

EXALTING CHRIST · EQUIPPING BELIEVERS · EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

CORNERSTONE

MARCH-APRIL 2025

*“I Need to Talk
To You Before I Go”*

The Continuous Ministry
of the Cross

The Essential Practices
of the Believer

...and more

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

Paul had been anxious to hear from Titus how the Corinthian church had received his first letter. Had they responded to his loving, apostolic exhortations? Had they disciplined the sinning brother as he had instructed (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:4)? Coming to Troas, Paul expected to see Titus. He did not show up. Was he delayed? Was he hurt? Even though the Lord had opened a door there for the gospel Paul was restless. Whether led by the Spirit or just in his weakness, Paul departed for Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13). It was there that Titus' arrival comforted him with the news that the Corinthians still had a fond affection for him and had acted on his Spirit-led words (7:5-13).

Alluding to "The Roman Triumph," Paul joyfully erupted with thanksgiving to God (2:14). During this parade, the Romans celebrated military victories with a triumphal procession honoring the conquering general. Captured enemy prisoners were forced to march in the train while incense was burned along the route. It was the aroma of victory.

Through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, Christ won the battle at Calvary. By His death, the Holy One fully paid the penalty for our sin through His shed blood, satisfying a holy God's justice, and opening the way of salvation for any who believe on Him (1 Pet. 1:18-19). From the cross He proclaimed this victory over sin with the victorious shout "Finished!" By His resurrection, Christ demonstrated His victory over death and His Father's satisfaction with His offering. The grave could not hold the righteous One (Ps. 16:10-11). By His ascension the Father vindicated His righteous Servant (John 16:10) who demonstrated His victory over the evil one as He returned to His Father, disarming and routing the prince of the power of the air and his evil hordes (Eph. 4:8-10; Col. 2:15). Indeed "Calvary was not a battle; it was a conquest" (See Voices from the Past on page 7).


On the basis of Christ's triumphant conquest, Paul pictured Christ leading him and all believers, captives of God's grace, in an unremitting victory march that extends into eternity. Though we may have trying circumstances, outside conflicts and inner fears (2 Cor. 7:5), we can continue to live triumphantly for Christ and serve Him. We are not fighting for victory, but in our lives,

worship, and service are following in the procession of Christ's triumph, celebrating His already completed conquest. This is the continuing ministry of the cross as we await the shout, the redemption of our bodies, and transport to heaven.

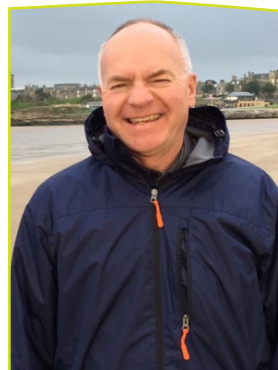
To God we are the pleasing aroma of Christ. As we share the gospel, we are the fragrance of death leading to death for those who reject Christ and the fragrance of life leading to life for those who trust Him (vv.15-16). As we submit to Christ's lordship, we emit a triumphal incense, releasing the fragrance of Christ through our lives and service. Even in our weaknesses and failures, the Lord continues to lead us in triumph, working out all things together for good to those who love him (Rom. 8:28). Later, the Lord did lead Paul back to Troas for fruitful and effective ministry (Acts 20:5-12).

Isaiah prophesied that God's elect Servant, the Son of God "*will not fail nor be discouraged...*" (42:1, 4). During His first advent, the Lord carried out God's eternal purposes with a resolute single-mindedness that could not be thwarted. It is with that same

determination that Christ is continuing His work today in and through us. He will not fail to finish that work (Phil. 1:6).

"Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16). *"Our sufficiency is from God"* (2 Cor. 3:5). When we are downcast or troubled (2 Cor. 7:6), remember that Christ will continue to lead us in triumph. Forever! 

"Though we may have trying circumstances, outside conflicts and inner fears, we can continue to live triumphantly for Christ and serve Him."



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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“I Need to Talk To You Before I Go”



If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you say to your family? I am sure you would use the time to say important things. You might prepare them for life without you, warning them of the dangers ahead, and assuring them of your love. When my wife Susan was in the last stages of cancer, she said to the hospice nurse, “I would like to talk with my (5-year-old) daughter before I go; when would be a good time?” The Nurse replied, “Today,” I brought Jill to her bedside and Sue poured out her heart in love for Jill and Sean (3 years old), giving also her thoughts about following and being true to the Lord.

In a similar way, the Lord Jesus, knowing He had only hours remaining until He would die, made sure that His disciples would be together and undisturbed (Luke 22:8-13). He wanted those last few hours with them to be so meaningful that the memory of things said would linger for the rest of their lives. Many years later, the apostle John vividly remembered all that the Lord had said and done as he wrote about that extraordinary evening together (John 13-17).

Washing and Forgiveness (13:1-10)

The occasion for Jesus’ disciples being together was the Passover. It was a significant time when the Jews remembered how God had delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Passover supper symbolized what the Lord would soon do by dying and shedding his blood on Calvary’s cross. He was the Lamb of God whose applied blood would save sinners from coming judgment.

In those days, the Jewish custom was to bathe prior to participating in religious ceremonies. The majority of people would bathe at a public bath or river, then their sandaled feet would need to be washed again after returning home. This foot-washing was usually done by a servant.

In order to impress the disciples with the importance of cleansing from the defilement of living in a contaminated world, the Lord began to wash the disciple’s feet. Peter felt unworthy to have his feet washed by the Lord and told Him so. He did not want to see his Lord and Master in such a servile position. The Lord’s purpose in this was to show His disciples that the way to true greatness was through humility and service to others. He also wanted to teach them important truths about the security of salvation and the need for daily cleansing from the effects of sin.

The Lord said to Peter, “*Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean*” (John 13:10, NIV). The Lord was speaking symbolically to show His disciples that once they were cleansed from sin, they were cleansed for eternity. However, because they lived in a sin-contaminated world, they would need to go to Him for “foot washing” or daily cleansing from the defiling contact with sin (1 John 1:9). When we become aware of our sin and confess it to the Lord, He forgives and cleanses us. This is how we maintain close fellowship with our Lord (John 13:14-15).

Betrayal and Death (13:21-28)

It is a terrible feeling to know you have been betrayed, especially by someone close to you. Judas had walked with the Lord for three years, had served with the other disciples, and had performed miracles (Luke 9:6,10). He appeared to be no different from the others, but there was in fact a major difference. He was greedy, dishonest, and ready to betray His Lord for 30 pieces of silver. The Lord, who knows the heart of every man, knew what was in Judas’ heart (John 2:24-25). Although He gave him every opportunity to repent, Judas’ heart was hardened by secret sins.

Because He wanted His disciples to be aware of all this, the Lord told them of His coming betrayal. This prepared the way for Judas to leave since he had no part in the discourse that was to follow. As he left to conclude his vile deed, Satan entered



into him. The Lord then told the remaining eleven how His death would glorify God and commanded them to love one another (John 13:31-34). Doing this, they would show the world that they were truly His disciples (John 13:35).

As Peter reflected on the betrayal and the need to be a true disciple, he told the Lord in his usual outspoken and impetuous way that he would never betray Him. Peter was speaking emotionally and, as a result, Jesus had to tell Peter that he would indeed deny Him three times (Luke 22:61).

I Will Be Back! (14:1-14)

Most of us as parents have had to leave home for several days, and we know how the children react as we prepare to leave. The most important message we can leave with them at such a time is, "I will be back!" The Lord Jesus told the disciples to wait and be ready. This teaching was important because it gave them the assurance needed to carry them through the persecutions that would come their way. A word frequently found in the prison cells of early Christian martyrs was "maranatha" – "Our Lord is coming." It was a simple yet profound message of encouragement. Titus referred to it as "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).


In these first few verses of John 14 the Lord Jesus assured the disciples that His going was "to prepare a place" for them, and that His return would be just as sure: "I will come back and take you to be with me" (NIV). This both comforted them and filled them with expectant joy as they awaited His return.

Knowing that they would have questions as to how they should live after He was gone, He assured them that He would not leave them alone like orphans. Just as children need a special relationship with their parents, so the followers of the Lord need His personal presence, love, guidance, and care. These things would be communicated through the coming Holy Spirit who would dwell in every believer (John 14:16-18; Eph. 1:13). The Holy Spirit would be their counselor and

comforter. He would empower them to do even greater things than the Lord had done while on earth (v.12).

Peace in the World (14:27-31; 15:18-16:33)

Because of the trials to follow, the Lord assured His disciples of His abiding peace (John 14:27). He knew they (and the believers to follow after them) would need the power and motivation of the Holy Spirit in their lives, because living for the Lord would not always be easy. Persecutions would come because they followed the One who was Himself rejected by the world.

For centuries, the Holy Spirit has used the Word, circumstances, personal testimonies, and many other means to continue convicting men of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11). Their reaction is to either reject the truth and be lost or receive the Lord Jesus as Savior and become a witness for Him. In spite of persecution and trials, the knowledge of God's salvation and His control in every circumstance would enable His disciples, and us, to enjoy an inner peace which the world can never understand. The Lord assured them, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV). These words should be as comforting to believers now, as they were to the disciples in those last hours with their Lord. 



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.



The Continuous Ministry of the CROSS

When the children of Israel came through the Red Sea, they immediately entered the wilderness. What they encountered and experienced there was intended to engender and mature their faith. Their hunger made them seek, their sicknesses made them pray, and their fears made them trust. Although they could not have known it at the time, Christ was their bread, their strength, their refreshment, and their healer.

In the wilderness the children of Israel began to learn the ABCs of faith, and their first classroom was the disappointing place called Marah. There are many disappointments in life, but God is able to create hope through disappointment. Through trial comes trust. Through bitterness we can find sweetness. Suffering first, then glory are the ways of faith, for *“weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning”* (Ps. 30:5).

The Israelites travelled for days into the wilderness but found no water. The most a human being can endure without water is about three days before they become dehydrated, irritable, lethargic, and in danger of death. After three days they came to Marah, where they thought they had finally found

some drinkable water, but they were bitterly disappointed. The water was unfit to drink.

“Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore, the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying “What shall we drink?” (Ex. 15:23-24).

Their first response was to complain. The knee jerk reaction of the flesh is to complain so we must watch and pray. Instead of seeing the situation as an opportunity to trust, they saw it as an occasion where God had let them down. Certainly, God could split the sea in two, but could He provide a drink in the wilderness? They turned on each other and, typical for the flesh, blamed their leader for their trouble. Thus, with no faith the people cried out to Moses for a drink.

Often, after a “mountaintop” experience, such as the one the Israelites witnessed when they passed through the Red Sea, we pass through a period of disillusionment. We expect God to act in a miraculous way but then find ourselves disillusioned, wondering “Where is God?” But what we see as “disappointment” God sees as His appointment and uses it to teach us more about Himself.

Thankfully Moses knew what to do. He knew who to turn to and when to do it. He did not complain. He prayed. He did not look down with discouragement. He looked up. He did not wallow in self-pity or pass the blame onto Aaron. Instead, Moses, by faith, cried out to the Lord to remedy the situation. In response the Lord showed him a tree. The tree was the solution. He cast it into the bitter waters and miraculously, the waters were made sweet. The Israelites were saved again.

In this “little” crisis the Lord showed them, and us, how to respond to Him in faith when we face disappointments, privations, or hardships in this life. Instead of complaining we are to cry out to Him. Instead of blaming one another we are to bring our burdens to the Lord. Instead of demanding “What shall we drink?” we are to say, “Wait on the Lord.”

Even though we are separated by thousands of years, not much has changed. We are still asking the same questions. Jesus taught us not to worry saying, “...*What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or what shall we wear? For after all these things the Gentiles seek...*” (Matt. 6:31- 32). Our heavenly Father knows we need these things, but He sometimes allows the circumstances and situations of life to stretch us, to show us His amazing grace time and time again.

And after thousands of years the solution remains the same. The tree is still the sweetener of bitter waters, being a picture of our Lord “*who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree . . . by whose stripes you were healed*” (1 Pet. 2:24). In our trials and disappointments, we are to look to the cross to make the bitter waters sweet. We are to “cast it” into the waters, which is to say, we are to apply it to our situation and remember that He who died on the cross would never let us die in the wilderness for lack of water.

In response to Moses’ prayer, the Lord showed Him a tree. A fresh look at the cross will always refresh a dehydrated saint. But to look for and see the tree is half the battle. Perspective is everything and that is why this is the first event we encounter in the wilderness. In all our disappointments we need to remember the cross and what it means to sweeten all our bitterness.


The Lord provided water in the wilderness in many ways and each of His ways is instructive to us. One time he had Moses strike the Rock and water gushed out. This speaks of Christ crucified to provide salvation and cleansing for filthy

sinners. Another time He told Moses to speak to the Rock and water would flow forth. This speaks of Christ risen from the dead to provide refreshment and strength to sojourning saints. But, in this instance, He did not provide water from a rock. Instead, He turned bitter undrinkable water into sweet refreshing water. This speaks of Christ our Comforter who walks with us and teaches us to walk by faith, who delivers us from all our perils and shows us His mighty power in impossible situations.

If we are feeling lonely because we do not have a companion to travel with at this present time, then we can cry out to the Lord and He will again show us the tree, and it will make the bitterness turn sweet. If we have suffered a loss or been the victim of someone else’s reckless sin, then we need to cry out to the Lord and He will again show us the tree, and it will make the bitterness turn sweet. If we thought a local church, ministry, or a relationship was going to be a soul satisfying and refreshing thing but instead it turned out bitter and disappointing, then

we need to cry out to the Lord and He will again show us the tree, and it will make the bitterness turn sweet.

Praise the Lord His testing is only for a season and always for a purpose. After the Israelites learned their first lesson of faith - to cry out to God for help - He showed Moses the tree to supply their cure. Shortly after they came to the place called Elim, “*where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees*” (Ex. 15:27). In that place there was plenty of water for thirsty souls and plenty of shade for sojourning saints. So, they camped there by the waters.

I am sure they would have liked to have remained there forever, but God had much more to teach them. What they needed was to press on to maturity and trials are God’s way of making our faith complete, mature, and whole, lacking nothing. So “*they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin*” (Ex. 16:1). 

“In all our disappointments we need to remember the cross and what it means to sweeten all our bitterness.”



by **Shane Johnson**

Shane Johnson was commended by Bethel-Park Bible Chapel as a full-time worker from 1999 to 2017. He now serves the Lord in itinerant teaching, preaching and children’s ministries. He is also the author of 31 Days Christmas Devotionals available at Gospel Folio Press.

THE GOSPEL HERALD

*"Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
proclaim the good news of His
salvation from day to day."*

1 Chronicles 16:23

Finding Answers to Life's Questions

THE TESTIMONY OF RICK MORSE

On December 18, 1978, the Lord Jesus Christ saved me from my sins and myself. I was just a month past my 21st birthday and had been aware of a painful emptiness in my life since I was 10 or 11 years old. Watching Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon in 1969, I wondered what they went looking for, and if it was the same thing I was looking for - answers.

Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? What was wrong with the world? Can it be fixed? Although there was nothing original about these questions, they are things we have to know if we are to satisfy our thirst for identity and purpose. Throughout my teen years, I began to read philosophy, religion, and science, to see if I could stop this aching loneliness in my heart and mind. They all failed, miserably and thoroughly.


Various philosophies explained that I was the supreme ruler of my destiny, and that my subjective views were all that mattered. That left me close to suicidal. One religion after another gave me a prescription for "earning my way" into some deity's favor. Yet when I asked, "Yes, but how?," I found neither the will nor the ability to live up to those tenets. And when I tried, I had no assurance of what was adequate, making me the victim of a cruel guessing game. Darwinism asked me to believe that substance came from nothing, that order came from chaos, and that life came from non-life. It asserted that I was an accidental by-product of a process without purpose that worked in reverse from all scientific methodology. What about atheism? It was simply illogical nonsense, a thinly veiled, disguised defiance of God, to avoid moral accountability.

In pain, I turned to extensive drug use and aggressive amusements, in an effort to drown out the torment in my mind and soul. The eventual damage only compounded my suffering and added further loneliness and misery to my existence. I

even failed at a couple of suicide attempts, because I was too afraid of what might await me afterwards.

At 19 years old, someone who cared (now my dear wife) bought me a Bible. I had grown up going to a popular Protestant denomination and had some respect for what was taught in Scripture. Still, I saw "going to church" as a community feel-good club, where people were deluding themselves into thinking that they were something more than they were. I preferred drugs, because they provided similar feelings without the moral obligations.

But as I read the Bible (especially the first five chapters of Romans), I began to realize that it could only have been written by "Someone" who knew me at the core of my being. Here were the answers to my questions, and I began to realize that I was designed by a loving, all-wise Creator, to have a living relationship with Him. Unlike religion, it was not up to me to earn my way into His favor, for He had already provided the remedy. My main problem was not an intellectual one, it was a moral one. What the Bible calls "sin" kept me apart from God.

However this was not an obstacle for Him! In a love which transcends description, He sent His only beloved Son to take the death penalty for my sins. Christ became my Substitute, and when I trusted 100% in what He had already done for me, the emptiness was gone. In an instant, He forgave all my sins and filled my soul with assurance and joy. I did not understand it, and I have spent the last four decades trying to measure it so it could be explained. The moment I believed that Christ had died for my sins, my questions were answered. I now know who I am and why I am. He not only satisfied divine justice, but He satisfied the deepest needs of my soul. Do not reject Him. He is and has everything you are truly looking for. 

by Rick Morse



Voices from the Past

THE CONQUEST OF CALVARY

*I*t is related of a celebrated general, that when, at the close of a great martial triumph, he surveyed from an elevated spot the field of battle and saw his victorious troops pursuing the utterly routed enemy, he was heard in exultation to exclaim, “This is not victory; this is conquest!” It takes, generally speaking, several victories to make a conquest; here, however, in a single battle the power of the enemy was utterly broken. “Victory” therefore would not express the magnitude of the triumph. It was “conquest.”

Amongst the many conquests of history one stands alone. It is unique in character, for it was won through weakness. It is unique in magnitude, because of the vastness of the issues at stake. It is unique in glory, for it is the triumph of divine love.

Before it the glory of earth fades as a star before the rising sun. When in the coming ages earth and its victories have long since dropped into oblivion, there will remain fresh in the heart that which commands the universal homage of heaven—the conquest of Calvary.

When I pass in spirit before Calvary and see the Holy Sufferer—God’s beloved Son—on the cross, I wonder as I behold Him rise superior to man’s deep-seated enmity against Him, which found its full expression at that moment. But when I see the great sin-question settled root and branch forever, the terrific assault of Satan met to his own eternal confusion, and everlasting glory brought to God; and when I see the One who died in weakness—having annulled the power of death and burst the bars of the grave—living by the power of God, crowned with glory and honour, then it is mine in holy triumph to exclaim, “This is not victory, this is conquest.”

Reader, the conquest of redemption is complete, and the Conqueror, wreathed with the laurels of victory, adorns the throne of God (Heb. 2:7). A full and free salvation, based on this, is still published far and near. The tide of victory still rolls


on, grace still reigns, the divine love therein displayed still conquers rebel hearts. Doubtless the tidings have reached your ears, reader.

“But God raised Him from the dead... Be it known unto you therefore... that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things” (Acts 13:30, 38, 39).

But what about your soul? Have you yielded to the Savior’s love? Has the grace displayed in the death of the cross won *your* heart?

Be assured of this, that if you refuse the love of God, if you bow not to Jesus, who is Lord of all, if, in short, reader, you are never broken, conquered at the sight of His conquest at Calvary, the judgment you so richly deserve will fall upon you, and *it* will be your own fault.

But if, on the other hand, you bow to His scepter in this the day of His grace, and in the consciousness of your ruin believe in His name, salvation is yours upon the authority of His own word (John 1:12). All the blessings flowing from His conquest are yours—to be enjoyed now and displayed in the day of glory—and all the glory is Christ’s.

“His be the Victor’s name
Who fought the fight alone,
Triumphant saints no honour claim,
His conquest was their own.” 

by **F.B. Hole**
(1874 – 1964)

Scattered Seed 16 (1900) p. 1
https://www.stempublishing.com/authors/hole/Art/Conquest_Calvary.html

THE FRONT LINES

LAST STOP BEFORE ETERNITY

A New Ministry

“This could be their last hope” said a brother when he heard my wife Cathie and I were asked to be the “chaplains” at Lookout Ridge Retirement Home in Fonthill, Ontario.

It was 2009 and a new retirement home was just about to open. A few days before the opening, Lester Shoalts, the builder and owner of the home, approached my wife and me. He asked if we would be interested in looking after the spiritual care of the residents who would soon be arriving at their new home. We both said we would pray about it.

My first reaction to the request was to say no. I thought to myself, “What do I know about working with seniors?” My wife, who plays the piano at some of the meetings at the chapel, suggested we visit a retirement home in a nearby city. We could see what program the “pastor” at that home was doing to meet the needs of the seniors.

After a couple of visits at the home and much prayer, with fear and trepidation, we agreed to take on the responsibility of caring for the seniors. We told Mr. Shoalts that our first responsibility was to preach the gospel. He was more than happy to hear that.

Beginning Steps

Our contact at the retirement home would be the recreational director. There were about 100 residents at the home, so we decided to have a hymn sing and Bible study using the large auditorium in the basement. This meeting was scheduled for 30 minutes every Wednesday and information was distributed to all the residents. We called the meeting “Good News,” because that is what the gospel means! The administration of the home requested that we tell the residents

that it was a non-denominational church service. There were already three other “religious groups” conducting church services, but very few attended them.

At our inaugural meeting we had a total of six residents - a bit discouraging. Two things struck me as to what we had to do. First, we would move the service to the chapel. It was a smaller area but had comfortable chairs and was more accessible to the residents. Secondly, my wife and I would visit the seniors during their lunch hour and remind them of the meeting right after lunch. As a result, we tripled our attendance to 18.

The Spirit of God at Work

We have had many personal discussions and experiences with the residents over our 15 years there. Let me share three of them:

“Anna” (not her real name) was an Italian Roman Catholic lady. Her daughter wanted her to go to the catholic services at the home. She told her daughter, “No, I will only go to Bob and Cathie’s service.” Her daughter agreed to let her go. At the end of our chapel meetings, I always closed with the chorus “Jesus Loves Me.” After about six months, when I was going around the lunchroom to invite the residents to the afternoon meeting, I came to Anna who grabbed my hand and said with the biggest smile on her face, “Jesus loves me.” I do believe she trusted the Lord as her Savior. For the next two years she never missed a service. Sadly, she passed away during Covid. I was scheduled to take her funeral service, but the Covid restrictions prevented me from doing so.

Some months later, Anna’s daughter approached me and asked if she could give something to the chapel in honor of



Sharing God's Word in the Chapel



Visiting the Lunchroom to Invite the Residents

her mother who loved going there to hear God's Word. The daughter decided to donate a beautiful new podium for the meetings. On the podium was Anna's name and inscribed under her name in big letters was "JESUS LOVES ME."

"Dan" was a retired schoolteacher. He was reluctant to come to our services, but one day he heard Cathie playing a hymn on the piano. He was hooked on her piano playing and started coming to the meetings, sitting in the front row at every meeting. You could see in his face that there had been a change in his life. I believe he had trusted the Lord. When I would ask for a favorite hymn to sing, he always asked for "God Will Take Care of Me." As further proof that he was saved, he would invite the other three people sitting at his lunch table to come to our meetings. Over the years, just about everybody he invited came out to the meetings. Sadly, Dan passed away and I had the privilege of speaking at his funeral.

"Lawton" and I had an interesting first meeting. I received a call from the recreation director. She said, "There is a resident here teaching some religious ideas and causing some to be upset with what he is saying. Could you come and have a talk with him?" I agreed.


Lawton and I met in his room and for two hours we talked about spiritual matters. He recounted to me the change in his life that had occurred in the last six months. He was a member of a religious denomination. He was sent out by this group to be a worldwide evangelist. And, for years he had preached that a person could be saved by faith in Jesus Christ and by doing good works. However, he said, "Six months ago I was reading Ephesians 2:8-9: *"For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Bob, he said, you are saved by God's grace and by faith in the finished work of Christ. Period!"

Lawton then told me that because of this truth he had been excommunicated from his religious organization. Furthermore, his wife and son had disowned him and would have nothing more to do with him. He had moved

back to the Fonthill area and his new home at Lookout Ridge. He said he now wanted to preach the true gospel. He also told me that he had recently been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and had just a short time to live. He said that his wife and son had told him "this was God judging him for preaching a new gospel."

I asked Lawton if he would come and speak at our Wednesday Bible study. He began his message by pointing around the packed room and saying, "I do not know what you believe, but I believe *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16, ESV). He then proceeded to give a wonderful explanation of this verse.

About three weeks later I received a call to say Lawton was in the hospital and that he was dying. I went to see him. In his room there were a number of people from his former congregation. They were talking about where his money would go after he died. I asked if I could speak with him. They said he could not hear me because he was in a coma. I knew and told the group that even if a person is in a coma they can still hear you. I do not think they believed me. I got up close to Lawton's ear and said, "Lawton, do you remember what verse you spoke on at our Bible study?" I quoted John 3:16. A tear began to run down Lawton's cheek. Someone said out loud, "You mean he can still hear us?" I replied, "Yes he can." Lawton passed into the presence of the Lord two weeks later.

Should the Lord ever open an opportunity for you to share God's Word with seniors, *"Preach the Word"* (2 Tim. 4:2). It may be their last stop before eternity. 



by **Bob Cretney**

Bob and his wife, Cathie live in St. Catharines, ON where they fellowship at Brockview Bible Chapel. They are chaplains at a local retirement home. Bob is the author of "Could You Ever Love Me Again? The Gary Weeks Story," "The Unseen Hand: The Angela Tran Story," and "Lost at Sea Found in Heaven: The Arthur Taylor Story."

FOUNDATIONS *of the* FAITH

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF REDEMPTION

IN Scripture, the term “redemption” has a very broad application. It is used for the process of buying back the personal property of inheritance and of persons (Lev. 25:51-52; Ruth 4), the ransom of a man’s soul (Ps. 49:8), salvation, justification, and forgiveness of sin by the grace of God (Rom. 3:24), the fullness of our salvation and inheritance (Eph. 1:14), including a glorified body fit for heaven (Rom. 8:23), and the salvation of the saved remnant of Israel towards the end of the Tribulation Period, also known as Daniel’s 70th week (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:24-27; Luke 21:28).

However, the foundation of redemption is rooted in the Old Testament record of acceptable sacrifices, including the Jewish sacrifices prescribed in the Mosaic Law. The essential element of these sacrifices was the shedding of blood by an innocent substitute. The clearest example is demonstrated by contrasting the offerings of Cain and Abel. Cain offered the works of his hands from the cursed ground. Abel

offered a young lamb slain on the altar - its blood was shed. God had respect unto Abel’s offering, confirmed thousands of years later by the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:4). The shedding of blood established a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain. Regardless of purpose, whether the atonement of sin, the deliverance from pagan nations, or the expression of worship, it was accompanied by praise and thanksgiving to God.

A second Old Testament case reflects the same essential element of redemption. The Passover lamb, slain the night before Israel’s exodus from Egyptian captivity, required not only the shedding of blood, but also the application and presentation of the lamb’s blood on the lintel and doorposts of the Jewish home. God’s approval was clearly voiced by the statement “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you,*” saving the life of the firstborn in the home (Ex. 12:13, 21-23). God reminds erring Israel of this redeeming work over and over in His subsequent dealings with them. This practice and ordinance of blood shedding, an essential element of redemption, is well established in the Old Testament.

Some may say, “Well that is the Old Testament. We are under the New Covenant of Grace.” God’s methods and practices from

dispensation to dispensation do differ, but His standards of holiness and His means of dealing with sin have not changed. This truth is clearly stated in Hebrews chapter 9 where the writer compares the necessity of sacrificial blood under the Mosaic Law with the necessity of Christ's blood to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Hebrews 9:22 says: "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." Therefore, as New Testament believers, we can have "...boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19-20).

This truth is well established for us in the remembrance service Christ initiated on the evening of His betrayal. After the Jewish Passover Feast, Christ symbolized His suffering and death by crucifixion with two objects: a loaf of bread and a cup of the fruit of the vine (wine). The bread broken spoke of His body torn on the cruel cross and the cup represented the blood that flowed from it. With these two symbols He asked that we remember Him (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Would we ever consider having the communion service with just the bread and eliminate the cup? Of course not! Thus, we speak of the blood of Christ as an essential element in the work of redemption.

The New Testament Greek rendering for redemption can be translated as "ransom in full" or "redeemed." The word "redeemed" in the Greek offers a picture of one going into the market place and buying back something previously owned – to buy up for the purpose of rescuing from loss. Figuratively as our Redeemer, Christ buys us back from the slave market of sin by the shedding of His blood which is the price of our salvation.

Consider the following verses and the association of blood in the work of redemption:

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:18-19)

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7)

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:14)


Over the years I have been party to discussions by well-meaning believers that held to the position that the shedding of Christ's blood was not necessary – only the fact that He died for us. They felt a need to disengage their minds from what they viewed as a "bloody gospel." Hymns about the blood were expunged from their hymnals. From time to time this error finds its way back among us.

The Jews believed in stoning to carry out capital punishment. In the time of Christ, the Jews had no power to execute Christ, for they were under the authority of Rome. In

any event, stoning would not have been acceptable to God, for His Son, the Lamb of God must pour out His blood for our sins. In the perfect sovereign will of God, the Romans introduced crucifixion in the second century BC as the form of execution for the most serious offenses. This change complemented the prophecies of Scripture and the biblical necessity of blood being shed for our sins. It satisfied God's divine plan for Christ to be the future offering for sin. As the sinless Lamb, He shed His blood for our sins.

A picture of the wonderful work of redemption can be seen in the life of Ruth and Boaz. Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons had left Bethlehem, travelling to Moab because of a famine. Elimelech died in Moab and the two sons who had married Moabite women also died (Ruth 1:1-5). Naomi and Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law, subsequently returned to Bethlehem (Ruth 1:6-22). Boaz, a near relative desired to marry Ruth and redeem Naomi's inheritance (Ruth 3:8-13). The nearest family member had first choice to redeem the inheritance but he declined (a picture of the Law). Boaz, the willing and able kinsman redeemer, was now free to "ransom in full and pay the price" for his wife (a picture of Christ our Kinsman Redeemer). Boaz elected to proceed and bought back the inheritance and married Ruth (Ruth 4:4-17).

When man was created in the image and likeness of the Triune God (Gen. 1:26-27), he belonged to God. Sin brought us into captivity to Satan and by nature we became sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-3). Fallen mankind became separated from God. However, in His grace and mercy, God proceeded to buy us back from the slave market of sin. This redemption could only be accomplished by a perfect, sinless substitute who would bear our sins and endure the wrath of God we all deserved. God's love for the sinner and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ brought about a redemption that is eternal for all who accept Christ as their Savior. Thus, every blood-bought child of God can say "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" (Song. 6:3).

Revelation 1:5-6 summarizes the grand work of redemption: "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us (freed us) from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." 



by Sam Thorpe

Sam Thorpe is a commended itinerant Bible teacher with ministry in the USA and abroad. He is in fellowship at Washington Bible Chapel, Washington, Georgia. He, and his wife Barbara have four children, and now enjoy twelve grandchildren.

ancestry.brethren



A first gathering of believers along the lines that have marked the Brethren Movement from the very beginning, occurred in Ireland, in the winter of 1827-1828. This “first meeting of “the Brethren” was held in Fitzwilliam Square,”¹ in the city of Dublin, Ireland.

Those present included, among others, John Nelson Darby, of whom we have already spoken, and John Gifford Bellett. Both had read for the Bar and practiced, though only for a short time.²

Enter Anthony Norris Groves from Exeter, England, “one of the most famous Brethren.”³ He was a successful businessman, a dentist with a fine practice which he would eventually give up in order to serve the Lord. He is often considered the “Father of the Brethren Movement.” In Dublin, where he was studying for the ministry at Trinity College, Groves enjoyed a particularly close friendship with Bellett, staying in his home on his visits to the city in the fall and spring of 1826-1827. There he was introduced to one of the most gifted of the circle of Christians who were accustomed to meet for private prayer and discussion: a young curate from Wicklow, John Nelson Darby. JND was destined, through his voluminous writings and extensive correspondence and travels, to become known as the Apostle⁴ of the Brethren Movement. Key players in the beginning of the Brethren Movement were now coming together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Following Groves return from his 1827 visit to Dublin, Bellett confided in a friend that Groves “had just been telling

him, that it appeared to him from Scripture, that believers, meeting together as disciples of Christ, were free to break bread together as their Lord had admonished them; and that, as far as the practice of the apostles could be a guide, every Lord’s day should be set aside for thus remembering the Lord’s death, and obeying his parting command.”⁵ It is undoubtedly for this that it has been said of him that “he dropped the pebble in the pool.” Equally important, according to Bellett, “Groves was the first to propose that simple practice of union, the love of Jesus, instead of oneness of judgment in minor things, things that may consist with a true love of Jesus.”⁶

At this point, we discover several additional strands of Brethren DNA. The Scriptures alone being our authority, the practice of the apostles should serve as a guide for how we are to gather as disciples of Christ. No ordained minister being mentioned as necessary, this resonated with the truth of the priesthood of all believers, held and practiced among us today. Then, too, we see the weekly occurrence and principal object of such gatherings; namely, the remembrance of our Lord’s death in the breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup as He commanded in the words, “*Do this in remembrance of me.*” (See Acts 20:7). Finally, love for Christ rather than full agreement on secondary matters was to be the modus operandi. Or, as Groves reportedly said, life rather than light should be the guiding principle. Would to God that some early Brethren had not so soon lost sight of this.

Within two years, on June 12, 1829, Groves sailed for Saint Petersburg on his way to Baghdad. More on this later. The

following year, Darby would meet another key player, Benjamin Wills Newton who, sometime in 1831, “invited Darby to visit him at his home”⁷ in Plymouth, England. In December of that year, a chapel had been secured and in January 1832 both Newton and Darby were present for the first public celebration of the Lord’s Supper at Plymouth. The latter would soon make Plymouth his home, testifying that “in Plymouth, rather than in Dublin, he had found his ideals realized.”⁸ At one time, “Plymouth had a meeting of a thousand members, ever to be known as the headquarters of the movement.”⁹ Thus the name, Plymouth Brethren.


Unfortunately, the coming together of these two men was destined to provide the flashpoint for an event that forever marked the Brethren Movement. Their falling out due to “their difference of views on prophecy and the Second Advent of Christ”¹⁰ along with Darby’s withdrawal in 1845 from communion with Plymouth, resulted in people and eventually entire assemblies taking sides. With Newton’s own departure from Plymouth in 1847, the Brethren lost a most capable scholar and Bible teacher, of whom James M. Gray, President of Moody Bible Institute, said, “he excels all expositors.”¹¹

In all the upheaval that followed, “one notable church remained content to pursue its own course in quietness.”¹² Bethesda, in Bristol, England, was in happy fellowship and had connections with almost every gathering throughout the country due to their support for George Müller’s orphan houses. When in 1848 the assembly was cut off for refusing to bend to the dictates of Darby and to disfellowship the Plymouth assembly,¹³ the Brethren Movement suffered a schism from which it has never recovered. Henceforth, Exclusive and Open Brethren would go their separate ways. This, too, is part, a sad part of our ancestry. While through the years we have read the same Brethren authors, believed and taught the same Bible doctrines and sung many of the same worshipful and theologically rich hymns, it is only in glory that we shall join together as one in Christ to praise the Lamb forever. Maranatha!

Comparing the subsequent developments of these two branches, “what we see on the one hand is independent churches enjoying evangelical freedom and liberality of communion; on the other, a system of religious bondage ... the result of pressing to its logical conclusion a preference for ‘separation from evil’ over ‘the common life of the family of God’ as the principle of Christian unity.”¹⁴

Bethesda, under the spiritual leadership of Henry Craik and George Müller, men of the highest Christian character, will forever stand as a testimony to the practice of an open table, open to all true believers in Christ and to the principle of

the autonomy¹⁵ and interdependence of the local church, both of which have characterized the Open Brethren ever since.

To be continued. 

“The Scriptures alone being our authority, the practice of the apostles should serve as a guide for how we are to gather as disciples of Christ.”

ENDNOTES:

¹Andrew Miller, “The Brethren” (Commonly So-Called) A Brief Sketch, slightly revised and abbreviated by G. C. Willis, Hong Kong, 1963, p.11-17

²Hy Pickering, Chief Men Among the Brethren, London: Pickering & Inglis, 1968, p.10

³Timothy Grass, Gathering to His Name: The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland, BAHN, 2021, p.1

⁴Peter L. Embley, The Origins and Early Development of the Plymouth Brethren, p.96

⁵Harold H. Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren 1825-1850, London: Pickering & Inglis, 1967, p.40

⁶F. Roy Coad, A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, its Worldwide Development and its Significance for the Present Day, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968, p.20

⁷Weremchuck, Max S., John Nelson Darby, Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1992, p.102

⁸Grass, p.36

⁹George H. Fromow: B. W. Newton and Dr. S. P. Tregelles: Teachers of the Faith and the Future, Second Edition, The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, London, 1969, p.46

¹⁰Ibid., p.5. Timothy Grass (p.76) suggests instead that “overall the conflict seems to have been precipitated primarily by divergent leadership styles and a personality clash.”

¹¹Ibid., p.23 ¹²Coad, p.154

¹³W. Trotter, The Whole Case of Plymouth and Bethesda, London, Gospel Book Depot (1849), p.32. While Bethesda is here exonerated for having finally judged as error the teachings of Newton, she is at the same time criticized for having taken so long in doing so and judged for not refusing fellowship to any believer from Plymouth or other assembly who might be suspected of having imbibed these teachings.

¹⁴F. F. Bruce in his Foreword to Rowdon, p.xi

¹⁵E. K. Groves, Conversations on “Bethesda” Family Matters, London: W. B. Horner, 1885, p.156,157



by Richard Strout

Richard Strout and his wife Virginia are commended by Community Gospel Chapel in Voorhees, New Jersey. They reside in Hudson, Florida, where they recently relocated following five decades of ministry among French Canadians in Quebec. They are in active fellowship at Carrollwood Bible Chapel in the greater Tampa area. The couple have four children, 14 grands, and 4 great-grandchildren.



The Essential Practices of the Believer

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is best understood to be a general letter to all assemblies, rather than specifically to one local church. It was probably intended to be widely circulated. The letter is certainly applicable to every believer and lays out important guidelines for our spiritual growth. Paul explains that before the earth was created, God, who does all things according to the counsel of His will, would take all those who had placed their hope in Christ, to be to the praise of His glory. They would be the bride of Christ.

But the Word of God clearly teaches that we would not immediately become free from our struggles with the old nature. In fact, we would begin our Christian lives as babes in Christ who would need to grow spiritually. For that reason, our omniscient, loving heavenly Father made clear provision for our spiritual growth and understanding. Such growth, however, is not automatic.

The Place of the Holy Spirit in our Growth

It is crucial that we realize the essential role of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual growth. The Lord promised the apostles that when the Spirit came, He would guide them into all truth. He would bring to their remembrance all the things that the Lord had said, reveal to them Church truth and things to come, and glorify the Lord (John 14:26; 16:13-14). The Lord's promise was wonderfully fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came in a display of flaming light and power on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The gathered believers were immediately indwelt by the Spirit and began to meet together on a regular basis. New Testament truth was committed to the apostles in their lifetime. They, in turn, committed it to writing and the New Testament completed God's written revelation to mankind. Today, the Spirit illuminates the meaning of God's Word to believers, opening up our understanding of its truth (1 Cor. 2:15-16; 1 John 2:20, 27).

The word "assembly" is not a denominational name but simply the fact that believers assemble for a particular purpose. This purpose is to "*continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). These four practices are indispensable for the growth of the believer. Paul explains that gathering together equips believers for the work of the ministry and for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12). It is vital to remember that these early believers' meetings and activities were led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31; 8:29; 13:2). Today, it is critical that our gatherings be Spirit-led as well.

They Assembled for Spirit-led Learning from the Word of God

All the epistles give instruction and help for our spiritual growth. Peter explains that in the same way a newborn baby craves its mother's milk, we should crave the spiritual milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2). He further encourages us to grow in the

grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). The way to know is to grow and the way to grow is to feed. Practical James tells us to be doers of the Word, not hearers only (1:22), while Paul gives extensive teaching in His epistles to edify the believer. When it comes to providing spiritual food for the local assembly, elders must seek the leading of the Holy Spirit, the One who knows the hearts and needs of all the saints.

They Assembled for Spirit-led Fellowship with Other Believers

Fellowship has to do with sharing in that which we have in common. Any time believers gather should be an encouraging time. As we walk in the Spirit it will also be a time of blessing as we allow Him to direct our thoughts, speech, and activities. Potlucks, coffee breaks, Bible studies, and other activities are precious times where the Lord can use us to be a blessing and encouragement to our brothers and sisters in the Lord if we will allow Him to direct our interaction.

They Assembled for Spirit-led Remembrance of the Lord in the Breaking of Bread

Every believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Every assembly of the Lord's saints is likewise His temple (1 Cor. 3:16). When experiencing the Breaking of Bread meeting for the first time, many visitors have asked "who is leading the meeting?" What a joy and blessing it is when we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in remembering our Lord each week. Think of the many times we have been thrilled at the obvious leading of the Holy Spirit during these precious times. Failure to grasp this has resulted in its tragic demise in many gatherings of the Lord's people, where tacking on the Lord's Supper at the end of a service has become the norm. What a tragic loss for the Lord and for His own.

They Assembled for Spirit-led Prayer

Why have prayer meetings been in such a decline? Why do many seem to simply focus on our needs: our health, our jobs, etc.? These are very important subjects for prayer, but often that appears to be all we pray about. Could it be that we do not allow the Holy Spirit His leading role in this vital meeting? When Paul prayed, his emphasis was on the spiritual growth of the believers, praying that they would "*be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God*" (Eph. 3:18-19). When Paul asked others to pray for him, it was so that thoughts and words might be given to him so that he would speak boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 6:19).

Result of Following God's Gracious Plan and Provision

The saints sacrificed; the suffering were helped and comforted; and souls were saved. Suddenly these previously


religious, but lost individuals became different people. The old had passed away and they were new creations in Christ. And it showed. They now had a reverential trust; they saw proof of the reality of the Lord, and all who believed were together having all things in common. They became selfless individuals who sold their possessions and gave to those who were in need. It is vital to point out that these acts of sacrifice were led by the Holy Spirit. Actions were as He led them, as it should be now. He may lead us to do this or that, and He may not, but it is very important that it be the Holy Spirit who leads.

Every day they were in the temple, in perfect harmony. They were breaking bread in various homes; they ate together in gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having the good will of the people. To this joyful new band of believers, the Lord kept on adding daily those who were being saved. The result of doing God's work in God's way was that souls were saved (Acts 2:47).

Since that amazing and wonderful beginning, the Lord has been building His church. Today, the result of God's assemblies doing God's work in God's way will be that souls will be saved.

Does This Work Today?

For many years I had the joy and privilege of teaching New Testament Church principles to missionary candidates. Many went to remote tribal areas. They learned the culture and the language. They translated the Word of God and souls were saved amongst primitive peoples who previously had no written language. As these same biblical principles were taught, assemblies were founded. One day we will gather with those from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, in praise of our Lord and Savior for so "*great a salvation.*"

The principles of the Word of God worked in early Church history and as we practice them today, we find that they still work. Hudson Taylor wrote: "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." Though he was referring to funds, the same biblical truth applies to all aspects of God's work. 



by Ray Jones

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

ISSUES & ANSWERS

“SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES...”

JOHN 5:39



Why did the Lord say to His disciples “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22) prior to Pentecost?

One of the most mysterious statements by our Lord came on the first evening following His resurrection. Meeting privately with His disciples, He commissioned them for the task of world evangelization (v.21). Having breathed on them, He stated, “Receive the Holy Spirit” after which He conferred upon them divine authority to declare either the forgiveness or retention of sins, based upon reception or rejection of Himself (v.23).


What makes this statement so intriguing is that the Lord had previously said that He would send the Holy Spirit - the Promise of the Father - at a future time (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). They were instructed to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Spirit which would mark the beginning of the Church. Once the Holy Spirit descended, believers would be baptized into one Body and endowed with Power from on High so that the newly formed Church could begin the task of fulfilling the Great Commission. But if the Holy Spirit was to come at Pentecost as promised, why then did the Lord breathe upon His disciples and command them to receive the Holy Spirit when the Spirit was promised to come at a later time?

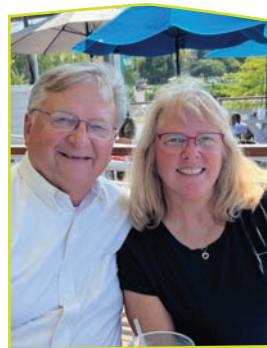
Two main reasons are typically given. One possible reason is that the disciples were simply being given a symbolic announcement, anticipating when that event would occur. As such, it did not represent the official coming of the Spirit as promised but was simply a foreshadowing and declaration from the Savior Himself of what was to occur at the conclusion of His forty-day post-resurrection ministry (Acts 1:3). However, the Lord did say to them “Receive the Holy Spirit” so it would hardly seem that it was just symbolic wording.

Another possible reason is that the disciples were being given a limited portion of knowledge and power at that time, until the Spirit would come in His fullness. His breathing upon them calls to mind when God breathed into Adam the breath of life – infusing life and power into him. Similarly, they too

would have power if needed, though nothing is recorded in Scripture of their use of such knowledge or power prior to Pentecost. This reason makes sense since the Spirit came upon others in the Old Testament, such as Bezalel for the building of the Tabernacle (Ex. 31:3) and to Samson several times in his life. It was a typical aspect of the ministry of the Spirit in Old Testament days, though temporary in nature. Though a stronger explanation, this reason also falls short.

However, a more complete answer is that the Lord was indeed preparing His disciples for the coming of the Spirit in all His fullness at Pentecost. It was in anticipation of that great event as promised. Yes, it would provide them with limited knowledge and power they would possibly need pre-Pentecost since that had always been one of the ministries of the Spirit. But the main difference is that the coming of the Spirit would now be in a new capacity in which the disciples would experience an even greater power and ability than ever before (Acts 1:8).

In some ways, it marked the final time in which the Spirit would be received temporarily and in a limited manner. It established a sharp contrast between the work of the Spirit at that time and what was to come at Pentecost. Such would no longer require a special action of the Lord to effectuate it; instead, it would demonstrate a new dimension of the Spirit’s ministry. It would be a permanent dimension in which the Spirit would never leave the believer (John 14:16; Ps. 51:11). After being baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ they could be filled with the Spirit to do even greater things for God. How encouraging to know that the present-day ministry of the Holy Spirit for believers is far greater and more powerful now than it was even during our Lord’s earthly ministry. 



by Mark Kolchin

Mark served as editor for Cornerstone Magazine from 2018-2023. He 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 by the Lord’s work in 1993 from Bethany Bible Chapel in Toms River, NJ.

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The invited speakers are Paul Rabideau and Tammy Hollingsworth. The cost for the weekend will be \$100 per person/\$200 per couple. Details and registration can be found at augustacounselingministry.com. Please contact Tammy Hollingsworth at augustacounselingministry@gmail.com or (706) 872-1717 with any questions.

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Boulevard Bible Chapel, Pembroke Pines, FL

Please join them this year as they seek to follow the Savior through His earthly ministry, observing characteristics of His life that should be reflected in our own. For more information or to register visit www.NAWeekofPrayer.com.

Toronto Easter Bible Conference

► April 18-19, 2025

2638 Steeles Ave. East, Brampton, ON

The scheduled speakers are Peter Bolton, Rex Trogon, and Bill Yuille. The conference begins at 1:45 pm. The doors open at 1:00 pm. For more information visit: <https://torontoeasterbibleconference.ca>.

2025 Ottawa Valley Easter Conference

► April 18-20, 2025

Rideauview Bible Chapel, Ottawa, ON

In the will of the Lord, the Ottawa Valley Easter Conference will be held each evening from 6:00-9:00 pm. The invited speakers are Gary McBride and Viji Roberts. Everyone is welcome. For more information please contact David Reid at reiddavidt@gmail.com.

55th Annual Palos Hills IL Spring Bible Conference

► April 25-27, 2025

10600 S 88th Ave, Palos Hills, IL 60465

In the will of the Lord, the Palos Hills Christian Assembly (Chicago, IL area) is hosting its 55th annual Spring Bible Conference. The scheduled speakers are Rob Lindsted, George Bristow, and Raju Kunjummen. Children's meetings will be conducted by Chris and Ruba Giese. Meetings will also be streamed on Zoom at: <https://bit.ly/PalosConference>. For more information, please contact Warren Hagey at eph320h@gmail.com or 708-935-4513.

Father/Son Retreat

► April 25-27, 2025

7011 Pony Lake Rd Dahlonega, GA

The Father/Son Retreat is an opportunity for fathers and their sons to spend time together under the teaching of God's Word. The invited speaker is Phil Guikema. Register online at www.camphopega.org/registration. For more Information visit camphopega.org/father-son-retreat/.

Discipleship Opportunity for Young Women

► June 5-14, 2025 | Grand Rapids, MI

"InTents Discipleship" is a nine-day discipleship training program for women ages 16 and up who desire to serve the Lord. For more information, please visit their Facebook page, InTents Discipleship, or email Becky at rbwagner3@yahoo.com.

Help Wanted - Camp Hope

7011 Pony Lake Rd Dahlonega, GA

Camp Hope has an open position for 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 as defined by the Camp Hope administrator. For more information and qualifications contact Steve Roys at 678-316-7309 or admin@camphopega.org.

Commendation

The brethren at Pittsboro Bible Assembly (Pittsboro, NC) commend Gerald and Kim Baker to the grace of God for the Lord's work. Gerald faithfully served Pittsboro Bible Assembly as an elder (2006-2024) while laboring at Pittsboro Christian Village. Gerald has the gift of leading and ministering in God's Word. Kim has the gift of hospitality and mercy. They currently fellowship at Good News Chapel Laurinburg, NC. The saints at Pittsboro join their hearts in prayerful support for them.

Glory to Thee, Thou Son of God Most High

*Glory to Thee, Thou Son of God most High,
All praise to Thee!*

*Glory to Thee, enthroned above the sky,
Who died for me.*

*High on Thy throne, Thine ear, Lord Jesus, bend
As grateful hearts now to Thyself ascend.*

*Deep were Thy sorrows, Lord, when heaven frowned—
Gethsemane!*

*Bloodlike Thy sweat, Lord falling to the ground
So heavily.*

*Dark was the night, but heaven was darker still,
O Christ my God!—is this the Father's will?*

*Thorns wreathed Thy brow when hanging on the tree,
Man's cruelty!*

*Why lavish love like this, O Lord, on me!
Thou lovest me!*

*Would that my soul could understand its length,
its breadth, depth, height, and everlasting strength!*

*Thy precious blood was freely shed for me
On Calvary.*

*To save me from a lost eternity;
Glory to Thee!*

*Nor death, nor hell, nor things below—above
Can sever me from Thy eternal love.*

*Like shoreless seas, Thy love can know no bound;
Thou lovest me!*

*Deep, vast, immense, unfathomed, Lord—profound,
Lord, I love Thee!*

*And when above, my crown is at Thy feet,
I'll praise Thee still for Calvary's mercy seat.*

EDWARD C. QUINE

