns that were coming to me for things "done in the body" (2 Cor. 5:10)—that is, while I was alive on earth. It was as if they were coming to me simply because I was a believer and knew the Lord. Maybe many people think that way as well but it is not quite what the Word of God conveys.

Take a moment or two to ponder the passages related to these crowns—some tough stuff when you think about it! A crown for suffering persecution? When have those conditions existed in my life? Certainly, there is no comparison to the testimonies of those contained in "Foxe's Book of Martyrs." And enduring temptation? Perhaps I lost the opportunity more than a few times by not following the Lord when tested by Him or tempted by the adversary. And how many people have I led to Christ? Paul called the Thessalonians and the Philippians, his "crown" (1 Thess. 2:19; Phil. 4:1). Paul must have had many of these crowns when you figure in the assemblies he helped

to establish at Corinth, in the region of Galatia, and other places on his missionary journeys. The fact that he knew nothing against himself (1 Cor. 4:4)—that his life was above reproach—is pretty strong evidence that he qualified for a crown of righteousness for a holy life and for awaiting the Savior's return.

When I think of the import of all this, I hang my head in shame. How many crowns will I receive in the day when rewards are handed out at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:14)? It is a far cry from just thinking I will get crowns from the Lord for simply showing up on the Lord's Day with my Bible in hand. Rather it is living for Him daily and letting the Spirit of the Lord and His Word transform my inner life that I may be more like Him (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 1:27). It is for serving Him that we might receive a full reward (2 John 8).

On the other hand, and as an encouragement to our readers, lest we think we may come to Him "empty-handed," remember that the Lord knows the heart that truly loves and trusts in Him. He will not be unmindful of service done in His Name, even though we feel that we have fallen far short. As the hymn states, "Let us then be true and faithful, trusting serving every day, just one glimpse of Him in glory, shall the toils of life repay."

*O! the crowning-day is coming, is coming by-and-by,
when our Lord shall come in power and glory from on high!
O, the glorious sight will gladden each waiting, watchful eye,
in the crowning-day that's coming by-and-by!* 



Mark has served as editor for Cornerstone Magazine since 2018. In addition to these duties, Mark travels throughout the US and Canada in a Bible-teaching and conference speaking ministry. He also heads up Know the Word Ministries Inc., located on the web at knowtheword.com. He and his wife Cindy were commended to the Lord's work in 1993 from Bethany Bible Chapel in Toms River, NJ.

by **Mark Kolchin**

Editor: Mark Kolchin, mkolchin@cornerstonemagazine.org
Assistant Editor: George Ferrier, gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org

Editorial Committee: Mark Kolchin, New Jersey, USA
 David Dunlap, Florida, USA
 George Ferrier, Ontario, Canada
 Brian Gunning, Ontario, Canada
 P. T. Tan, Maryland, USA

Advisory Council: Fred Schwertfeger (USA)
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Donations: For **U.S.** donors: please send gifts to
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 For **Canadian** donors: please send gifts to
 Cornerstone Magazine Trust
 PO Box 246, Waterford, ON, NOE 1Y0
 For **online** donations, please go to:
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Design and Layout: Danielle Robins

Website Design: Matt Williams, Louise Street Marketing

Treasurer: Eileen Lee (USA) · George Ferrier (Canada)

Purpose: Cornerstone Magazine seeks to build up and encourage the Lord's people by publishing Bible teaching articles and reports of the Lord's work. Its aim is to present truth in words that are easy to understand in regard to the person of Christ, His church, and evangelism.

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Donations: Cornerstone Magazine is jointly published by Cornerstone Magazine, Inc., an United States Internal Revenue Service 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit corporation, and Cornerstone Magazine Trust, a charitable trust registered with Canada Revenue Agency. Cornerstone Magazine is dependent upon the Lord to provide for its needs. It is freely sent upon request, as the Lord enables. No subscription fees are charged. Cornerstone Magazine is supported by those who appreciate the aims and the work of this ministry. All donations are tax deductible in accordance to law. All funds received are used towards the ministry of Cornerstone Magazine. We are thankful to all who practically support the work of Cornerstone Magazine.

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BUILDERS WANTED:

Apply Within

If Paul the apostle was on a construction site today, we would easily recognize him because he would be wearing the white hard hat. As the wise master builder (1 Cor. 3:10) he took great delight in recruiting others to the project, as those who could be laborers together with God (1 Cor. 3:9). He would then delegate duties to Timothy, Epaphroditus, Titus, Tychicus, and many others, with the purpose being that the church of God would grow into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21).

Unfortunately, a lot of work that is done for the Lord, is not really the work of the Lord. What we imagine or prefer may not be harmful, but these activities should be yielded to the revealed will of God as we have recorded in His Word. He will never lead us to do anything that is inconsistent with His character or His Word, giving us a sure means of staying on course.

When Paul met with the elders from the Ephesian assembly at Miletus (Acts 20:17-38), he gave them a pattern for being the type of builder God is looking for; the type of people he desires for us to become. He told them what to expect, how to conduct themselves, and how to align themselves with God's will and purposes. He emphasized that the assembly belonged to God, and that He had purchased it at an immense cost. This would instill a sense of stewardship in them, to displace any sense of ownership they might have.

Here are some key traits he emphasized, which we can easily see as being needful for any who desire to engage in God's work. Builders together with God must aspire to embody these, and thus be the skilled workers He looks for in this most enduring construction project.

Humility (20:19)

This is the setting aside of personal ambitions in perfect submission to God's will, and it is an essential starting point. The assembly is God's dwelling place; we are to be building not a personal monument nor a self-honoring legacy. Praise or recognition from others should never be sought, but they can be accepted and then redirected to the One who enables us.

Availability (20:20)

To be effective, we cannot hold back anything from our Lord. He deserves and demands the best use of the abilities He gives us, and rewards everything done unto Him, whether noticed by others or not.

Consistency (20:21-24)

The message never changed, and although Paul would change his approach to presenting the gospel to reach those within reach (1 Cor. 9:19-22), the content of the message was always the same, for he knew it to be the gospel of God (Rom.1:1). The church is to be built of saved individuals, not religious spectators.

Submission (20:25)

Paul knew something of what lay ahead for him, and happily submitted himself to the Lordship of Christ in his life. While it is always wise to count the personal cost of our service, it is never wise to place conditions or limitations upon the Lord who has called us. He sets the procedures of the workplace; we simply need to implement them.

Education (20:27)

It is the responsibility of each builder in God's temple to understand his own job description. Just as we would expect each member of a construction crew to have obtained the skills to do his work, so we each must invest in ourselves through consistent prayer and a thorough knowledge of His Word. We are only ready for work when we are ready to work. A carpenter may know how to do a job, but the engineer knows why it is done that way.

Responsibility (20:28)

There must ever be a watchful awareness of what we are doing, and who we are doing it for. Just as Nehemiah encountered constant opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, our adversary will oppose anything done for God's glory. The Jerusalem crew worked with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, i.e., they were ready for anything.

Vigilance (20:29-30)

When troubles do arise—and they most certainly will—God's builders must be willing to identify and correct what is wrong. It may grieve our hearts at times to do this, but poor workmanship must be pointed out and corrected. Sabotage cannot be allowed to go unchecked, or the whole project will be derailed.

Passionate (20:31)

Tears will be shed. Joy will be evident. When we truly care about what we are doing, our full being will be engaged in pursuit of the work. While some have incorrectly made emotional experiences the benchmark of spirituality, being excited about involvement in God's work should never be looked down upon. Come to think of it, is there really anything in life worth being more excited about?

Dependence (20:32)

As members of the body of Christ, and one another in particular, an attitude of respect and cooperation with others should always prevail. Those with less experience must always defer to those with more, as an apprentice would to a journeyman. This principle of mentorship goes throughout the Bible, and has not yet been improved on.

Independence (20:33-35)


God's builders must strive to be free from enticement and entrapment, which will only serve self and not Him. The world has more distractions than ever to offer, so focus is difficult yet needful. Builders must ever be asking themselves, "What can I put into this?" and not "What am I getting out of this?" This is completely contrary to the flesh and the world, so must be cultivated by practice and spiritual exercise.

Intercession (20:36)

Finally, true and effective builders in God's edifice must be a people of prayer. We need to pray for the work and with the workers, and look to God for His supply and enablement. The late Hudson Taylor founded his life on the principle that "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply," and proved it throughout his missionary work in China.

Apply Within

Applications are now being accepted for Christians who wish to work together with God in the most important construction project in human history. Nothing we do in our entire lives will matter as much as this, nor have the far-reaching effects of edifying the house of God.

The time for application is now, and the place of application is within each of our own hearts, at the feet of the One whom we call Lord and Master. 



Rick Morse lives in Berwick, Nova Scotia with Janie, his wife of 40 years. They fellowship at Bethany Gospel Chapel in Dartmouth, NS. Saved at age 21, he is active in his home assembly and frequently ministers in many assemblies in Atlantic Canada. Rick's speaking and written ministry centers on love for apologetics and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

by Rick Morse

THE ROAD TO *Effective Leadership*



The time had come for leadership transition. As death neared, Moses made a plea that God would give His people a godly, qualified leader who would lead them with courage. Obviously, Moses could not be with the children of Israel forever. Moses longed for the right person to succeed him. It was time for a transition. The transition of leadership for the next generation had already begun with Eleazar's replacement of Aaron as high priest (Num. 20:22-29).

How did Moses handle the process of leadership transition to Joshua? Several vital principles emerge from the inspired record in Numbers 27.

1. Moses prayed and asked God to make this choice (Num. 27:15). He did not appoint someone out of personal favoritism or other human considerations. His prayer was focused on passing on the responsibility of leadership to the next generation. It was a focused prayer for this specific need.

2. Though he was about to die, Moses did not think about himself, but he had a great concern for the future and welfare of Israel (Num. 27:15-17).

3. Moses did not simply ask for a military commander or political leader, but someone who could lead and direct the people like a tender and caring shepherd (Num. 27:17). Moses desired that the newly appointed leader would be just as concerned as he had been for the welfare of the nation. The shepherd language (“*the assembly of Jehovah be not as sheep that have no shepherd*”)¹ underscores the basic principle of spiritual leadership in the Bible.

4. In this whole process, Moses acted in total dependence on God (Num. 27:15-22).

5. Moses did not steal Joshua’s glory; he gladly affirmed it. He was willing to pass on some of his “authority” (“honor” or “majesty”) that he had to Joshua (Num. 27:20). This was done at the Lord’s command so that the people who used to obey Joshua while Moses lived, might more cheerfully do it afterwards (“*that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient*”).

6. As a responsible leader of God’s people, Moses knew the importance of training other leaders along the way, so they be would ready and equipped to shepherd the people of God when he left. Moses had this vision. Joshua had been prepared for it. All through the time of Exodus, Moses worked with Joshua. He was Moses’ assistant and even led the army (Ex. 33:11; 17:8-10) and was one of the faithful spies in Numbers 13. Early in his leadership, Moses sought to train a leader that would replace him.

7. Moses did not delay or hinder the process of transition. As a leader, he did not cling to his position selfishly (Num. 27:22). He was ready to hand over the responsibilities to the next generation. God answered Moses’ prayer by commissioning Joshua (Num. 27:23), “*a man in whom is the Spirit*” (Num. 27:18). New leaders may be very different from their predecessors, but they have nevertheless been appointed by God to do the job that needs to be done.

“One of the responsibilities of Christian leaders today is to see to it that the next generation is equipped to carry on the work (2 Tim. 2:2). Each local church is one generation short of extinction, and unless we teach and train new leaders, we jeopardize the future of our homes, churches, and nation.”²


What a sobering thought!

The goal of ministry is, “pass it on” (2 Tim. 2:2). The buck may stop with you, but truth must never stop. Christian life is not instinctive, it is taught. Disciples are made not born. I believe the “*faithful men who will be able to teach others also*” (2 Tim. 2:2) is connected to: 1 Timothy 3:2 (“*able to teach*”); 1 Timothy 5:17 (“*the elders...those who labor in the word and doctrine*”); Titus 1:9 (“*...that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict*”)—a requirement for elders. The primary,

though not exclusive audience for Timothy’s teaching in this context, may well have been such elders in the church. Elders must take the initiative in teaching, training, mentoring, discipling, and equipping other men who eventually will take the responsibility of leading the assembly in the future as spiritual shepherds of the people of God. This is an intentional and planned ministry carried out by responsible and visionary spiritual leaders. Such men are the ones to lead the assembly of God.

Our culture is all about leaders—how to find them and make them leaders and celebrities. But Scripture is clear about the true nature of spiritual leadership. God chooses, appoints, and empowers shepherd leaders to lead His people. God sovereignly raises and replaces leaders. When God removes a leader, He has a plan of succession in place. Trust Him to provide and depend upon Him. The Moseses and Pauls among us must take the time and effort to intentionally train and equip the Joshuas and Timothys of the next generation. This role of the elders is perhaps the most neglected one and therefore must be emphasized in the local church.

Let us seriously ponder over these scriptural principles of leadership transition. Does this really happen in our assemblies? Many assemblies around the world have suffered serious setbacks because the baton has largely failed to be passed from one generation to the next. If the Lord has placed you in a leadership role in your local assembly, always be looking for ways to pass the baton. That means equipping people for the work of service (Eph. 4:11-12).

Some years ago, I took a series of studies on spiritual leadership in a large assembly in North America. After the meetings, one of the elders came to me and whispered: “Brother, I searched the records of all the sermons and Bible studies in the assembly for the last forty years, and to my surprise, I could not find a single message or study on eldership or spiritual leadership.” I gently whispered back to him, “I know it is a “missing link” in many assemblies. We must rediscover it from the Word.” Shall we? 

Endontes:

1. Darby Translation

2. *The Wiersbe Study Bible, NKJV* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2009) p. 236



Alexander Kurian is a commended full time worker serving the Lord for the last forty years in itinerant ministry of evangelism, teaching, training, writing, and equipping. He and his wife Valsa fellowship at their commending assembly, Edmonds Lane Bible Chapel in Lewisville, Texas.

by **Alexander Kurian**

THE *Song* THAT LED TO *Salvation*

THE TESTIMONY OF
IAN WILLIAMS

"COME AND HEAR, ALL YOU WHO FEAR GOD,
AND I WILL DECLARE WHAT HE HAS DONE
FOR MY SOUL."
PSALM 66:16

COME & HEAR

I grew up in a Christian family of eight children in the northern Ontario city of Sudbury. It was not a perfect family, but it was perfect for me. God's Word was honored in our home; I can remember as a boy about four or five years old sitting beside my mother learning to read by reading the Bible in our daily family Bible readings. As a youngster, I was concerned about salvation and can remember reading a Chick tract about hell left conveniently in the bathroom. It scared me. I did not want to go to hell. I even said a sinner's prayer as a thirteen-year-old boy at camp, but I knew I was not saved. I had no indwelling power from the Holy Spirit to confess Christ to even my parents. I only had conviction when I heard or read God's Word that I was not saved. I was scared to death of going to hell, but, I did not believe I was the sinner Christ died to save. I thought I did not deserve hell. So as a teenager, I turned from my upbringing and the church and headed off into the world to run my own life. I told God "Not now—maybe when I'm older."

I fell in with the wrong crowd, partying and doing drugs. God spared me from the worst of it as many of these companions ended up in prison for drug dealing. Some died too young, and many ruined their minds and health. In my last year of school, I turned from that life and focused on my education. I worked as a cook during this period where I met my former wife. We lived together and ended up moving to the Newmarket area in 1994. We married the following year but still my life was getting worse.

Despite all I had done to push God and his people out of my life, my parents and family continued to pray for me even when I had no God to pray to. If you have children or loved ones who are not saved and who are far from the Lord and his people, I say, "Pray on!" There is a God in heaven who answers the prayers of parents for the salvation

of their grown children and my life is a testimony to that. Looking back now, I can see the influence of the prayers of my parents. No matter how far I thought I got away from God, I never lacked a Christian witness in my life to God's saving grace.

In time, our first child was born, and like most naive parents, we started to look for daycare only one month before my wife had to return to work. In a frantic search, she took the advice of my sister-in-law and investigated church-related daycare in Newmarket, where their two sons were enrolled. We found out that the waiting list was over one year long and that this was normal for all daycare centers. However, God had a different plan. The daycare had a policy of keeping families together, so we were allowed to jump the queue. It was while my oldest was going there that the Lord really began to work on me. As a young father I would pick her up in the afternoon and load her into her car seat and bring her home. I cannot fully tell you how it melted a sinner's heart to have his own child sing the very songs that I had learned as a boy in Sunday school many years before. They were like echoes through the halls of time calling me back to something, to Someone that I had rejected as a young man. The simple truths of these songs began to plough the hard ground of a heart hardened against the Savior's love.


So, it was into these life conditions that God reached out to me. When the events of September 11, 2001 happened, I was at work smoking in the parking lot at break time. One delivery driver had come in and announced the news that an airliner had crashed into the towers. I thought nothing of it. By the end of my break, another driver said a second airplane had crashed into the other tower, I thought to myself it must have been a terrorist action by the same group that had tried unsuccessfully to blow up the trade towers in 1993. After my break, I went back into the machine shop

and sat down at a large table in front of the electrical panel that I was programming. As I looked at the clock on the wall showing 9:10AM, God spoke to me then and there. I cannot explain it other than to say it was like Big Ben ringing in my innermost being. His voice was not audible, but I knew it was God. All he said was "Now!"

I went home at the end of that fateful Tuesday and after everyone had gone to bed, I pulled out a Bible my mother had given me, knowing it spoke of future events. I read the whole thing in ten days trying to figure out what was going on in the world. I found out four things: I found out I had no clue what was going on in the world; I found out I was a sinner; I found out Christ offered salvation to sinners who would simply place their faith in Him; and I found out that God does say "Now." Isaiah 1:18 says "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Second Corinthians 6:2 says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

On the evening of September 21, 2001, under deep conviction I went for a walk to the area where our new home was under construction and under a starlit night on the platform of the unfinished second floor of a neighbor's home, I told God I was a sinner and I needed His Son. He had told me through His Word that if I placed my faith in

His resurrected Son and asked Him to save me He would. That night, I received Christ and I passed from death to life.

Life has not been easy as a Christian. I have suffered through family breakdown and rejection, losses, and the consequences of poor choices on my behalf, but the Lord has been faithful even when I was undeserving. He has guided my life so I can say with the apostle Paul "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" because "all things work together for good to them that love God." Having therefore obtained help from God, I continue to this day being blessed through the Christians in the Newmarket area and here in Barrie as I seek ways to edify God's people and point others to the Savior. 



Ian Williams fellowships at Northside Bible Chapel in Barrie, Ontario, Canada and serves the Lord in his local assembly as the Lord provides opportunity.

by **Ian Williams**



WEEK OF PRAYER

North American

APRIL 17-21, 2023
BOULEVARD BIBLE CHAPEL
PEMBROKE PINES, FL

An Invitation and Call to Prayer in 2023

ANTICIPATING HIS WONDERS

"Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."

JOSHUA 3:5

Believers from North America have joined from around the continent and globally to seek the face of God for revival in our churches and a spiritual awakening among the lost. We extend a personal invitation for you to join us at Boulevard Bible Chapel in Pembroke Pines, FL.

We urge you to prayerfully consider participating in the Week of Prayer in any of the following ways:

- Attend in person at Boulevard Bible Chapel
- Host a group that will meet to pray either in person or online
- Join a group to pray daily either in person or online

For more information or to contact us with any questions, visit our website: www.naweekofprayer.com
Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/naweekofprayer

Report: North American Week of Prayer

The Army of God Goes Forward on its Knees

At the onset of the church, the disciples were known for continuing steadfastly in the teaching of God's Word, the fellowship of believers, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42). The Church of the living God should continue to hold to these four pillars of the local church. It has rightly been said that these are the same four pillars of discipleship in an individual believer's walk with the Lord.

If a survey of Christ's followers were to be taken today, whether it is related to their personal walk with the Lord or regarding the practices of their local church, it would quickly be seen that the teaching of God's Word continues to be a focus. It is only through the preaching of God's Word that people are saved and the church edified. We appreciate the need for fellowship, even scheduling opportunities for such to take place. Additionally, in honor of Christ's command to remember Him, the breaking of bread is a priority as we worship the One who alone is worthy.

It seems however, that even as believers and local assemblies, many of us have failed to understand the importance and urgency of prayer. Personal prayer and the corporate prayer meeting have gone by the wayside for many. We are more inclined to schedule a Bible conference to teach on prayer or to have fellowship groups to discuss the importance of prayer. We find it difficult to bring ourselves to simply pray. As has often been noted, the prayer meeting in many of our assemblies is the most poorly attended of all our meetings.

Many years ago, the Lord was working in the hearts of several brothers, transforming the way they understood and practiced prayer in their prayer closet. The Lord began to burden these men that the church needed to return to the roots of the early church. He planted the seed for having a week that would be devoted to seeking God in prayer. After several years of seeking the Lord personally and together, the Lord led them to schedule the first North American Week of Prayer in May 2015.

This then would be a different kind of conference than we were used to; not one devoted to teaching on prayer nor to engage in fellowship with believers to talk about prayer. Instead, this would be a gathering of believers to seek the Lord in prayer.

This initial week of prayer focused on the theme of "Revival" from Psalm 143:11, "Revive me, O Lord, for Your name's sake." We sought God for the revival of our personal relationship with Him, the revival of our local assemblies and the revival of His Church, particularly in North America. Since that first year, the Lord has continued to lead us on, devoting weeks of prayer to the same burden for revival. For two years, 2020 and 2021, we did not gather in person, but the Lord redirected us to online prayer sessions and regional prayer meetings

throughout North America. Last year we enjoyed a "hybrid approach" with saints meeting together at Boulevard Bible Chapel in Pembroke Pines, Florida, and others gathering online and regionally in person. Short messages related to the theme were preached and posted online for other prayer groups to benefit from before they prayed.

We marvel at the countless testimonies of transformation in individuals, marriages, families, and local churches that have resulted from these times of prayers. Every testimony of individual repentance, souls saved, relationships restored, believers walking in unity and victory, and assemblies reinvigorated with gospel zeal bears witness to the power of our great God. This in turn brings glory to Christ and renews our confidence in Him.

In April 2023, we are prayerfully anticipating and planning for another week of prayer at Boulevard Bible Chapel in Florida. The theme for this year is, "Anticipating His Wonders." As the children of Israel were being led into the promised land, Joshua charged the people saying, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you" (Josh 3:5). Is it not true that the people of God are still charged to be set apart and that we should still be anticipating His wondrous works in our day?

If you have not participated in the week of prayer in the past, we invite and encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might do so this year. You can join with us in person or follow along with the livestreams or perhaps even lead a local gathering or online meeting. For more information, you are invited to visit the naweekofprayer.com website.

As we prepare and plan for this year's week of prayer, we continue to pray that His Church today would be an army for God's work, recognizing that we cannot go forward but on our knees. We should never be content with a North American week of prayer, but rather that the Spirit of God would do such a work of transformation in our lives that we might know something of a North American life of prayer! 🙏



Jon and Shona Benson were commended to the work of the Lord by Northgate Bible Chapel in Rochester, NY in June 2016 where they serve together as the Lord leads. Jon is also the Executive Director of Camp Li-Lo-Li, located in Randolph, NY.

by Jon Benson



God's Scholarship Grant

PART ONE

Suffering is God's scholarship grant endowed to the believer for the school of life. Philippians 1:29 says, "*For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.*"¹ The word "granted" (G5483) means to show favor or kindness; it derives from the word translated "grace" (G5485) in Ephesians 2:8: "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*" These verses reveal that both the believer's salvation and the suffering we experience in life are gifts from God, a manifestation of His grace.

The Source of Suffering

Sometimes the Lord may directly bring trials into our lives, to discipline us as a loving Father (Heb 12:5-11), or to prune us for spiritual growth (John 15:2). Other times His permissive will allows hardships through the normal experiences of life. Still other times He allows our adversary, the devil to touch us, sometimes directly, other times via surrogates like governments, religious groups, or individuals in a world that hates Christ. The Lord may even allow the devil to touch our health, financial security, and family (e.g. Job, Paul). Persecution for our identification with Christ has been the lot of believers throughout church history. Many have died for the faith, some have suffered professionally having their careers held back, others have been ostracised by family and friends. Still others have had their businesses targeted, being sued in court, and suffering great financial harm.

When tribulations intrude into our lives we should not consider them to be unusual, or be caught off guard by them (1 Pet. 4:12). Since we are loved by Christ, fruitful, effective, godly Christians can expect to become the target

of the evil one (2 Tim. 3:12). However, we can take comfort that God is in control and anything that He allows will be for our ultimate good and for His glory (Rom. 8:28).

Paul speaking specifically about Ephesus, and Asia Minor in general said "*For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*" (1 Cor. 16:9). He saw God opening up opportunities for him to spread the gospel but there were many resisting him. Though authorities, religious groups, and false teachers opposed him he recognized the source as spiritual. In his letter to the Ephesians he wrote: "*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*" (Eph. 6:12).

This invisible spiritual battle (Dan. 10:13) is still being waged today. The devil has an army of evil fallen angels to influence governments, religious groups, and others to oppose the work of Christ. They attempt to hinder, delay, and raise up opposition against God's servants. As many missionaries can attest: "with great opportunity comes opposition." Yet, it is God's grace that empowers to triumphantly endure all things, enabling us to value life's trials for their spiritual benefits.

Spiritual Benefits of Suffering

1. Preventative Against Pride (2 Cor. 12:7-10)

A humorous story illustrates our susceptibility to sinful pride: "In a certain pond, there were two ducks and a frog who were neighbors and the best of friends... But as the cold drew near and the water dried up, the ducks realized

Continued on page 14...

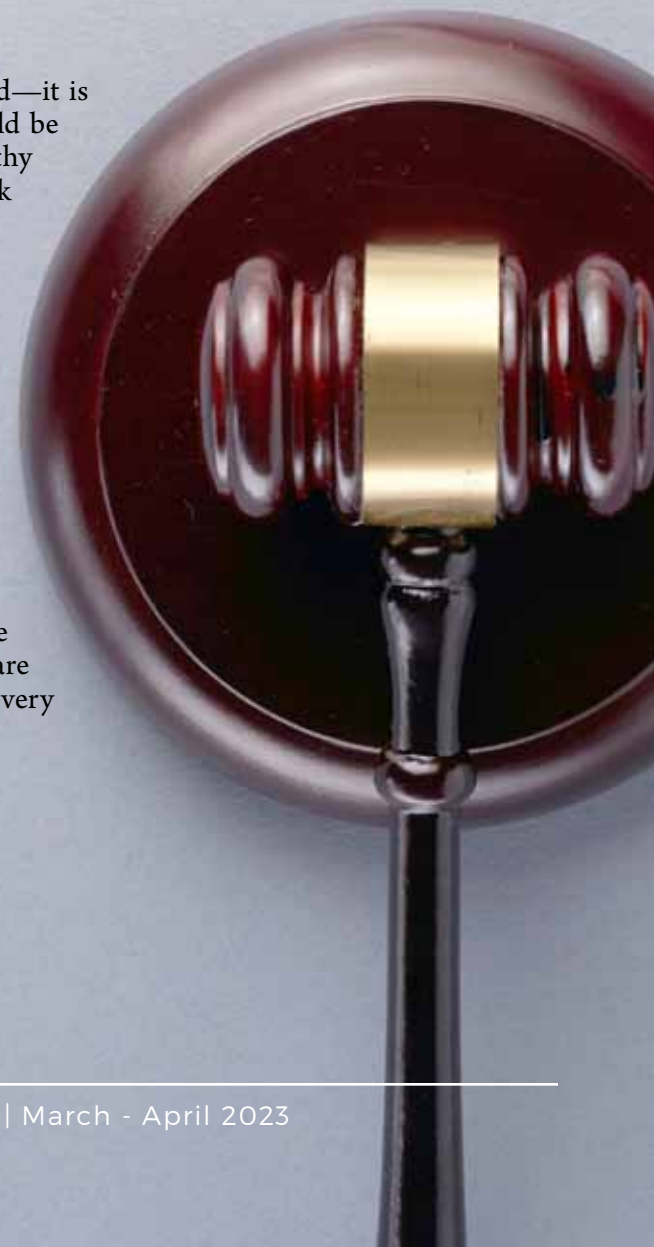
FOUNDATIONS

GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

“NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THE BOOK OF REVELATION MIGHT BE TO UNDERSTAND, GOD WOULD NOT GIVE US SUCH A BOOK AND DESCRIBE IT AS BEING THE REVELATION (UNVEILING) IF IT COULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD!”

Someone once said, “The book of Revelation is not hard to understand—it is hard to believe!” What they meant by the words “hard to believe” could be open to interpretation, but one thing is for sure: Revelation is trustworthy because the author is Jesus Christ—referred to four times over in the book as the “Faithful and True.” True in every respect besides being the True Light (John 1:5, 9); the True Bread (John 6:31), and the True Vine (John 15:1). Unless one takes the study of God’s Word seriously—which we are meant to do—the first part of that statement is also open to question. No matter how difficult the book of Revelation might be to understand, God would not give us such a book and describe it as being the revelation (unveiling) if it could not be understood!

The book of Revelation, like some other books of the Bible, is not written in chronological order, although most parts of it are. This is one reason the storyline can be difficult to follow. Added to this is the meaning of the many symbols used. Some Christians are quick to advance this latter point as an excuse for not studying the book, but it has no validity when we come to the last five verses of chapter 20 because there is not a single symbol mentioned there. Those five verses (11 to 15) are the most solemn of the entire Bible and, sadly, will be the experience of every



unrepentant sinner. For that reason, and hoping some unsaved persons are reading these pages, it is essential that we repeat them here:

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (vv. 11-15)

The above verses describe a court scene beyond compare, to which we now turn our attention. This throne is not a regal throne in the sense of normal regal rule, but judicial—set up specifically to judge those who have rejected Christ as Savior. Since it is unlike judicial systems throughout the world, we contrast some differences using that which is most familiar to me—the Northern Ireland (NI) system.

There is no better place to start than with the throne and its Judge. The throne is great because of who sits on it and of the seriousness of the matters dealt with. Also, it is white because of its purity—the righteousness of its Judge and His judgments. Three times over, Revelation tells us that Jesus Christ and His judgments are righteous (16:5, 7; 19:2)—so unlike our judiciary, who recently had to undergo training because of unhelpful comments made from the bench.

Next, we come to the dead, small and great standing before God. In many instances, under the NI judicial system, the defendant does not have to be present. They may plead guilty by post, or have a solicitor appear on their behalf to enter a plea. Should the defendant not be present, and not be legally represented, the case may be proven in their absence. In contrast, this will not happen at the Great White Throne. Every unsaved person will appear there. There will be no escaping the jurisdiction, no amnesty, and no reliance on “comfort letters” (claiming the person is not on the wanted list) issued secretly to “on-the-run” terrorists by a government that could not be trusted.


Allied to this is the behavior of defendants when present in court. Because of political aspirations, some who are there under arrest refuse to recognize the Court. When I think of this, my mind goes to the account of Jesus’ arrest as recorded in the opening verses of John 18. Upon being

asked, and then confirming that He was “Jesus of Nazareth,” those who came to take Him by force went backward and fell (forward) to the ground in obeisance. There will be no disrespect for the Judge at the Great White Throne.

Then, there is the legal maxim which dictates that every person who stands charged with a criminal offence is presumed innocent until proven guilty—unless a specific law provides for an exception. Hence, the burden of proof is on the prosecution. And, there is also the defendant’s entitlement to legal representation, with the added advantage of perhaps qualifying for financial help to meet that cost. But again, none of these things will apply at the Great White Throne.

The absence of the person’s name in the Book of Life at this throne is the convicting evidence, while the other books determine the sentence—not as to duration, but severity, for they are judged according to their works (v.13).

As for the sentence, there will be no withdrawing of the charge; no worry about insufficient evidence; no absolute discharge; no conditional discharge; no binding over to keep the peace; no monetary fine; no deferred sentence; no maximum period of imprisonment; no suspended sentence; no probation (agreeing to live a ‘reformed’ life under the supervision of the authorities); no community service order; and no recorded sentence (imprisonment presumed to having been served). The only punishment will be IMPRISONMENT in THE LAKE OF FIRE with torment day & night for ever and ever—as revealed in the next comment.

After the judgment, there will be no appeal; no remission of sentence; no parole; no royal pardon (as distinct from an amnesty) and no miscarriage of justice, because the sentence will have been passed by Jesus Christ the Righteous, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The consequences of the scene described are so terrible that Christians need to both warn and pray for family, friends and others who are perishing lest this be the experience of any of them. 

Editor’s Note: Given the gravity of this topic, why not share a copy of this article to those who need to hear it?



Alan McIlwaine is a retired police officer from N. Ireland. Most of his 30 year service was during a sustained terrorist campaign when 302 of his colleagues lost their lives. Saved at age 17, he has been associated with several assemblies commensurate with his career postings. He has written legal articles, edited a periodical and written three books (one his memoirs) and published others. Married to Helen, Alan is the father of four and grandfather of ten.

by Alan McIlwaine



BEFORE GO

A young city girl was in the country for the first time and looking up into the night sky commented, “Oh, mother, if heaven is so beautiful on the wrong side, what must it be like on the right side!”¹ Indeed, how can we possibly know what God’s dwelling place is like unless He tells us about it? Thankfully, God has used various means to open our understanding of heavenly things. For example, both Isaiah and Ezekiel saw a vision of God and His heavenly throne and each wrote down what they had witnessed (Isa. 6; Ezek. 1).

Like Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Paul (2 Cor. 12:2-4) before him, John was also taken up into heaven to see God’s throne room and was instructed to write down what he saw (Rev. 1:19; 4:1-2). In Revelation 4, John mentions the throne of God twelve times and is careful not to describe anything else he saw except in its relationship to the throne: on the throne, around the throne, from the throne, before the throne, and in the midst of the throne. Why does John not describe anything that he sees apart from its connection with God’s throne? Because God is sovereign over all things—everything which exists is dependent upon Him. Without God on His throne, nothing else would matter. John, thus, begins his revelation with the most spectacular sight in heaven—God Himself on His throne.

On the Throne (Rev. 4:2)

John describes the outshining of God’s holy essence—His spectacular glory. The prophet relates this visible manifestation of God’s essence to the colors reflected from a jasper and a sardius stone. Jasper is used twice in Revelation 21 as a symbol of God’s glory in connection with the New Jerusalem, God’s eternal heavenly city (Rev. 21:10-11). In fact, the walls of this city are made entirely of jasper (Rev. 21:18). Jasper is a crystalline form of silica containing fine minerals of quartz and moganite. It is neither transparent nor translucent, meaning that all visible light reaching its surface is either absorbed or reflected back to us in the colors red, yellow, brown, green, and sometimes blue. Sardius is a red stone. John describes no form on the throne, only a dazzling spectacle of various hues of light emanating from God’s presence. It is noted that sardius and jasper were the first and the last precious stones, respectively, in the High Priest’s breastplate (Ex. 28:17-20). These two stones mentioned in tandem, then, may be a picture of God’s immutable and eternal glory.

Around the Throne (Rev. 4:3-4)

John also saw a rainbow encircling the throne. God promised Noah that He would never destroy the earth again by water; the rainbow was given to mankind as a symbol of that covenant. The circle never stops and thus represents eternity. The compound symbol indicates that God’s promises are eternal—He is a covenant-keeping God.

Around God’s throne were twenty-four other thrones upon which twenty-four elders were seated. The elders represent the redeemed just resurrected from the earth, which

certainly would include, but may not be limited to, the Church (Rev. 5:9). These were clothed in white raiment and were wearing gold crowns upon their heads (Rev. 4:4). These crowns, or rewards, were given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His saints for their honorable service to Him. Though there are likely many other types of crowns given to reward faithfulness, five are mentioned in Scripture:

- The Crown of Glory will be given to church elders who shepherd well (1 Pet. 5:4).
- The Crown of Life will be given to those who endure trials because they love the Lord (Jas. 1:12).
- The Crown of Rejoicing will be given to those who were soul-winners for Christ (1 Thess. 2:19; Phil 4:1); this crown may be more encompassing, such as a reward for spiritual growth in general.
- The Crown of Righteousness will be given to those who long for His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).
- The Incorruptible Crown will be given to those who control fleshly desires through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 9:25).

The rewards that are earned during this lifetime provide the believer with a greater appreciation for the Lord, a greater capacity to worship Him throughout eternity, and indeed, a greater capability to enjoy heaven (1 Cor. 15:41-42; Rev. 4:11).




scene represents the looming worldwide judgment of Christ's return to the earth to vindicate His name. Neither Stephen nor Paul mentioned anything about thunder, lightning, and voices during their glimpses of God's throne during the Church Age. Yet, with the redeemed in heaven and on the eve of pouring out judgment on the wicked, His throne rumbles.

Before the Throne (Rev. 4:6)

The next detail John describes in relationship to God's throne is the sea of glass before it. The laver in the tabernacle and then later in the temple were patterned after this crystal sea, yet these earthly lavers held water, not glass, so a clear distinction is being made between the type and the antitype, as seen by John. Why the difference? As long as there was a Christian on earth the practical aspects of cleaning defilement from the believer's life would be a necessary ministry of Christ's intercession and Word, as pictured in the laver. But now that the Church had passed from the scene of her earthly defilement into heaven, she had no more need of the laver. Every Christian now possessed a body fit for heaven. The clear, ripple-free sea of glass in heaven declares that those in heaven are perfectly cleansed and at complete peace in God's presence.

In the Midst of the Throne (Rev. 5:6)

The scene of Revelation 4 and 5 shows that the Lord Jesus, the Lamb, is on His Father's throne (Rev. 3:21); He is still waiting to establish His kingdom on earth. At that time, He will sit on His own throne in Jerusalem. The twenty-four elders on their thrones in heaven are anticipating their opportunity to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. But until that time, every redeemed saint and angelic being in heaven is occupied with worshipping the One who deserves: all power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing—the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:12). For this reason alone, each of us should yearn to be about God's throne, that we too may worship the One in the midst of the throne! 

Endnotes

1. Jim Flanigan, *Notes on Revelation* (Gospel Tract Publications; 1987), pp. 40-41

As both the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel are clearly tied to the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, it seems likely that the numerical representation of twenty-four, the number associated with God's priesthood in Scripture, is used here to represent all those who have been redeemed and have experienced glorification (Rev. 5:8-10). This probably includes the Old Testament saints and the New Testament Church (Heb. 11:40). The Lord told His disciples that they would be seated about Him on twelve thrones in a future day and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).

The elders in this scene have already been rewarded for faithful service and seated in a place of honor about the throne of God and the Lamb. This event refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ, which occurs immediately after the rapture of the Church from the earth (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12-14). This is a remarkable scene as humans were created to govern the world, not heaven, and humans have a lower position in creation than the angels (Gen. 1:26; Heb. 2:6-8). Yet, we never read of angels seated on thrones in Scripture, nor do they rule and reign with Christ as redeemed humanity will; they were created as eternal beings to serve God and will remain unchanged forever.

From the Throne (Rev. 4:5)

John observed that there was continual lightning, thunder, and voices proceeding out from God's throne. This ominous



Warren Henderson and his wife Brenda serve the Lord full-time and currently make their home in Stevensville, Montana. Warren is involved in a writing, evangelism, and Bible teaching ministry and has written and published a number of books which can be obtained worldwide through online retailers.

by Warren Henderson



Continued from page 9...

they would have to move. This would be easy for them, but what about their friend the frog? Finally, it was decided that they would put a stick in the bill of each duck, and then the frog would hang onto the stick with his mouth and they would fly him to another pond. And so, they did. Just then, a farmer looked up and said to his wife, “What a great idea! I wonder who thought of that?” Proudly, the frog said, “I did...”²

Paul had been given a revelation of heaven, a glimpse of what was in store for all those in Christ. To prevent him from being filled with pride, the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh, “a messenger of Satan” to harass or torment him. Paul prayed three times for it (likely a health issue) to be removed from him. Each time the Lord answered: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

In response Paul testified: “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” From the devil’s viewpoint this was his opportunity to hinder Paul’s work for the Lord. Instead, in chain-like fashion, Paul’s suffering led to increased dependence upon Christ, God responding with limitless power, resulting in Paul’s fruitful service, bringing glory to God. Paul’s acceptance of his God-given affliction gave him a greater effectiveness in service he would not have had otherwise. He boasted (gloried, rejoiced) in it because it ultimately magnified Christ.

Second Corinthians 10:17 says: “But he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” Serving in the power of our resurrected Lord, let us boast of Christ: His power, His wisdom, His work in and through us. When someone commends us for our service, let us “lift it up as a bouquet to the Lord” using the occasion as an opportunity to praise the Lord.


2. Testimony to a Lost World (1 Pet. 2:11-12)

The word “devil” means the accuser, the slanderer, a liar. Part of his strategy is to stimulate others to attack believers through blasphemy, railing, slander, and other forms of evil speaking. 1 Peter 2:11-12 says: “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

When tragedy strikes, many people have asked the question: “how could a loving God allow this to happen?” Our character and behavior in response to extreme duress (e.g. tragic loss, character assassination, health issues, loss of employment, death of a loved one, persecution, etc.) bears witness to a watching world so that when God convicts some of their sin (their day of visitation), they may by our witness trust in Christ, glorifying God.

The story is told of a powerful force of Roman soldiers known as the “Thundering Legion.” They were expected to bow to Caesar and acknowledge him as Lord. However, forty Christian soldiers refused to do so. So, they took the 40 soldiers to a frozen lake in the middle of a terrible winter storm. They stripped them of all their clothing and left them to freeze to death. Their general said, “Simply bow down to the emperor and save your life?” But all refused to deny Christ.

As they bravely walked barefoot onto the icy lake, these believers prayed and began to shout “Here die 40 men for Christ.” Eventually one gave up and ran to the warm fire on the shore. Later, one of the Roman soldiers sitting by the fire, having watched the courage and faith of the remaining 39, stood up and said to the general: “I will take that man’s place; I will be a Christian.” As the general watched in amazement, the Roman soldier removed his clothing and walked onto the icy lake to join the other 39. As the Roman soldiers sat by the fire all night long, the last thing they said they could remember hearing through the howl of that terrible freezing winter storm was 40 Christian men shouting “Here die 40 men for Christ.” In the morning, there were 40 frozen bodies; men who had died for their faith in Christ.³

The faithfulness of the 39 led to the salvation of the Roman soldier observing them. Similarly, our Christ-like response to suffering testifies of a loving God who empowers us to live victoriously above our circumstances. 

To be continued...

1. All verses quoted from the NKJV

2. Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), p.1100

3. Various sources

by **George Ferrier**

ISSUES *and* ANSWERS

"Search The Scriptures..." John 5:39

Who are the overcomers mentioned in the seven churches of Revelation?

The word translated "overcome" (nikao, G3528) derives from the word "victory" (nike, G3529). It means "to conquer, to get the victory, to prevail."¹ Therefore, overcomers are victorious. But how and over what?

Prior to the cross, knowing He would ultimately triumph, the Lord said: *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).² After completing the work of suffering for our sins, Christ shouted "finished!" from the cross, declaring victory before dismissing His spirit. On the third day, the Father substantiated His victory by raising Him from the dead. Then, forty days after His resurrection Christ led a victory parade in His ascension back to heaven, traveling through the air, the very domain of the evil one who is the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2; 4:8-10).

The Bible teaches that believers are overcomers in the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 John 5:4-5 says: *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"* Through the channel of faith, Christ's victory is the source of our victory.

There is a **completed** aspect to the believer's triumph. Our faith in Christ to save us signaled a victory over the evil one, who seeks to blind people to the gospel, the good news about Christ's glory (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:3-4). By faith, we now see Jesus crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9). Our position in the glorified Christ, makes us conquerors over a world system that opposed Him and lost. Positionally, we are now seated in the heavenlies with Him, no longer of this world, but now citizens of heaven (John 17:16; Eph. 2:6; Phil. 3:20).


Yet, there is also a **continuing** battle in our daily experience. All that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life—tempts us to live for the visible, physical, temporary things of this Christ-rejecting world. Believers can either live a joyful, victorious Christian life or a discouraged, defeated one. This is not a battle that we should strive to win in our own strength.

Instead by faith, we must fight from a victory Christ has

already won—He has overcome the world. Christ our High Priest, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and God's Word are sufficient resources for victorious living in our daily experience. Living by faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Through Christ, our eyes can focus on eternal, spiritual, invisible realities (Col. 3:2). In Him we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

Finally, there is a **conclusive** victory for believers when they enter into the fullness of their inheritance in Christ. It is true that there are varying degrees of rewards that will be handed out by Christ at the judgment seat of Christ. However, the promises to the overcomers in the book of Revelation are part of the common inheritance for all believers in the eternal state.

For example, all believers will eat from the tree of life, experiencing the richness of eternal life for all eternity (Rev. 2:7; John 3:16; 1 John 5:11-12). Second, no believers will experience the second death, eternal spiritual death in the lake of fire (Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14-15). Third, believers will reign with Christ (Rev. 2:26; 3:21; 20:6). Finally, no believer will have their name blotted out of the Book of Life, which is the fate of all unbelievers (Rev. 3:5; 20:15). Further, in the eternal state the overcomer is contrasted with the lost in Revelation 21:7-8.

Therefore, an overcomer is synonymous with being a believer. In Christ, all believers will ultimately be victors, forever free of battle, entering into our eternal rest of enjoying fellowship with God (Rev. 21:3). 

Endnotes

1. Strong, James, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc. Publishers, 2010), e-Sword edition

2. All scriptural references are from the NKJV



George Ferrier is a full-time worker commended by Bridlewood Bible Chapel (Ottawa, ON). In addition to itinerant preaching and teaching at assemblies and conferences in North America and overseas, he is on the board of Cornerstone Magazine Inc. where he also serves as assistant editor. He fellowships at Bethel-Park Bible Chapel in Brantford, ON.

by George Ferrier

News & Notices



Shining Lights Youth Retreat

March 10-12 • Grace Gospel Chapel
1642 Ehrets Lane, Allentown PA

Grace Gospel Chapel in Allentown is planning the return of the Shining Lights Youth Retreat! The retreat for high-school, college, and career-aged youth will be held on March 10-12, 2023. This year's theme is City on A Hill, and the speaker is Dan Weaver! Registration opens December 10th, 2022 until February 10th, 2023. To register, email retreat@gracegospel.us. It is free of charge for any who would like to attend, and accommodations can be provided. For more information contact Elisabeth Schwarz at retreat@gracegospel.us 484-661-7578.

Discover Emmaus Weekend

March 16-18 • Emmaus Bible College
2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001

Discover Emmaus Weekend (DEW) is an opportunity for high school Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors to come to campus and get a taste of what life is like as a student at Emmaus Bible College. The weekend includes attending classes of your choice, chapel, various student-life events, staying overnight in the dorms with a host student, and a Friday night concert by Christian recording artist Jervis Campbell. For more information please visit www.emmaus.edu/dew or email admissions@emmaus.edu.

Stand Fast Mens' Conference

Saturday, March 18 • Fanwood, NJ

Know the Word will be hosting their annual Stand Fast Men's Conference at Woodside Chapel in Fanwood, NJ on Saturday, March 18th, 2023. The time will be 10:00-2:45 PM. Scheduled speakers are Randy Hoffman (Canada) and Steve Price (KS). Lunch will be provided. Email knowtheword@gmail.com to indicate your plans to attend.

Feeding the Flock 2023

March 20-23 • Ocean County, NJ

Join with other believers for four days of enriching ministry and fellowship at this annual event hosted by Know the Word. Speakers include: Mike Attwood, Warren Henderson, Randy Hoffman, Keith Keyser, Mark Kolchin, and Steve Price.

Missionary reports will be given each night. Messages will be given in-person and online. The cost for the conference is \$295 pp which includes deluxe accommodations and great meals at America's Keswick, a deluxe conference in Ocean County, NJ.

To register, go to knowtheword.com

2023 Dallas Area Spring Conference

April 1-2 • Wheatland Bible Chapel
1303 W. Wheatland Rd, Duncanville, TX 75116

Lord willing, the annual Dallas Area Spring Conference will be held April 1-2, 2023 at Wheatland Bible Chapel. The speakers will be Warren Henderson (Stevensville, MT) and Craig Shakarji (Rockville, MD). The conference will be held on Saturday, 10AM - 4PM with lunch served at 12 noon; Following noon lunch on Sunday, the conference will conclude with ministry from 2:00PM - 4:00PM. For more information contact Doug Rice at johndrice@sbcglobal.net or 469-387-5535.

Ottawa Valley Easter Conference

April 7-9 • Rideauview Bible Chapel
1249 Prince of Wales Dr, Ottawa, ON

Ottawa Valley Easter Conference will be held at Rideauview Bible Chapel, April 7-9, 2023. The times of the meetings are 6:00-9:00 pm each night; with a Youth Rally 1:00 - 4:00 pm Saturday. Speakers will be announced at a later date. There is a fellowship time after each meeting. Everyone is welcome.

North American Week of Prayer

April 17-21 • Boulevard Bible Chapel
Pembroke Pines FL

www.naweekofprayer.com

We are excited to announce the 9th annual North American Week of Prayer to be held at Boulevard Bible Chapel in south Florida. In addition to the in-person meeting, the messages will be livestreamed and we expect to have various options for online or in-person prayer meetings throughout North America. Please visit the website, www.naweekofprayer.com, for more information. We encourage many to attend in person to seek the Lord together.

Lancaster County Weekend in the Word

April 21-23 • Lancaster County, PA

Monterey Chapel located in Lancaster County, PA will be hosting a special Weekend in the Word on April 21-23, 2023 in conjunction with Know the Word Ministries. Meetings will be held at Monterey with a special community outreach concert on Saturday night featuring Richard Christen (NJ). Cost for the weekend is \$180 per person (double occupancy) Accommodations will be at the Bird-in-Hand Family Inn. Register at knowtheword.com.

Palos Hills Spring Bible Conference

April 28-30 • Palos Hills Christian Assembly
10600 S 88th Ave, Palos Hills, IL 60465
(Chicago area)

Lord willing, the annual Palos Hills Spring Bible Conference will be held Friday, April 28 - Sunday, April 30, 2023 at the Palos Hills Christian Assembly. The scheduled speakers are Nate Bramsen, Steve Price, and Tom Schetelich. There will be meetings for children during some of the conference sessions.

For more information contact Warren Hagey at eph320h@gmail.com or (708) 233-1268.

78th Annual Bible Conference

May 6-7 • Lake Park Chapel
201 Schlieff Drive, Belle Chasse, LA 70037

Come join them for a spiritually refreshing weekend in God's Word from May 6-7, 2023. The meetings will begin on Saturday May 6 at 3:30 p.m. Dave Bosworth from Pembroke Pines, FL will be the speaker, DV. For more information please contact Ray Cummings at 103 Dickson Drive, Belle Chasse, LA 70037, or 504-239-7068, or 504-393-7083, or lakeparkchapel@att.net.

Hymn Books Available

If your assembly is in need of hymn books there are about 80 Hymns of Worship and Praise, and about 70 Hymns of Truth and Praise available for the cost of shipping. All of the hymnals are in good condition. Most of them are embossed "Hollywood Bible Chapel." For more information contact Doug Rice at doug@stewardsfoundation.org or 972-726-6550.

Morningstar Bible Camp

3031 McIver Rd, West Kelowna, BC, Canada
Discipleship Training Program

Morning Star Bible Camp is an assembly church camp looking to recruit people for their Discipleship Training Program in Kelowna, BC. Come join their 3 and/or 4 week session if you would like to be mentored and are interested in sacrifice, discipline, hard work, and reward to take your walk with the Lord to the next level. Email: manager@morningstarbiblecamp.com for more info.

Ministry Opportunity – Camp Registrar

A new Camp Registrar is needed at Morning Star Bible Camp, effective immediately to plan for 2023. Computer and people skills are a must. Contact Josh at manager@morningstarbiblecamp.com for more information.

Executive Director – Horton Haven Christian Camp

The board of Horton Haven Christian Camp in Lewisburg, TN, is prayerfully and carefully seeking an individual to serve in the role of Executive Director. A job description and an application are available upon request should you or someone you know be interested in filling this position. If so, please contact Jon Glock at jonwglock@gmail.com or call 563-580-3884.

Seeking to Meet With Like-Minded Believers

A couple is seeking to meet with like-minded believers in accordance with New Testament church principles in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Please contact Todd Knight at 540-435-5553 for more information.

Legacy Ministry Services

Believers Stewardship Services is excited to announce that we have chosen a new name for our organization, Legacy Ministry Services, which will be in effect beginning on January 1, 2023. Legacy will continue to provide the same services we have always provided to God's people under this new branding. It is our desire to use this new identity to distinguish ourselves among the many wonderful assembly ministries, while also aligning with our Canadian sister ministry, Legacy Ministries Canada. For those who currently use our services, we have taken the necessary steps to ensure nothing will be affected by this change.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Legacy's estate planning and charitable giving services, please contact Rob Sullivan at rsullivan@bssmatters.com or Nathan Griffiths at ngriffiths@legacycanada.org. You can also visit our new website, which will launch on January 1, at legacyministryservices.com.

Information Help – Danforth Gospel Hall (Toronto, ON, Canada)

The assembly at Danforth Gospel Hall will be marking 125 years of testimony in the spring of 2024 (the second oldest assembly in Toronto). As part of this anniversary, their brother, Michael Thomas, is writing a book on the history of the work at Danforth and its former days as Swanwick Gospel Hall (Deut. 32:7). They are appealing for information, stories, memories, photographs, or documents to help in telling of the work. Any information is greatly appreciated. So if you, or anyone you know was either connected to or has any details of the assembly work at Danforth/Swanwick Gospel Hall please send it along to Michael Thomas at big_m_prop@hotmail.com or by mail: Michael Thomas c/o Danforth Gospel Hall, 2237 Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON M4C 1K4.

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What if Christ had not risen?
What if He still lay in the tomb?
What if that great, heavy stone
Still sealed that cold, dark room?

Then faith in Christ would be worthless;
Our sins could not be forgiven.
Separated from God forever—
We'd have no hope of heaven.

But our Savior indeed has risen!
He's come back alive from the dead!
He's conquered both death and hell,
Providing access to heaven instead!

So our faith is not without value—
Christ can forgive all our sin!
When we repent and trust Him as Savior,
Our heart is completely cleansed!

And God's power that raised up Jesus,
Towards believers is equally strong.
There's no prayer our God cannot answer—
To an all-powerful God we belong!

As we learn to rely more on God's power,
In Him we more fully can rest.
For He can do more than we can imagine.
Through our risen Lord, we truly are blessed!

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

by Karen Sparks

