

EXALTING **CHRIST** • EQUIPPING **BELIEVERS** • EVANGELIZING **THE WORLD**

CORNERSTONE

JULY-AUGUST 2024



Passing the Baton

More Than a
Spectator Sport

Daniel: A Man
of Prayer

...and more

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

Every member of a relay team is vital to its success. They must brilliantly run their leg of the race and then securely hand off the baton to the next runner. Similarly, each believer may be viewed as a runner on a multi-generational relay team, responsible for serving their generation and ensuring that the baton of faith, the “faith which was once for all delivered to the saints,” is passed down to succeeding generations (Jude 3). New Testament truth is as relevant and applicable today as it was to the early Church. God’s Word spans time and culture for there is one Lord, one Spirit, one body, one faith (Eph. 4:4-6).

Let us consider a few snares that could veer us off course in the Church’s relay race that has already spanned twenty centuries. The first is spiritual apathy driven by the many distractions prevalent in the world today. The Lord understands our need to work and provide for our families. However, we must not allow society to conform us to its mold, using wealth and leisure to crowd out our sanctification and spiritual growth. Christ, our Head, must be preeminent (Col. 1:18), through regular Bible study, “family altars,” and regular attendance and service in the local assembly (Heb 10:25). The ordinary affairs and vicissitudes of life must not disrupt our spiritual lives.

A second snare is discouragement. It is easy for the death of a loved one, a job setback, or lack of visible fruit in the Lord’s work to lead us to despair and a pessimistic outlook. However, we cannot let disappointments paralyze us for it can lead to irrational fears (Numb. 13; Deut. 1:19-46), arouse feelings of abandonment (1 Kings 19:14), and bring about a desire to give up (Heb. 12:12). Knowing believers can be affected by this deadly malady there is a great need for encouragers in the local church, people like Barnabas who introduced Saul (Paul) to the apostles (Acts 9:27) and facilitated his entry into service at Antioch (11:25-26).


Another is forgetting that Christ has called us to serve. A common expression in Scripture is that servants “stand” before their master. They wait for instructions, then immediately depart to carry out the given commands (Gen. 41:46; 1 Kings 17:1; 18:15; Zech. 3:1; Luke 1:19). Serving Christ is our reasonable service and an act of worship (cf. Deut. 10:8; 2 Chron. 29:11; Rom. 12:1). Yet, we must also be wary that a busy ministry does not sideline a regular quiet time with the Lord which can lead to serving in the flesh. We stand before Him first and then we go out.

Finally, we can sometimes forget the grandeur of Christ’s building project. We belong to a work of God which is far more illustrious than any world entity today. It is Christ’s eternal

purpose to construct His holy, organic edifice through the hands, feet, and voices of its composite living stones (1 Pet. 2:4-5). Let us never cease to marvel that God gives us the honor of serving Him. Long ago a discouraged Methodist preacher wrote to the great Scottish preacher Alexander Whyte to ask his counsel. Should he leave the ministry? “Never think of giving up preaching!” Whyte wrote to him. “The angels around the throne envy you your great work!” The angels would love to have our opportunity. What a joy! What a privilege! What a responsibility!

Though the lead and anchor runners normally stand out, all the members of the winning team receive the gold medal. The equally important second and third leg runners are not left out. Nor will those who quietly served the Lord in background roles. The Lord will recognize all who participated and ran well in their divinely assigned roles.

“Don’t let the discouragements of the past, the burdens of today, or the fears of tomorrow paralyze us from grasping the baton and pressing on.”

Are we participating with the zeal of a runner, anticipating the crown, or are we sitting on the sidelines? Don’t let the discouragements of the past, the burdens of today, or the fears of tomorrow paralyze us from grasping the baton and pressing on. Those who have already passed the baton are cheering us on. Don’t let our teammates down. Especially don’t let our Captain down. 



by George T Ferrier

George lives in southern Ontario and fellowships at Bethel-Park Bible Chapel (Brantford, ON). Commended to the Lord’s work in 2013 by Bridlewood Bible Chapel (Ottawa), he engages in an itinerant preaching and teaching ministry at North American assemblies, camps, and conferences. He is on the board of Cornerstone Magazine Inc. where he also serves as editor.

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PASSING THE BATON

Excitement is building as the eyes of the world will soon be focused on the athletes as they gather in Paris for the XXXIII Summer Olympics. Some athletes, particularly those on the US Men's and Women's 4 x 100 relay teams, will not want to repeat the disaster of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. During those games, runners on both teams dropped the baton in the hand-off, and their teams failed to advance. All hope of winning a gold medal was shattered. Shock, disappointment, and disbelief shook the runners and those watching.

Several years ago, a brother wrote me with this challenging comment. "What baton are we passing on to the next generation? They must understand the great doctrines of the faith including the biblical truths of the Church." Sadly, in too many circles, the baton of *"the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"* is not being passed on to the next generation (Jude 3). Because of this, many are not established in the precious truths of God's Word. Floundering in their lives personally and spiritually, they are being *"tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in cunning craftiness of deceitful*

plotting” (Eph. 4:14). The challenge is great and there are no easy answers. How can we pass on the baton of foundational truth and the principles of the New Testament Church to the next generation?

In his book *“Come Before Winter”* Chuck Swindoll writes, “We are moving toward an era similar to the Dark Ages . . . when copies of the Scriptures were chained to the pulpit in the secret language of the clergy . . . when the public was kept stone ignorant of the life-changing teachings of the truth. But I see one difference. In those days biblical ignorance was forced . . . in our day it is voluntary. Therein lies the saddest fact of all.”

In writing his first letter to young Timothy, Paul dealt primarily with the issues of false doctrine and Church principles. He closes his letter with these memorable and powerful words, *“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle (empty) babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge – by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen”* (1 Tim. 6:20-21). There are two words that stand out in these verses – “guard” and “committed.”

Guard is “a banking term, indicating a treasure entrusted to the bank for safe keeping” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, Homes A. Kent, Jr.). Paul exhorted young Timothy to guard *“what was committed to your trust.”* This is in reference to the gospel, but in a broader sense, it refers to the doctrines of the Christian faith and Church principles.

Committed suggests “to bind as a promise or pledge” and a “dedication to a long course of action.” These precious truths have been entrusted to us and need to be safeguarded and passed on to the next generation. This is in opposition to the heresy and worthless speculation of false teachers, *“avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.”* I have put this note in the margin of my Bible, “Humanistic philosophies masquerading as truth or science falsely so called.” This falsely named “knowledge” claims to be superior knowledge but is in fact an affront to genuine spiritual knowledge. Sadly, the Word of God is manipulated to teach these humanistic philosophies.

Throughout my life, I have seen many who have defected from the local assembly to attend bigger and “better” places, where the “needs of the family could be met.” But have we ever questioned why this is? Many years ago, our family attended a vibrant, growing assembly where we were being *“built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted*

together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20-22). During those early and formative years, we grew in our appreciation of foundational New Testament Church truth because our elders wisely sought to pass on the baton of truth.

Two or three times a year the elders invited various brethren for a one-week series of ministry meetings, brethren like David Long, J. Boyd Nicholson, Frederick Tatford, and others. The elders would suggest that certain foundational truths be taught, as well as New Testament Church Principles. I remember David Long taking up the Kenosis Theory, “Did Christ empty Himself of His Deity?” Dr. Tatford often spoke on prophetic subjects.

One thing troubling believers at that time was the resurgence of “The Charismatic Movement.” Some assemblies lost attendees and some assemblies divided, never to recover. During this time, our elders made certain the “Doctrine of the Holy Spirit” was systematically taught by local brethren as well as having special meetings that focused on the “tongues movement and faith healing.” Our assembly did not lose a single person.

The elders wisely dealt with these truths, *“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting”* (Eph. 4:12, 14).

During this time, I was directing the Youth Camp and remember walking down to the beach in the afternoon. I could not believe it! There was a good-sized group of young people sitting there with open Bibles discussing some of the truths they had been learning.

Our assembly sought to pass the baton of developing gift. From time to time, they wrote up an outline of an epistle and passed it out to the assembly. They asked various men, some who had never taken part publicly, to open the subject for 15 minutes at the mid-week meeting. A conversational study followed their opening. I remember that we were studying Ephesians and a young brother in his early 20’s was asked to speak from Ephesians 1:15-23. This was his first time speaking publicly. We were amazed at the gift he had, and how well he spoke. Because of this experience, he went on to develop his gift. It was not a “perfect assembly” but what assembly is? The elders at that time sought to pass on the baton of developing gift and establishing the believers in the faith.

...Continued on page 14

“WHAT BATON ARE WE PASSING ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION?”



MORE THAN A SPECTATOR SPORT

The stadium was packed, everyone was on their feet, the shouting in the stands drowning out the sound of an airline jet passing overhead. The fans were going crazy as the two teams battled in the last few minutes of the game. It was the Super Bowl and both teams were tied with only one minute to go. There is nothing to compare with being there and experiencing the excitement of those moments as the two teams, equally matched, battled out the last minutes of a hard-fought game. With time for one more play, the quarterback looks downfield to see a wide receiver open. He throws the ball into the hands of the receiver who spins out of a tackle, twists past another defender, and runs the last five yards diving over the goal line for a touchdown. The crowd goes wild!

In the following days, fans from both teams will be criticizing and praising different players. The Monday morning quarterbacks will be giving “expert advice” on what the coaches should have done. Later these same fans will be discussing their favorite hockey, baseball, and basketball teams. There are many spectators in sports and while they admire the condition and skills of their favorite players, their own exercise can sometimes consist of nothing more than moving their arms to their mouths to eat junk food as they sit in their armchairs watching the games on television.

The same mentality is often found in churches where spectator Christians go from place to place searching for what “suits” their perceived style of music, ritual, and ambiance. Too often they do not really hear the ministry of God’s Word because they are distracted by the many projects they have planned for the day ahead of them.

Christian Players

What is happening to take the real spiritual life and participation out of Christian living? I believe we have come

to accept as normal the secular society in which we live. Unfortunately, the church has also become more and more secularized and is accepting the current trends of a lost world system. While modern technology is helpful in so many ways, it can also re-arrange our thinking and actions as it numbs our minds and cauterizes our consciences to God’s plan for life and living. Following the secularized worldview reminds us of Lot who was drawn to the worldly ways of his time (Gen. 13:10-12). It may seem exciting but has no value to God.

However, scripture gives many examples of people who followed God’s way, men like Abram, John the Baptist, Matthew, Paul, and many more. New Testament scriptures are filled with examples of the Lord’s teaching about what it is to lay up treasures in heaven. (1 Tim. 6:17-19; Luke 18:28-30). There are many more recent church leaders such as George Whitefield, D.L. Moody, Hudson Taylor, C.T. Studd, and the five missionary martyrs in Ecuador who continue to give us examples of serving God and His people and not just being a spectator.

There are several biblical examples of the Lord Jesus calling men to follow Him because He had a plan and purpose for their lives. Two of John the Baptist’s followers heard John say, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” They followed the Lord who asked, “What do you seek?” They replied, “Rabbi, where are You staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” (John 1:36-39 NASB). They followed the Lord Jesus, stayed with Him that day and then Andrew went to look for his brother Peter with the good news. “He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’...He brought him to Jesus” (John 1:41-42).

Later, Peter and Andrew were by the sea casting out their nets when the Lord passed by and called them. “He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they



“DON’T BE A SPECTATOR. OFFER YOURSELF TO THE LORD AND BE PREPARED TO DO WHATEVER HE HAS FOR YOU TO DO.”

were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me’” (Mark 1:16-18). The Lord called them and gave them a better work and a new focus for their lives. They would become “fishers of men.” They were no longer observers but players in the real game of life.

A tax collector, Matthew, was busy at work when the Lord passed by (Matt. 9:9). The Lord then went to Matthew’s house where he was able to speak to many tax collectors (Matt. 9:10). Matthew opened the way for the Lord to speak to all these and to other sinners. He later wrote the gospel that carries his name.


The apostle Paul was called in a very unusual way when the Lord appeared to Him on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:3-6). Paul was commissioned as a chosen instrument of the Lord to take the gospel message to Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel. This was not going to be an easy task as it would be a pathway of suffering, persecution and finally martyrdom. Paul became one of the greatest of the apostles and was used through his suffering to pen a large portion of the New Testament. His life shows what God can do with those who are prepared to follow the Lord with all their hearts.

The Lord told a parable illustrating some of the excuses people make for not coming to Him, and these are typical and still in vogue today (Luke 14:16-20). One man had bought some land and wanted to look at it. But there was no purpose in just looking at his land. Many times, our possessions become more important to us than being involved in serving the Lord. Wealth and possessions become obstacles to living “the life that is truly life.”

First Timothy 6:17-19 says: “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to

do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life” (NIV).

Today, we are called to follow the Lord and be obedient to Him as He fits and prepares us to serve. He will not call everyone to be missionaries overseas or well-known evangelists, but He has a place for each one of us in a local church, either here at home or overseas, using us together with others in continuing to carry the gospel to the world around us. He will prepare and fit us for the ministry He wants us to perform. He gives spiritual gifts to every believer and as we work together, God will use the diversity of our gifts and abilities, even sometimes using our weaknesses, to manifest His greatness and power.

Don’t be a spectator. Offer yourself to the Lord and be prepared to do whatever He has for you to do, wherever He can best use you. 



by Ian Taylor

Ian Taylor a commended missionary to Colombia in 1968, served 20 years there, later moved to the USA, and has continued as an itinerate teacher, currently serving on the Board of Trustees of Emmaus Bible College and chairing the Board of Emmaus Worldwide.



COME & HEAR

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

PSALM 66:16

Profitable For All Things

THE TESTIMONY OF WAYNE ERDMAN

Born in 1952 into a happy Roman Catholic family, I was raised in Waterloo, ON, Canada, about one hour west of Toronto. I had four older brothers and a younger brother and sister. My parent's first child, a daughter, had died at the age of two.

My father owned a taxicab while my mother was a homemaker. We faithfully attended mass until I was about 13, when we stopped attending. My older brothers had already stopped going before that. We were a happy family, and our parents gave us a good childhood. I remember that my uncle Wilf left to work in the United States and in the early 1970's became a believer. When he would return to Canada for a visit, he would share the gospel. We were surprised because previously it had never been his practice to even attend church. Now he often talked about his faith.

Judo

Growing up I enjoyed playing hockey, baseball, and other sports with my friends, and at the age of 13 I began taking judo lessons. Born in Canada, my coach John Hatashita was a Japanese

Canadian. He was also a Christian who would share his faith with me. I began competing in local competitions at the age of 14 and in 1971, at the age of 19, I became the Canadian Men's National Champion in the 70-kilo class. I spent the next five years training, sometimes in Japan, other times in Canada. We did not do a lot of socializing because our team was concentrating

on numerous competitions and world championships. My best ranking in the world's was finishing top-7 one year. My highest achievement was winning the gold medal in the 1975 Pan American Games in Mexico City.

Summer Olympics

From 1973-1976, the national team had an apartment in Montreal where we trained. Sport Canada supported us, and we occasionally did little odd jobs to make a bit of extra money. Money was tight and we never turned down a meal when we were invited to someone's home. In the 1976 Montreal Summer Olympics, I lost a close match to a Korean and was eliminated from competition. He went on to finish fourth, just missing out on a medal. I



Wayne Erdman at the 1975 Pan American Games

was disappointed; after one match my Olympic experience was all over. I blamed my performance on too much training which had burned me out.

Return to Waterloo

I moved back to Waterloo, managing the fitness center that Mr. Hatashita owned as well as teaching judo to children and adults and coaching serious competitors. I stopped competing for three years until I began thinking of the 1980 Olympics. I started competing again, winning the Canadian championship for the fifth time in 1980, this time in the 78-kilo class. This win qualified me for the national team at the 1980 Moscow Olympics. However, due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and many western nations, including Canada, deciding to boycott the games, my Olympic dreams were over.

Depression

I began falling into depression, seeing I could no longer compete. Little of my coach's and uncle's testimonies had penetrated me. Knowing my fitness was now deteriorating, I began to think about spiritual things. One day I prayed "God, please reveal yourself to me." Immediately after praying this, late one Friday afternoon my car broke down right in front of a service garage. They could not work on the car until the next week. I called my brother to give me a ride home after he was done work, but he had already left for the weekend. So, I walked over to the King/Erb bus stop and waited for a bus. A stranger named Bruce came up and said, "It would be faster walking or hitchhiking." We began walking together and I noticed he had some tracts in his front pocket. I asked for one and read it as we walked together. I asked him where I could find out more about this. He told me to go to a Bible-believing church and that Sunday I attended the local church where he fellowshiped. At that time, it was known as Velvet Hills Baptist Church, an independent church.

New Life

It was either that Sunday or the next, that my heart was just pounding as I heard the gospel message. It was the same gospel as my coach and my uncle had given me but this time I understood and was convicted of my sin. There was an altar call. I went forward and was saved that day in July 1983. I felt instant relief and peace. The pastor told me I should come back and be baptized that same night. I suddenly became wary and stayed away for a whole month. I had heard about cults and wondered what I had gotten myself into. I went and talked to Coach Hatashita who was thrilled to hear of my salvation. He reassured me and explained the meaning of baptism. I went back to church, was baptized, and enjoyed warm fellowship there.


However, after a time there was a church split. Not understanding a lot, I left with the departing group because my friend Bruce did. Unable to find someone willing to pastor our group, eventually everyone decided to go wherever the Lord led

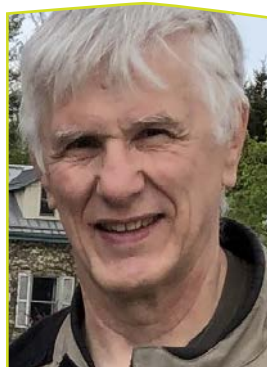
and the group disbanded. Some went to other Baptist churches. I was not sure what to do.

In 1983, I had bought the gym from Coach Hatashita. While I was looking for a church Mark Weber, one of the gym's clients, told me he went to Bethel Chapel, a brethren assembly in Waterloo. I began attending in 1986 and have been in happy fellowship there ever since. Around the time I bought the gym I began coaching judo and was on the Canadian National Coaching Staff for seven years. I found coaching very rewarding. I coached Mr. Hatashita's son, Roman, from a beginner to his winning some nationals as well as making the Olympic team. While national team coach, we won some Olympic and world medals. I kept a tract rack near the front door as a gospel witness and over the years have had opportunities to witness to various people. One woman named Lydia came to the gym and I talked to her about the Lord and invited her to the assembly. After a time, she came to know the Lord and since then has even learned Hebrew. I kept the gym for 25 years until 2008. Though I still teach judo recreationally, I no longer coach.

I have had opportunities over the years to serve in various ways at the chapel: chairing the mid-week prayer meetings; reading correspondence letters; sharing God's Word; and helping out wherever needed. A group of us give out gospel tracts outside Waterloo university early Thursday evenings. With some friends I also distribute tracts on Monday and Saturday afternoons in downtown Kitchener, Waterloo's twin city. Sometimes I take my motorcycle to nearby towns such as Paris and give out tracts.

First Timothy 4:8 says, *"For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."* Any glory in athletics pales in comparison to knowing Christ as my Savior. Knowing Him is rewarding in this life as well as in the one to come. I thank the Lord for my life experiences—good and bad—and how they led me to Christ. I give Him all the glory.

Isaiah 55:6 states, *"Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near."* Finally, Romans 6:23, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* It is my prayer that all reading this would know Christ as their Savior. 



by Wayne Erdman

Wayne is a Canadian Olympian saved by the grace of God. He loves sharing the gospel, giving out tracts in Kitchener/Waterloo and the surrounding area. He has been in happy fellowship with the saints gathered in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ at Bethel Chapel, Waterloo, ON since 1986.



A Heavenly PERSPECTIVE

THE TESTIMONY OF ASAPH

A suitable outline for Psalm 73 is:

- ▶ An outward look (vv.4-11)
- ▶ An inward look (vv.2-3,14-16)
- ▶ An upward look (vv.17-20)
- ▶ A forward look (vv.21-28)

Doctrinally

Asaph had sound theology as seen in his statement “*truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart.*” This is a truth he grew up with and as a worship leader in the temple, he would have often proclaimed and affirmed it. As a parallel, the believer today also knows that “God is good.” However, we have a fuller revelation. We know God offers His peace to us, that our future

is secure, and that God is sovereign over this world. We also know that things will deteriorate morally and spiritually in the last days.

Emotionally

Asaph was torn apart on the inside because he started focusing on the world around him. In his case he was envious of the wealthy people who were also evil in their dealings. He could not understand why these people had few worries and lacked the troubles that plagued other people. They were characterized by pride, violence, abundance, and blasphemy. They went so far as to mock God. They were ungodly, and yet they continued to prosper financially and materially.

Asaph confessed that his feet almost stumbled as these conditions began to affect his outlook on life (v.3). He knew he could not verbalize his doubts and thoughts but had to keep them to himself (v.15). As a result, the situation became too painful for him, in that he was being torn apart emotionally as he was consumed by envy (v.14).

In the Psalms, Asaph is not alone in this predicament. David

(Psa. 37) and the Sons of Korah (Psa. 49) also expressed similar thoughts. Some of the prophets expressed the same perspective (ex. Habakkuk). The world around them seemed to contradict their theology, in particular the premise that God was good to His people. The circumstances around them affected their perspective and caused doubts to arise.

Spiritually

Asaph did not have an answer, so he changed his position by going into the presence of God. He realized he needed to have God's Word as his guide. What a transformation took place in Asaph's world view. He now recognized the imminent danger these wicked people faced as he came to understand their end.

The wicked were in slippery places and headed for destruction. There was desolation and there were terrors ahead for them. These people were not to be envied but rather, in light of where they were headed, they were to be pitied. They would experience an eternal separation from God. He later said, "For indeed, those who are far from you shall perish" (v.27).

Emotionally

God's revelation in the sanctuary made Asaph realize his error. He felt a sense of grief and sorrow. He repented by admitting he had been foolish and ignorant to have had such thoughts about the wicked people he was observing.

In light of this revelation, his perspective changed. The world around him and the wealthy wicked were still there but Asaph had changed on the inside. Time with the Lord and a different perspective radically transformed Asaph's thinking. He moved from being controlled by feelings to resting on facts and then to responding in faith.

Mentally

Instead of being controlled by his emotions, he now thought rationally and acknowledged that he had an unbreakable relationship with God. The same is true for us as well for we have the assurance of Christ. He is our hope of glory, and He promises us that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Asaph also affirmed God's direction in his life. God held his hand and guided him with His counsel. We also have the assurance that the Spirit guides, directs and gives us comfort. Further, he knew his destiny was to be in the presence of God forever (vv.23-24). The same is true for us. Our citizenship is in heaven and so is our future home. I once heard this encouraging outline: "we have the guarantee of His presence, the grasp of His hand, the guidance of His counsel, and His glory to follow."

With the change of focus, Asaph saw that his relationship with God gave him all he needed and could ever want. The wicked may have riches but Asaph had an eternal relationship and a wealth the world cannot fathom. He could draw near to God (v.28) and proclaim that God is indeed good, thus taking himself back to the start of the Psalm. He put his trust in the

Lord and was now determined to declare the works of God.

Application

Many believers today are consumed with what they see, either in the news, on-line, or in their own city. Like Asaph, many wonder that if God is good, then why are all these wicked and immoral things going on around us. Some believers feel that their only hope is a change in government and that perhaps a different person in power would usher in a godlier environment.

For us the answer is the same as Asaph discovered. A focus on circumstances will result in discouragement, whereas a focus on Christ will bring delight to the child of God. We should go to the Word of God for insight and a godly perspective. Our concern should be for the souls of men and women who are headed to a lost eternity. The world around us is not likely to change or get better, but we can change as we focus on the benefits and beauty of our relationship with the Lord. Instead of feelings being in control, we can focus on facts and respond in faith. When considering Asaph's experience, I am reminded of the following poem by an unknown author:

*Three men were walking on a wall,
Feeling, Faith, and Fact.
When Feeling took an awful fall,
And Faith was taken back.
So close was Faith to Feeling,
He stumbled and fell too.
But Fact remained and pulled Faith back,
And Faith brought Feeling too. CM*



by Gary McBride

Gary and his wife Gloria were commended in 1980 to the Lord's work. They spent two years in Zambia followed by 27 years in Northern Ontario ministering in the north and working at Northland Bible Camp. After time in Southern Ontario, they moved back to Kirkland Lake, ON for six years. Recently they have moved to Pembroke, ON.



FOUNDATIONS *of the faith*

CHRIST OUR HOPE

THE PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE

“Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

The Lord’s imminent return for His Church provides hope, comfort, and encouragement for the believer. Therefore, the Bible instructs the Church, consisting of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, to watch and wait for His return. Our hope is not in politics, science, medicine, technology, education, or in reforming this world. Instead, Christ is our hope. This hope, properly held in our hearts, motivates us to serve, labor, and witness for our Lord (1 Thess. 5:6-7). The expectation of His return is an incentive for holy living (1 John 3:2-3). Moreover, knowledge of our reunion with those who have died *“in the Lord”* is a source of great comfort (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

The Millennial Kingdom

Before we examine the rapture – the Lord’s return in the air for His Church – we will consider three major views of His later coming to earth to establish His kingdom. From the Latin meaning one-thousand, these views all use the word “millennial”:

- 1) The amillennial view teaches that there is no literal kingdom and that there is no future for Israel as a nation. A general judgment will occur after the Lord’s return to earth. It relies heavily on the “spiritualizing” method of interpreting Scripture.
- 2) The postmillennial view teaches that the Lord comes after the kingdom is brought in. The millennium is ushered in by the preaching of the gospel or by “social/political

reform.” This view has been revived today under the title of “Christian Reconstructionism.”

- 3) The premillennial view teaches that the Lord comes before a 1,000-year reign. It proclaims a literal 1000-year kingdom reign on earth by the Lord Jesus Christ who comes in power and glory to set up His kingdom (see Rev. 20:1-7). Promises to the nation of Israel will be literally fulfilled.

Why the divergence of views? One’s approach to interpreting the Bible determines one’s eschatology, the doctrine of last things. The premillennial view is arrived at by the application of a consistent literal interpretation of Scripture (Dan. 2:35, 45; Isa. 7:14; 11:6-8). While most who believe that the Bible is God’s Word interpret the Bible literally, many abandon this approach when interpreting yet to be fulfilled prophecy. For example, Luke 1:31-32a says, *“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest.”*

All three views would agree that this was literally fulfilled at the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where they differ is on the portion following it, *“and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”* (Luke 1:32b-33). One either spiritualizes this part, that is ascribe to it some other meaning than what it clearly says, or consistently and literally interprets the entire portion. Comparing Scripture

with Scripture, the premillennial view of Christ's return to earth is the correct eschatological interpretation.

The Rapture

When will this great event occur? The Lord declares: *"but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father"* (Mark 13:32). Therefore, Scripture exhorts all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to continually *"wait for his Son from heaven"* (1 Thess. 1:10). With earnest and eager anticipation, we should look for Him, watching not for an event but for our Savior. Philippians 3:20 says, *"For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."*

The return of the Lord Jesus to the air for His Church is the next event on God's prophetic timetable. The believers who have *"died in the Lord"* will be resurrected and caught up to meet Him in the air (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Immediately afterward, He will *"catch up"* (rapture) living believers to the air, transforming their bodies, and equipping them to live in heaven.

Premillennial Bible students differ on whether the Church will go through all or part of the future Tribulation, also known as Daniel's 70th week (Dan. 9:24-27). Following are four biblical reasons why Christ will remove the Church before the Tribulation:

1. The Tribulation Pertains to Israel

The Tribulation is a time designed specifically for the nation of Israel. While there will be an effect on Gentile nations, the following verses reference "Jacob," "Israel," and "thy people." They refer to the Jewish nation alone; the Tribulation does not involve the Church:

"And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah" (Jer. 30:4) "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30:7).

"Therefore, fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." (Jer. 30:10; see the entire context of Jer. 30:4-11; Dan. 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-24).

2. The Mystery of the Church

The Church was a mystery: *"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed...that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God"* (Eph. 3:5-6, 9).

Christ's body, the Church did not exist in the Old Testament. It could not come into existence until the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the sending of the Holy Spirit to form His body. Though the Church was in the eternal plan of God, it was not revealed and could not be known until the Lord made it known by divine revelation. The Church is a New Testament entity and is not the subject of Old Testament prophecy while the Tribulation is a subject of Old Testament prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27).

Initiated with the birth of the Church (Acts 2), the Church Age is a parenthesis or period of time not foretold in the Old Testament. The completion and rapture of the Church will close out this era. When the Church Age ends, God's dealings with His Old Testament people Israel will resume.


3. The Tribulation Passages in Revelation

The Church is not mentioned from Revelation 4:2 until chapter 19. There are "saints," but these are not to be confused with the saints of the Church age.

4. The Teaching of the New Testament

The plain reading of Revelation 3:10 and a comparison of 1 Thessalonians 5:9 with Revelation 6:17 reveal that the Church has not been appointed to experience the time of God's wrath upon the world. First Thessalonians 1:9-10 expresses the hope and confidence of the Church: *"to wait for his Son from heaven... even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."*

Imminency means "any moment." The doctrine of His imminent return stresses that the timing of His arrival is uncertain and that He may come at any moment. There are no intervening signs or prophesied events that need to be fulfilled before the Rapture could occur. This produces in the believer a constant state of expectancy and incentive for service and holy living.

In view of His imminent return, may we be reminded of His promise in the closing words of Scripture, *"He which testifieth these things saith, surely, I come quickly"* (Rev. 22:20). May our hearts respond as did John's: *"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* 



by Larry Price

Larry Price is an itinerant Bible teacher and travels extensively teaching and preaching the Word of God. He and his wife Wanda are in fellowship at Grace Gospel Chapel, Gilbertsville, PA. Larry's testimony can be obtained by going to <https://www.larryrprice.com>.



DANIEL

A MAN OF PRAYER

Daniel was a remarkable man who possessed enormous ability and rose to a position of great importance. He had arrived in Babylon as a captive from his home city of Jerusalem and never returned. From that destitute position he became the administrator of the greatest empires of his day.

The secret of his greatness was simply that he obeyed God and took prayer seriously. He interceded with God, but his prayers were more than just a series of requests. This is clearly seen in chapter two of his prophecy where we read of him returning from the king and gathering his three friends to engage in intercession. Their prayers were answered when it says, “*Then was the secret revealed*” (2:19). That was a marvelous moment as they recognized the greatness of God in hearing their prayer and giving them an answer. There was relief in their hearts as they, together with all the other wise men of Babylon, no longer had the threat of death hanging over their heads.

Yet Daniel did not immediately rush to give the news to the king but spent time in considering the greatness of God. First, he blessed God and highlighted the fact that God is a God of knowledge, the omniscient One who knows everything. He is also the God of power, the omnipotent One who is mighty. Indeed, he said, “*Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His*” (2:20).

Then he gave thanks and praise to God before he went to see the king. He said, “*I thank You and praise You, O God of my*

fathers; You have given me wisdom and might and have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king’s demand.” (2:23). He did not forget to thank and praise God for answered prayer.

The Secret of Greatness

Daniel’s life revolved around prayer, and nothing could stop him from communing with God. Three times each day he knelt at an open window facing west towards Jerusalem “*and prayed and gave thanks before his God*” (6:10). That was his settled routine and with consistent discipline he never missed those times of communion with the Lord. It was his prayer life that led him unwittingly into a danger which was life threatening. By this time the Babylonian Empire had been overrun and was now part of the Medo-Persian Empire under the rule of King Darius, with Daniel as the chief administrator.

Daniel’s enemies in court were so jealous of his high rank and influence with the king that they conspired to remove him from office. However, he was so faithful and conscientious in his duties that they could not find anything to accuse him of, “*except ...concerning the law of his God*” (6:5). Therefore, Daniel’s devotion to God and His laws were what they used against him.

The counsellors met with the king and worked upon his pride and ego by suggesting a new law, which would only be enacted for a month. It stated that no one should pray or make petition to any god or man except to the king. Presumably this was suggested as a way of focusing people’s attention on the power and greatness of King Darius. The king signed the decree, and

it became law, and the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be amended, broken, or rescinded. When Daniel heard about this new law, he never stopped praying but continued with his daily devotions.

There are times when we must obey a higher law than the law of the land. In the New Testament when the disciples were prohibited from preaching the gospel, they answered that they should obey God rather than men. They willingly broke the law so that people could hear the good news of the gospel. Here Daniel answered to a higher authority and refused to obey the king's decree. He continued to pray to God three times a day and we are given a glimpse of the principles of prayer that enabled Daniel to be so effective for God (6:10).

1. His Prayer was Humble:

"He knelt upon his knees." He knelt before God. Powerful statesman that he was, he still recognized the infinite greatness of Almighty God. He needed God and before the awesome God of creation, glory, and greatness, he was small, just a man. Pride and prayer do not go together as we are reminded in the parable Jesus told of the proud Pharisee and the humble tax-collector. It was the humble man who went away justified (Luke 18:9-14). We must always approach the throne of grace humbly, even though paradoxically we can approach confidently. That great missionary pioneer, Hudson Taylor, had a similar, humble approach to God and it is said that the sun never rose in China, but it found Hudson Taylor on his knees in prayer.

2. His Prayer was Regular:

"Three times a day." He made it a matter of daily routine to spend three times a day with God. It would have required discipline, perhaps getting up before the workday began, leaving important government work at mid-day, and then last thing at night communing with the Lord. His daily routine was saturated with prayer and that made him effective in all he did. We must never miss our daily quiet time with God.

3. His Prayer was Personal:

This was not corporate prayer but personal prayer as he engaged with God in the quietness of his own home. We must never neglect the vitally important prayer meeting as it is the cornerstone of our church life, but the daily foundation of our spiritual life is personal prayer.

4. His Prayer was Known:

His window was open, and people could see him pray and perhaps even hear his words. Though his prayer life was personal it was not secret, and he would have been utterly unashamed for people to know that he was a man who communed with the true and living God. Are we known as people of prayer? If so, one of the things we can sincerely say


to people who are going through crises is that we will pray for them.

5. His Prayer was Constant:

Even the edict of the king that outlawed such activity did not deter him from praying. He was willing to die rather than stop praying. Daniel therefore faced the penalty for disobedience to an earthly edict which was to be thrown into a den of lions.

Simply because he prayed to God, he had broken a law of the land. There was nothing he could do about it and even the king was helpless to save Daniel from execution. The sentence was carried out, but God upheld and protected His servant. The power of God held back the lions and Daniel was miraculously saved from death. God does not always intervene to protect His servants from a "premature" death. In the New Testament, James was killed with the sword while Peter was miraculously saved from death. Many Christians through the ages have died the martyr's death but some have also been spared in amazing ways to continue their work for God. That was Daniel's experience. So, whether we live or die, let us be determined to obey the Lord and uphold His name and keep close to Him in prayer because our lives and our eternity are bound up in the person of the Savior.

"Whether we live or die, let us be determined to obey the Lord and uphold His name and keep close to Him in prayer because our lives and our eternity are bound up in the person of the Savior."

The challenge is to be faithful despite the possible consequences. In the words of Louis Zamperini which apply to prayer, "Never give up and never give in." That was exactly the attitude and practice of Daniel. May we follow in his footsteps and bring glory to the name of the Lord. 



by Paul Young

Paul Young is married to Alison and has been in full-time service for the Lord for over 40 years. He was formerly a schoolteacher. He is based in South Wales, UK and ministers the Word of God both throughout the UK and in many countries around the world. He has been involved in radio ministry and has authored 18 books, most recently "They Died Young" accounts of 14 influential Christians who were called home around the age of thirty.

Several years ago, a brother shared with me that at one time it was “The Vertical Church” - from God to His people. But now it is “The Horizontal Church” - “what is in it for me?” In Jude’s day, apostasy had set in, and he urged the believers to “*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3). Jude was greatly concerned about the problems facing believers and spoke with force and authority warning them of subversive teachers. We ought to be concerned too. In *The New Tolerance* the author writes: “The surrender of the Christian church to the ideas and ideals of the new tolerance has begun in earnest and is proceeding with frightening speed...” (Josh MacDowell and Bob Hostetler, p. 174).

Are we passing on the batons of Foundational Truths, New Testament Church Principles, Christian Living, Gospel Preaching, etc.? The challenge is great in this Laodicean age. It is not an easy task, but these precious truths need to be entrusted to the next generation for safe keeping.


Are we passing on the baton of a biblical family? Sometime ago, I heard of a missionary family who were home on furlough. One Lord’s Day morning someone asked the wife where her husband and son were. She replied, “Oh, he is taking him fishing this morning.” What example did this father just pass on to his son? God is not important; the church is not important, but fishing is?

Parents, do you have a daily family devotion time with your children? More than ever, families need this time together. Also, when you enjoy a meal together, make time to talk to your children about their day. In one family a three-year old girl quoted to me Psalm 23 and John 3:16 with a few helps. This indicated that their family was spending time in the Word together.

“*And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph. 6:4). This responsibility is primarily placed in the father’s lap. Our youth are being bombarded from every side. The assembly is only as strong as the family unit. Fathers do not abdicate your responsibility. Are you a wise and godly leader in your home? Parents, do your children ever see you praying and reading God’s Word? There is a huge but necessary responsibility to pass on this baton to succeeding generations.

Several years ago, a brother spoke at the Toronto Easter Conference on “The Company of the Committed” from Mark 8:34-38, where the Lord challenged His disciples to “*take up his cross and follow Me*” (v.34). He mentioned that there are three concentric circles pertaining to disciples in the Word of God:

- 1. Curious Disciples** – How many believers today are shallow and uncommitted in their spiritual lives? They never seem to mature.
- 2. Convinced Disciples** – How many Christians today are convinced of scriptural truth but are too involved with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches to be involved?
- 3. Committed Disciples** – These are needed as never before. Paul challenged young Timothy, and may he challenge our own hearts, “*This charge I commit to you, son Timothy.*” What was the charge? “*that...you may wage the good warfare*” (1 Tim. 1:18).

Lastly, the aged Paul reminds him, “*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*” (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul wisely passed on the baton of truth to the next generation. The challenge remains, “What baton are we passing on to the next generation?” Let us not fumble it! 



by Jim Comte

Jim and his wife Heather make their home in Barrie, Ontario (Canada) where they fellowship at Northside Bible Chapel. Commended to the Lord’s work, Jim is a frequent conference speaker in Canada and the US.



ISSUES *and* ANSWERS

*“Search the
Scriptures...”*

John 5:39

What Is the Difference Between the “Fruit of the Spirit” and the “Gifts of the Spirit?”

The Bible speaks about both the “gifts” and “fruit” of the Holy Spirit. It is essential for believers to be aware of the differences between them.


Both the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit are manifestations or expressions of the Holy Spirit and come to us through Him. But they are in two different categories of blessing. Spiritual gifts are Spirit-worked abilities. They are a God-given ability for spiritual service, divine endowments so that by the Spirit’s empowerment believers can exercise a regular ministry in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:1-11; Rom. 12:3-8). Every believer is spiritually gifted in at least one area of service (1 Cor. 12:6-7). The Holy Spirit sovereignly gives spiritual gifts to His people “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11, NKJV). The purpose is for the edification of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7).

The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is a cluster of spiritual qualities of Christian character which the Holy Spirit produces in a believer as they live in the fullness of the Spirit, filled and controlled by Him. The experience of filling relates to Christian character (Eph. 5:18-21). The description of the fruit of the Spirit is a description of Christlikeness. “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*” (Gal. 5:22-23a, NKJV). It is by walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and being led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:18) that the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in us.

That Spirit and flesh are in conflict is illustrated by contrasting the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The works of the flesh refer to what one can do in their sinful nature. The fruit of the Spirit, on the other hand, is a natural product of the work of the Spirit. This fruit is produced when the believer has a dynamic, close fellowship with Christ.

The singular form of the word “fruit” stresses that these qualities are a unity, like a bunch of grapes, instead of separate pieces of fruit.

We find a variety of the gifts of the Spirit, but only one cluster of the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts are given one by one to different believers, while the fruit should be found in all Christians. The gifts are God-given abilities, while the fruit is the nine virtues of Christlikeness produced by the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit refer to believers’ spiritual capabilities in the service of the Lord; the fruit of the Spirit refers to believers’ spiritual character. The gifts are given instantly to every member of the body of Christ at the moment of salvation, whereas the fruit is developed gradually as believers abide in Christ and yield to the working of the Holy Spirit. Gifts are never a means of judging the quality of a person’s spiritual life. Conversely, the fruit displays the spiritual development and spiritual maturity of a person.

The gifts of the Spirit primarily involve our activity; what we do, while the fruit of the Spirit speaks to what we are. Gifts are related to our service, while fruit is related to our character. We may receive different spiritual gifts; however, we should each be known by the same multi-faceted fruit of the Spirit. Remember, gifts are given to us, fruit is developed in us. Gifts are given according to the sovereign will of God, while fruit is produced by the Spirit because of our submission to Him. The Lord Jesus reminds us that all will recognize us as His disciples not by our gifts, but by the fruit virtue of love (John 13:35). 



by Alexander Kurian

Alexander Kurian is a commended full-time worker serving the Lord for the last forty years in an 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.

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► **September 27-29th, 2024**

20 Bergen Ave, Voorhees, NJ

Community Gospel Chapel in Voorhees, NJ will be hosting their annual Weekend in the Word Bible Conference on Fri. Sept. 27 through Sun. Sept. 29th, 2024. Mark Kolchn from Know the Word Ministries will be the speaker. All sessions are in-person and on Zoom and YouTube. Local accommodations are available. For more information and to obtain Zoom login information, contact Sherman Fray at safraz@msn.com.

3rd Annual Danforth Bible Conference

► **November 1-3, 2024**

*Danforth Gospel Hall
2237 Danforth Ave. Toronto, ON. M4C 1K4*

Danforth Gospel Hall will be celebrating their 125th anniversary with special anniversary presentations. The theme is: "Great is thy faithfulness." The expected speakers are Jack Baker, Bruno Morel, and Bill Yuille. For more information contact Michael Thomas at 416-795-0389 or big_m_prop@hotmail.com.

Clermont Bible Fellowship

355 Citrus Tower Blvd., Suite 110, Clermont, FL 34711

If you are traveling or moving to central Florida, the believers at Clermont Bible Fellowship welcome you to come and worship with them. Clermont is centrally located near the theme parks, but west of the Orlando business area. For more information contact Lanny Evans at 321-663-5532 or bluedolphin@gmx.us.

Help Wanted: Camp Hope

7011 Pony Lake Rd, Dahlonaga, GA

Camp Hope has an open position for the Director of Maintenance. This is a full-time, salaried position responsible for the maintenance and repair of the camp's facilities, working with rental groups, and other duties. On campus housing or a stipend for off-campus housing will be provided. The candidate must have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. For qualifications and more information contact Steve Roys at 678-316-7309 or admin@camphopega.org.

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(www.resthavenhomes.org)

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THE JUDGMENT SEAT of *Christ*

*Swiftly and surely comes the day
When I shall keep a tryst.
The focal point of all my life --
The judgment seat of Christ.*

*Shall I approach that throne with dread,
With fear and stark dismay?
What will confront me, what be read
About me on that day?*

*I shall not stand a prisoner
Who waits with bated breath
To bear the sentence of the Judge,
If it be life or death --*

*All this was settled long ago.
But rather I shall stand
A servant, waiting judgment on
The work of heart and hand;*

*Those works in which my soul took pride
May there be judged as hay
And burned as chaff and stubble on
That all-revealing day.*

*Oh may there be some little deed,
Some word for Him I said;
Some work the SPIRIT energized,
Some earnest prayer I prayed;*

*Something entirely free from self,
Or hope of gain, or pride.
Works done for love of Him alone --
These only shall abide.*

*How would I feel if I should have
No crown of gold to give,
To lay before the feet of Him
Who died that I might live?*

*May I live my remaining days
Remembering that tryst
Which I must keep with Him before
The judgment seat of Christ!*

MARTHA SNELL NICHOLSON

