

EXALTING CHRIST • EQUIPPING BELIEVERS • EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

# CORNERSTONE

MAY-JUNE 2025

“PLEASE, SHOW  
ME YOUR GLORY”

Where God's Glory Dwells

An Exodus From Religion

...and more

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



**B**eyond definition, the resplendent beauty of God's glory stretches from eternity to eternity, permeating throughout God's Word from the opening curtain of Genesis to the climax of Revelation. Our transcendent God displays

His glory by proclaiming His Name, the Name that embraces the totality of His divine attributes and the perfections and excellencies of His ways. The Lord manifests His glory in creation as the sole Creator (Ps. 19:1; 139:14; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2) and in His redemptive work as the only Savior (Isa. 45:21; John 6:68; 17:3; Titus 3:4), His eternal purposes worthy of both our praise and worship (Rev. 4-5). The visible manifestation of God's presence, often referred to as the Shekinah glory, typically appeared in a cloud or in fire (Ex. 3:2; 13:21; 24:16-18; 33:9; 1Kgs. 8:10-13) because no creature had the capacity to behold the radiance of His glory (Ex. 33:20; Matt. 17:1-2; John 17:5; 1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 1:3). He is a holy God; there is none like Him (Ps. 113:5; Isa. 45:6). We may reverently summarize that the glory of God is all that He is and all that He does because of who He is.

Having found grace in God's sight, Moses besought the Lord for His presence to continue with them after Sinai. After God granted that request, Moses implored “*please, show me your glory*” (Ex. 33:18). In this he conveyed his fervent desire to see God and for a deepening experiential knowledge of Him. In response, the Lord passed by, proclaiming His Name while He hid Moses in the cleft of the rock (Ex. 33:12-34:8).


Many years later David would similarly pine, “*One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple*” (Ps. 27:4). In the upper room Philip expressed humanity's same innate thirst, “*...Lord, show us the Father...*” (John 14:8). Christ responded, “*Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’*”

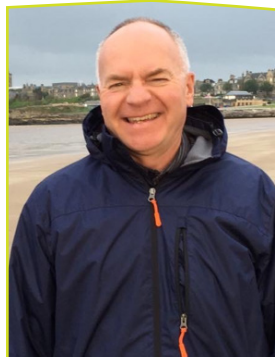
Our thirst for God is eternally quenched in Christ (John 4:14). The beloved apostle John testified, “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as*

*of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth...No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him*” (John 1:14, 18). Only One who is God, only One who shared the Father's glory could fully make Him known. In manifesting His Father's Name, Christ, the eternal Son of God, glorified His Father by revealing His Father's glory (John 12:28; 17:4, 6).

**“...the glory of  
God is all that He  
is and all that He  
does because of  
who He is.”**

Where does God's glory and grace dwell so that we can experience the blessing of salvation and fellowship? It dwells in Christ. “*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor. 4:3-4, 6).

The gospel is the good news of Christ's glory (John 12:23-28; John 13:1-12; 17:1-5). John 17:3 says, “*...this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*” It is through Christ that one may enter into a relationship with God. And as the believer abides in Him through His Word, the Spirit inwardly transforms us into His likeness, so that we reflect the exquisite glory of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Eternal life is the “Lord Jesus Christ from beginning to end” (1 John 1:1-3; 5:10-13). In John 17, Christ prayed that believers would behold His glory; that we would see His face. In fulfillment, someday “*we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*” (John 17:24; 1 John 3:2). To the praise of His glory! 



### 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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# "PLEASE, SHOW ME YOUR GLORY"

**T**he Lord had acted in power to bring the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, the iron furnace (Deut. 4:20). They had crossed through the Red Sea, drank water from the rock, eaten manna from heaven, and eventually made their way to Mount Sinai to receive the commandments of the Lord. The Lord spoke to Israel out of fire, cloud, and thick darkness, and all Israel heard and trembled (Deut. 5:22ff). But when God called Moses up onto the mountain for many days, the people of Israel made a golden calf and worshipped it, breaking the Lord's commandments even before Moses returned with the tablets of stone (cf. Ex. 20:3–6; 32:15–19). Their idolatry provoked God's righteous indignation. Moses pleaded with the Lord to show mercy and not consume the people in anger. The Lord listened to Moses' prayer and spared the nation, although many died for their unfaithfulness (Ex. 32:30–35).

It was at this time that Moses asked the Lord to show him His glory (Ex. 33:18). The Lord answered Moses' request, but as is so often the case in our lives, not in the way he expected. While God refused to visually show Moses the full extent of His splendor (Ex. 33:20), the Lord did promise to reveal something glorious about Himself that Moses could experience through words and sound. At Sinai, God revealed essential truths about His character and actions that provide the basis for the gospel that would later come through the Messiah, Jesus.

## **The Ever-Existing, Covenant-Keeping God**

*"Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed,*

*'The LORD, the LORD God...'"* (Ex. 34:6, NASB). The "LORD" (*Yahweh*) is the name that God revealed to Moses at the burning bush. This name in Hebrew means "*I am*," and points to God's eternality, that He is the self-existing God (cf. Ps. 90:2). The name *Yahweh* was also a promise to Moses that God would go with him and be His God and not abandon him (Ex. 3:12). The phrase "*I am who I am*" could also be translated as "I will [always and forever] be who I am [right now]" (Ex. 3:14).

The significance of the Lord's name as *Yahweh*, "*I am*," is not just His eternality, but it is also a covenantal promise of His personal presence with His people. The great "*I am*" was also the one who promised Moses and Israel, "*I will be with you*." He was and is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who keeps all His promises to His people. We find this same character in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who "*is the same yesterday, today, and forever*" (Heb. 13:8).

## **The Incomparable Character of God**

*"...Compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth..."* (Ex. 34:6, NASB). In these next phrases, we have three sets of characteristics about God. The Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. This was true when Israel sinned with the golden calf and continues to be true today. All sin demands punishment. But God in His compassionate mercy loves all sinners and desires their restoration to Himself while concurrently abhorring their sin. This grace of God is the essence of the gospel of Jesus.



Not only is God gracious, but He is also patient with His people. He is slow to anger. The Hebrew expression for patience here, literally translated, means “long of nostrils.” Think about a raging bull who, right before it gets ready to charge, snorts and flares its nostrils. God takes a long time to flare His nostrils. He is slow to snort, long of nostril, patient with His people. “*The Lord is...patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance*” (2 Pet. 3:9, NASB).

The Lord abounds in lovingkindness and truth. Our God keeps His covenantal promises toward His people and His promises never fail. Every word of the Lord rings forever true (Prov. 30:5). There is never something He promises that He will not accomplish. We live in a world where people make many promises but often do not have either the persistence or the power to keep them. Not so with our God! His words are solid, firm, immovable, and unchanging. When He makes a promise, He keeps that promise. Always.

### Where Love and Justice Meet

“...Who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations” (Ex. 34:7, NASB). These final phrases of God’s self-revelation reveal three actions the Lord undertakes. First, He extends His lovingkindness toward thousands. His goodness does not have a limit in terms of who can receive it. Today, the love of God is available to all people through the cross of Christ, if they will only place their faith in Christ for salvation (Titus 2:11).

Second, the Lord forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin. These same terms for sin occur in Psalm 32:1–2, “*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!*” (NASB). God delights to extend His love to thousands, freely forgiving sin. In our day, forgiveness is freely available to everyone who believes in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38).

Yet there is a third action God takes in this verse. God is a God not only of love, but also of justice. He does not, indeed cannot, sweep sin under the rug. God will punish the guilty. And for those who do not repent, there can be generational consequences for their descendants. Today, children brought up in an unbelieving home consequently run a greater risk of being lost than those raised in a believing home. The love of God and justice of God are not contradictory to one another, like opposite forces fighting for control. God’s lovingkindness

extends to thousands freely, while His justice is enacted upon any who do not repent of their sin.


### The Glory of God and the Gospel of Christ

God has always been perfectly consistent in His character. The same God who revealed Himself to Moses at Sinai has now revealed Himself through His Son. The Lord Jesus is the perfect representation of God to humanity (John 1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Some think that the God of the Old Testament is a God of judgment and wrath, while Jesus in the New Testament is a

God of love and peace. But when we look at God’s self-revelation in Exodus 34:6–7, it helps us understand that God has always been loving and just. He wants to forgive, and He extends His love to thousands upon thousands, but He will by no means acquit the guilty.

The self-revelation of God at Sinai explains why Jesus had to die on the cross. Because God is a God of both love and justice, He cannot let sin go unpunished, but He also will not let the sinner go

without the opportunity for forgiveness. At Calvary, Jesus took our punishment on Himself so that God’s forgiveness could be freely extended to all who believe. Paul explains in Romans 3:21–26 that at the cross of Jesus, the justice of God which demands punishment for sin is satisfied, while the love of God that graciously offers forgiveness of sins is demonstrated. God shows Himself to be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

The glorious gospel of Jesus Christ displays the gracious love of God in extending forgiveness to sinners, while never compromising His perfect righteousness in justly judging sin. At Sinai, 1400 years before the birth of Jesus, we see these essential gospel elements. Praise God for the consistency of His character and the wonders of His love! 

“At Sinai, God revealed essential truths about His character and actions that provide the basis for the gospel that would later come through the Messiah, Jesus.”



#### by JJ Routley

Jonathan J. Routley (PhD, Columbia International University) teaches in the Bible Department at Emmaus Bible College in Dubuque, Iowa. He enjoys serving the Lord through itinerant preaching and camp speaking ministries. JJ and his family fellowship at Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel in Dubuque.



# WHERE GOD'S GLORY DWELLS

**I**mmediately after the Lord Jesus had changed water into wine, we read, “*This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him*” (John 2:11). The very next story is of Jesus “cleansing the temple.”<sup>1</sup>

*“Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!’ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’ So the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:13-21).*

There are two main views regarding when this story took place. One view is that Jesus “cleansed the temple” twice: once at the start of His public ministry recorded here by John, and again shortly before the cross as recorded in the other Gospels. The other view states that Jesus only “cleansed the temple” once at the end of His public ministry and John records that event out of sequence for literary reasons.

Whether John records an earlier “cleansing” than that of the other Gospel writers or is recording the same “cleansing” but positions it out of sequence at the start of his Gospel, the important question is really the same: “Why does John record the event at this point?” A hint is found at the end of the previous story, in John 2:11, where we read that Jesus “manifested His glory.”

In the Old Testament, when Israel first came out of Egypt, the Lord told Moses, “*Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle ...*” (Ex. 25:8-9). And then concerning the ark and mercy seat which would be placed inside the most holy place of the tabernacle, God told Moses, “*And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat ...*” (Ex. 25:22). When the tabernacle was completed we read, “*...the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle...*” (Ex. 40:34-35). Much later, when Solomon built the first temple we see a very similar occurrence, “*...the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God*” (2 Chron. 5:13-14).

God manifested His presence, and His glory filled the temple as it had the tabernacle before it. The temple mentioned in the New Testament Gospels was built much later than Solomon’s temple. When it was dedicated, according to Ezra 6:13-22 we do not read of a visual manifestation of God’s glory. However, the prophet Haggai, speaking of this second temple says, “*...I will fill this temple with glory, says the Lord of hosts. ‘... The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former’...*” (Hag. 2:7-9). Despite there being no recorded visual



manifestation of God's presence or glory associated with the second temple, there is no question that God intended to fill it with His glory in a way greater than anything He had done before.

John records one instance of Haggai's words being fulfilled when he tells of Jesus, the true manifestation of God's glory (John 1:14), entering this second temple to "cleanse" it.<sup>2</sup> After His resurrection the disciples will remember this episode and believe "*the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said*" (John 2:22). In other words they will connect the dots. They will see that He was fulfilling Psalm 69:9, "*Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up*" (quoted in John 2:17) and they will remember Jesus speaking of His own body when on this occasion He said, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*" (John 2:19).

Without question this second temple had the manifestation of God's presence and glory enter it in a way far superior to that of the previous temple and tabernacle; in this temple the Son of God – God Himself manifest in the flesh – would walk through its precincts on a regular basis. Despite this fact, this is not John's intended message in recording Jesus "cleansing" this temple. Rather, John is presenting to us a contrast between Jesus, Himself, and the entire Old Testament system of worship and of how man relates to God.


John opens his Gospel, teaching us of "the Word" being with God and, in fact, being God Himself (John 1:1) and that "*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). It is no coincidence that John uses the verb form of the Greek word for "tabernacle" in this verse. John writes, "*the Word ... tabernacled among us.*" Jesus came to fulfill exactly the function of the Old Testament tabernacle and temple. No longer would God manifest His glory in a tent in the wilderness or in a building in Jerusalem. Jesus is Himself now "the place" where God manifests His glory. Jesus, Himself, is where men must go if they desire to find forgiveness and approach God. Everything the Old Testament taught about the tabernacle and temple is now fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the wedding at Cana, John records the first sign by which Jesus "*manifested His glory*" (John 2:11). From that point on, His own body was the true temple (John 2:21) where God would manifest His glory and meet with men. The temple in Jerusalem had become a "*house of merchandise*," a place of commerce and no longer a place of worship and prayer. In a few decades it would become undeniably obsolete when in AD 70 the Romans destroyed it (see also John 4:21-26).

And very soon Jesus would give the sign the Jews had demanded of Him. It would be the sign of His own resurrection (John 2:18-19), to declare beyond all doubt that He is the Son of God and has been glorified by the Father (Rom. 1:4; John 17:1-5). And this sign would be the last of the signs recorded in the Gospel of John, given that we may "*believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*" (John 20:31).

Whenever this "cleansing the temple" event occurred chronologically, it was necessary for John to record it near the beginning of his Gospel. At the wedding, Jesus first manifested His glory to men. When Jesus "cleansed the temple," exposing how man had corrupted it, He made a clear contrast between it and His incorruptible body, God's true temple, which would rise from the dead (John 2:19, 22). "*For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption*" (Ps. 16:10; see Acts 2:25-31).

## “Jesus, Himself, is where men must go if they desire to find forgiveness and approach God.”

This contrast between the Lord Jesus and the temple in Jerusalem forms the basis of much teaching that follows. Keeping these details in mind as one reads through John's Gospel will help to illuminate some of the bigger themes presented in the book. 

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>"Cleansing the temple" is in quotes to indicate this is not a scriptural description of what Jesus was doing but has become the commonly accepted way to speak of this event.

<sup>2</sup>Chronologically, the first time Haggai's words were fulfilled are found in Luke 2:22-38 when Jesus was taken as a baby into the temple.



### by Joe Wilbur

Joe Wilbur is in fellowship with the saints in Nokesville Gospel Chapel in Nokesville, VA. In recent years, the Lord has given Joe increasing opportunities to teach God's Word at several assemblies in PA and VA.

# 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

## Lord Jesus Christ From Beginning To End — AN EXODUS FROM RELIGION —

On Sunday, April 2, 2006, three men of the Hutterite Cascade Colony in Montana, who protested against the Hutterian religious system, were summarily censured and later excommunicated. What had brought this about?

These three believed, and later stated at various hearings (inquisitions), that in the Hutterite religious system, Jesus Christ had no authority and that what He says in His Word carried less weight than the elder's traditions and the Zeitgeist. Where had these three found the courage and discernment to oppose the only religion, the only way of life they had ever known? For that we must go further into the past where we discover that they were not the only ones. In fact, there were numerous others in their midst and in different Hutterite colonies, both in the US and in Canada, who believed as they did. Five years earlier, upwards of forty souls had forsaken the Hutterite religious system, settled in the Lethbridge area of Alberta, Canada and established a church with the help of Gospel Hall brethren Joe Clark, Steve Kember, and their families. Also, while people were coming to Christ at Cascade Colony, Montana, other people were also being saved at nearby Fairhaven Colony.

I recall the night God saved me. As early as 10 years of age, I had a real fear that I and many around me were headed for

hell. Now, a decade later at the age of 21, my conscience was sleeping, rarely disturbed by eternal things. It was then that a cousin of mine, recently saved and on his way to Bible college, traveling with another young believer, stopped in for two days. These new believers continually talked of Jesus for two days: His Person, His sufficiency, and salvation in His name. Cut to the heart, I remember a long sleepless night with the name of Jesus ringing in my ears. For the first time in my life I had heard that it is not religion, not form, not good works that makes one fit for heaven, but faith in Christ and His once-for-all sacrifice for our sins. It was then in 1981, that I trusted Christ and now desired to please Him. I decided to remain on the colony and joined the Hutterite system by becoming a baptized member in hope of reforming it.

Unbeknownst to anyone on the colony, a faithful Christian working in a nearby tractor repair shop, had prayed for over twenty years for Hutterites to come to faith in Christ. When Hutterite men would come into the shop to do business with him he marveled that these religious men did not know Christ and had no interest in spiritual things.

Meanwhile, Mennonite visitors who had moved into the area were frequently given tours of the colony. Invariably, the tour wound up in the schoolhouse or chapel where the Mennonites would sing beautiful gospel songs. The colony



youth and young adults quickly learned and sang these songs (Hutterites sing a lot, for leisure, in church, in school, at work). Now, at work, the young people would sing these gospel songs rather than their normal country western songs.

Time moved on, I got married and we began to have children. When the oldest child was twelve, I sensed a crisis on the horizon. I was concerned that our children would fall into the same pitfalls of sin as I had in my youth. I prayed that God would prevent that. Being the children's Bible and Sunday school teacher for the colony, I taught the gospel with no restrictions. Immersion in the Bible, good Christian literature, and occasional conversations with other Christians strengthened me in the continuing conviction that the Hutterite way was false.

On February 2, 2003, our family entertained a visitor from a nearby town. He was none other than the believer who had been praying for over twenty years for spiritual enlightenment among the Hutterite people. He had been asked to pay us a visit by my wife's mother, who lived on a neighboring Hutterite colony and whose family had recently become acquainted with him. Over the next two years, he returned to visit us many times with his wife and children.

We enjoyed sweet fellowship with his family in our home as well as in my brother's home. Our children, along with nieces, nephews, and cousins were often in attendance. Our friend's approach was quite simple: "The Lord Jesus Christ is your authority, not the colony ministers. Christ Jesus is the mediator between God and man, not the colony ministers. God is pleased when His Son is thus honored." In the course of time, our four children, ages 11 to 17, trusted Christ. Of course, they had heard the gospel many times from me, their father. However, now they heard that not only had Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, but that it is the Lord Jesus Christ from beginning to end! Many nieces, nephews, cousins, and several of my brothers and sisters soon became believers in Christ. It was an exciting but tense time. The Holy Spirit was working.


In early 2003, believers from Western Canada stopped by for a visit. They had lived on a Hutterite colony but had either broken away from the system or been excommunicated en masse. They visited us numerous times over the next two years until they were banned from doing so. They helped strengthen us in our faith. Many other believers also came to visit during these years. Some were sent by God; others were well-meaning but had their own motives. At different times, several assembly brethren came for an evening. One of the more memorable ones to visit was Jabe Nicholson.

By 2004, life on Cascade Colony became more tense. Believers began having their own Bible studies in the evening;

first in the school, then in their homes. Of course, this did not go over well with the colony ministers and leaders. Though they were unsympathetic to our beliefs, they were rarely harsh. But finally, given the pressure applied by other colony ministers, the Hutterite bishop and his lieutenants decided to address the issue. They questioned a colleague and me about what we were teaching our students in Sunday School and Bible class. We stood our ground on the Gospel, proving that we were teaching nothing contrary to the Bible. We told them that they were supplanting the Bible with tradition. After much deliberation they warned us but allowed us to retain our teaching positions.

However, it was the beginning of the end. Many believers felt this had gone on long enough and on April 2, 2006, we decided to force the issue. Six weeks later, fifty Hutterite ministers from Montana, Alberta, and Saskatchewan came to Cascade Colony for an official inquiry. The gist of the inquiry was this: Do you believe in Christ or do you believe in the Hutterite colony? Well, that was the question. Many of the young believers gave beautiful testimonies. The ministers ridiculed and judged them as misled. They gave us a few weeks to think it over.

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, the whole group of ministers plus a score of others showed up for round two. This time the baptized believers and their wives, including my brother and I, were excommunicated. Happily, we were not banished from our homes. Our family continued to live on the Colony for another year and continued to meet in homes for fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. Some of the younger believers soon left. The excommunicated men found employment off the colony. One of our sons also left. When our second son stated that he was leaving, my wife and I knew it was time for us to leave and begin a new life.

In July 2007, we pulled out with our last load of household items to live in a rented farmhouse. Our oldest son, who had left earlier, came to live with us. Meanwhile, a couple of Gospel Hall families from McKeesport, PA (Joe and Penny Clark together with Dale and Becky Vitale), planted an assembly, "The Good News Center," in Great Falls, Montana. We soon began to fellowship with them. In 2012, the assembly bought an abandoned school building in Sun River, Montana and changed the name to River Valley Fellowship, where we are today. 

### by Mike Wipf

Mike and his wife Martha live in the Big Sky state of Montana. They gather to the Lord with the saints at River Valley Fellowship where Mike is one of the elders. For the past few years they have been part of a team teaching Sunday School classes to unchurched children and ministering in a retirement home through singing and Bible teaching.

## "DO YOU BELIEVE IN CHRIST OR DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE HUTTERITE COLONY?"

# THE FRONT LINES

## HEAVEN'S STAR ATTRACTION

Star power can be a formidable force. Earth's star attractions are often idolized by millions of adoring fans. Many enthusiasts go to great effort and expense to secure a seat when their particular idol comes to town.

The exuberance of fans entering a stadium or entertainment venue is often in stark contrast to their faces when heading home after an event. This cycle is observable at most sporting, musical, movie, theatrical, and even political events. Such was the case recently at Toronto's Rogers Centre.

The current songstress of our era was scheduled for six concerts in November 2024. All events were sold out well in advance with 50,000 fans attending each concert. Security advised that another 10-15,000 disappointed fans were milling about outside the venue, many desperate to pay big bucks for a ticket to get inside. Media hype was excessive and unrelenting. Toronto was under a spell of star stupor.

Enter our merry little band of believers eager to proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ – heaven's *"Bright and Morning Star"* (Rev. 22:16). For each of the six November events, various configurations of our team perched at prominent preaching points and declared the glorious gospel of God's way to God's heaven through the Lord Jesus Christ – the crucified, buried, risen, exalted, and soon returning King of kings and Lord of lords.

Vast crowds lined up as early as 3:00 pm each day for the 7:00 pm events. Waves of people flowed slowly past our signs, tracts, and preaching points before and after the concerts. But how to address such an audience in context?

In the pages of Scripture, we see our Lord Jesus Christ adept at speaking to people about what was on their minds.

He often began his chats by talking to people about what they did know before deftly flipping the conversation to what they needed to know. Consider Nicodemus in John 3:2. *"Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."* In response, Jesus talks about a greater miracle than Nicodemus could ever imagine – the miracle of new birth, the new creation.

In John 4, the woman at the well had water on her mind. She knew the value and necessity of water in sustaining life. She also knew that water must be accessed repeatedly. Thus, Jesus spoke to her of *"living water"* in verses 10 and 14: *"... the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life"* (v.14).

Following our Lord's example and precedent, we proceeded to preach. Six sold-out concerts totaled 300,000 fans clutching tickets, with thousands more hopefuls clamoring to gain entrance. We used the contrast between the "haves and the have nots," between those who had bought entrance for the one-time viewing of an earthly star and those who were never going to see their star. We pointed out that millions had received God's free gift of entry to His majestic attraction of heaven's eternal *"Bright and Morning Star."*

At the Rogers Centre, multitudes were deeply disappointed that there was no more room, and no amount of money could gain them entrance to an already full house. However, we declared there to be, "No charge and no shortage of 'seats' or capacity in God's heaven." There is room for crowds which no man can number. Entrance is a gift purchased at the enormous price of the shed blood of Christ, heaven's *"Bright and Morning Star."* However, this offer of entrance is time-limited. Enter in time, or it will be forever too late. God's offer expires upon



one's death or the Lord's return. Enter while you may. Join us in the celestial celebration that will continue forever and ever!



*Laurie and Trent Herbert*

In a scenario such as a major “star” event, the people are not in a conversation mode, especially in brisk weather. Instead, they were hurrying to enter the stadium as soon as possible. When the show was over, it was 11:30 pm and they were eager to leave for home.

We desired to preach to as many people as possible without any expectation of conversations. If we had stopped preaching in order to speak to individuals, many thousands would not have heard the gospel. However, a large amount of literature was given out and several young people from West Fifth Bible Chapel (Hamilton, ON) were encouraged by their first taste of open-air preaching.

One Christian asked if I thought anyone was listening. I replied, “I don’t know how many are listening, but I know that many thousands are *hearing*.” People may not be listening at the moment but they have heard God’s Word which can later be brought back to their remembrance and lead to saving faith. The Bible says, “...*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17).

What kind of response did we observe? There were many comments, side chats and much light banter throughout the six afternoons and evenings. The seed of God’s living Word was preached. We watered the seed with prayer and looked to the Lord of the harvest to bring forth fruit to His glory.

There was an additional blessing to our souls. Many Christians who attended identified with the good news saying they were “so encouraged, heartened, and challenged” to see and hear



*Outside the Rogers Centre*



*Kayla Hay, Daniel Rojoy, Winson Johnson, Pintu David, Joel Baarbé*

Jesus being preached publicly. Above all, we trust that God was glorified as His Son Jesus Christ, the Lord from glory, was declared to be the One who “*came into the world to save sinners*” (I Tim. 1:15).

Wonder of wonders! 



### **by Gary Weeks**

Gary and Claudette Weeks are in their 42nd year as Commended Workers. The last 28 years, Gary and Claudette have been in fellowship with and commended by Markham Bible Chapel in the Toronto, ON Canada area.



# FOUNDATIONS *of the* FAITH

## Unlike Any Other Book

In our pluralistic age we often hear the Bible described as merely another source of divine inspiration alongside the sacred texts of the Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs. It is also argued that the Bible makes its own claim to be the Word of God and that therefore the claim cannot be valid. Why should anyone believe what the Bible says about itself? The question may be posed in a spirit of unbelief, or it may be asked by a genuine seeker who wants to find the truth. Ultimately, an earnest impartial investigation will reveal that the Bible is unlike any other book:

### The Bible is Self-Validating

The Bible makes stunning claims about itself. For example, Paul advises Timothy that, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* (2 Tim 3:16). Is there any way that this claim can be validated?

The Bible was written over a time span of approximately fifteen-hundred years by about forty different writers. The earlier authors made many detailed predictions about events which would happen later. On the road to Emmaus, the Lord Jesus told the two disciples, *"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself"* (Luke 24:25-27). Later that evening the Lord appeared to the disciples and said, *"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which*

*were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures..."* (Luke 24:44-45).

This gives us the key to understand how the Bible is self-validating. Many of the prophecies which were written in the Old Testament were fulfilled in the New Testament with an accuracy that defies all natural explanations.

We name some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ which have already been fulfilled: He was to be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14); to be of the line of Abraham (Gen. 12:3); to be of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10); to be of the house of David (2 Sam. 7:12-13); to be born at Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2-3); to be called out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1); to have a forerunner (Isa. 40:3); to be a worker of miracles (Isa. 35:5-6); to be a man of sorrows and to be rejected of men (Isa. 53:3); to be deserted (Zech. 13:7); to be scourged and spat on (Isa. 53:5); to be given vinegar to drink (Ps. 69:21); to be pierced with nails (Ps. 22:16); to be forsaken by God (Ps. 22:1); to be surrounded by enemies (Ps. 22:7-8); to be numbered with transgressors (Isa. 53:12); to agonize with thirst (Ps. 22:15); to commend His spirit to God (Ps. 31:5); to have His garments distributed (Ps. 22:18); to have no bone broken (Ps. 34:20); to be buried with the rich (Isa. 53:9); to rise from the dead without seeing corruption (Ps. 16:9-10); and to ascend into Glory (Ps. 68:18).

The above list is by no means exhaustive. By checking the Old Testament prophecies against their fulfilment in the New

**"The Christian can contend  
for the faith in total confidence  
regarding the inspiration,  
accuracy, harmony, and  
truth of the Bible."**



Testament, we can see that the Bible is manifestly demonstrated to be true, accurate, and divinely inspired. We have every good reason to believe what the Bible says about itself. No other book in existence is self-validating in this way.

## The Bible is Self-Interpreting

The Bible is its own interpreter. Believers in any culture, with a reasonable translation of the Bible in their own language, will be able to read and understand the Scriptures for themselves. To draw out the teaching of a passage, we must compare Scripture with Scripture. Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that the natural man cannot discern spiritual truth, whereas believers have the Spirit of God to illuminate the Scriptures (1 Cor. 2:14-16; 1 John 2:20, 27). Thus, believers can come to an understanding of a passage by comparing Scripture with Scripture as led by the Spirit of God.

No one can claim divine authority to interpret Scripture. Any such claims by a “church” to be the sole interpreter of Scripture must be rejected. Individual Christians can read and understand the Bible, precisely because it is self-interpreting.

## The Bible is Self-Consistent

The Bible, which never contradicts itself, should be read in its totality in the knowledge that it has one true unified meaning. The great themes of creation, redemption, and glorification are dealt with progressively throughout the Bible in total harmony and agreement. But without doubt, the over-arching theme of Scripture is God’s revelation of Himself in His Son. The Lord Jesus said, “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me*” (John 5:39).

Some have claimed that there are contradictions and inconsistencies between the Old Testament and the New Testament. For example, why were animal sacrifices required in the Old but discontinued in the New? Why were food restrictions necessary under the law but not under grace? Why were believers required to keep holy days in the Old but not in the New?

There is nothing contradictory between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The coming of Christ has fulfilled the types and shadows of the Old Testament. The offerings of the Old Testament have fulfilled their purpose in pointing to Christ, but now that Christ has come, they are no longer necessary. The food laws demanded a separation from Gentile diet and from what was ceremonially unclean, but Christ has now declared all foods clean, thus bringing the Gentile into equal blessing with the Jew. The holy days, such as the Sabbath, new moon, and the annual feasts of Jehovah, are all fulfilled in Christ and are not part of the Church’s calendar. There are no feast days given to the church.

Paul explains to the Colossians, “*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance*

*is of Christ*” (Col. 2:16-17 NKJV). There is a unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament which is finally and fully expressed in Christ. The whole Bible is non-contradictory and is self-consistent from beginning to end.

## The Bible is Self-Contained


The Bible is a completely self-contained book. Jude tells us that all that we need has been delivered, “*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3 NKJV). In other words, the revelation of Scripture is complete – there is nothing more to add.

The Lord Jesus said, “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*” (Matt. 24:35). The Bible will never be revised, corrected, updated, withdrawn, or declared obsolete. In fact, the Bible will outlive the universe.

## Some Key Truths About the Scriptures:

- They speak of Christ (Luke 24:27; John 5:39)
- They tell us the way of salvation (2 Tim. 3:15)
- They are inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
- They cannot be broken (John 10:35)
- They shall never pass away (Mark 13:31)
- They are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16)
- They nourish us and cause us to grow (1 Pet. 2:2)

## Conclusion

The Bible is unlike any other book. The Bible is self-validating, self-interpreting, self-consistent, and self-contained. On the eve of the crucifixion, the Lord Jesus prayed to His Father concerning His disciples, “*I have given them thy word...Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*” (John 17:14, 17). The Christian can contend for the faith in total confidence regarding the inspiration, accuracy, harmony, and truth of the Bible. 

### Editor’s Note:

Marginally edited by permission of the author from an article published in *Believer’s Magazine* (December 2018).



### by John F Parkinson

John resides with his wife Andrea in Ballymena, N. Ireland. They are in fellowship in Ballymena Gospel Hall where John is an elder. He has visited China, India, and other countries to help with Bible teaching. John has also written seven books on Christian themes, including *The Faith of God’s Elect* (available from Gospel Folio Press).



# Waiting Upon the Lord

In

the classic book “Pilgrim’s Progress” the author John Bunyan wrote, “And Patience was willing to wait.”<sup>1</sup> One of the most important aspects of divine guidance is the principle of waiting upon the Lord. In the Psalms, Proverbs, and many other books of the Bible, we find commands to wait

on the Lord, such as: “*Wait on the LORD: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: Wait, I say, on the LORD*” (Ps. 27:14, KJV).<sup>2</sup> Many modern translations use the phrase “*wait for the Lord*.” To English readers, the idea of waiting on the Lord might seem like a passive exercise, but a closer study reveals that it is nothing of the sort.

Patient, confident trust in the Lord is the central idea of the exhortation to wait on the Lord. The entire Psalm 27 is a prayer to God for help. It beautifully illustrates the meaning of waiting on the Lord. Throughout the Psalm’s eloquent lines, David expresses authentic faith and courageous trust in God, based on his confident expectation that the Lord will rescue and save him in his time of trouble.

## Trusting in the Lord

First, we see that we can wait on the Lord by trusting in Him. David expressed great confidence in the Lord, who was his light, salvation, and stronghold (Ps. 27:1–2). Bible commentator, the late Dr. John Phillips (1927–2010), so aptly commented,

“Our times are in his hands. God is never in a hurry. This is one thing that King Saul could not do. His failure cost him his crown. What God has promised He will perform. The great thing is to be patient and wait. Wait on the Lord and be of good courage.”<sup>3</sup>

This kind of dynamic trust dispels fear and despair: “*When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident*” (vv.2–3).





## Seeking the Lord

Secondly, we can wait on the Lord by seeking Him. David conveyed his trust in the Lord by longing to be with Him, to commune in God's presence and worship in His temple: *"One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple"* (v.4). In God's dwelling place, praising and worshiping the Lord, David felt safe and secure: *"For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD"* (vv.5-6).

## Waiting on the Lord in Prayer

Thirdly, we can wait on the Lord through prayer, as David did in eager expectation of deliverance (vv.7-14). David asked God for wisdom, direction (v.11), and protection (v.12), wholly believing he would *"see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living"* (v.13). Those who wait on the Lord can fully expect Him to fulfill their hope: *"Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame..."* (Ps. 25:3, ESV).

## Waiting with Confident Expectation

Additionally, waiting on the Lord involves the confident expectation of a positive result in which we place a great hope. This expectation is based on knowledge of and trust in God. Those who do not know the Lord will not wait on Him; neither will those who fail to trust Him. We must be confident of who God is and what He can do. Those who wait on the Lord do not lose heart in their prayers: *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us"* (1 John 5:14). Waiting on the Lord renews our strength (Isa. 40:31).

The beloved expositor, Dr. H. A Ironside (1876-1951), adds,

*"God does not always do for us immediately what we ask. We are not only to wait on the Lord but we are to wait for the Lord. Wait His own time. But now notice that thirteenth verse, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' What a tragedy it would have been if I had not believed, what a blunder...David is saying, Oh, the tragedy if I had not known the Lord! But I do know the Lord and now my soul is at peace, and I can wait on Him."*<sup>4</sup>


Waiting on the Lord by trusting, seeking, and praying establishes our faith and brings serenity and stability: *"I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and*

*fear the LORD and put their trust in him"* (Ps. 40:1-3). As this passage affirms, waiting on the Lord is also a testimony to others who will see our faith and, as a result, put their trust in God.

## Waiting Brings Blessing

Finally, waiting on the Lord brings God's blessings: *"Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him"* (Isa. 64:4; see also 1 Cor. 2:9). Sometimes we might feel as though the Lord does not see or hear us—that He is not answering our prayers. During these moments, we can put our complete faith and trust in the living God. We can wait on the Lord in eager anticipation, knowing that He is with us and in control of our lives. He will do what He has promised. He will rescue and save us. He is always working for our good, even when we don't feel Him (Rom. 8:28). The devotional author of "Streams in the Desert," Mrs. Charles Cowman (1870-1960), knew something of what it was to wait on the Lord. She writes:

*"Did you ever hear of any one being used much for Christ who did not have some special waiting time, some complete upset of all his or her plans. Consider St. Paul being sent off into the desert of Arabia for three years, when he must have been boiling over with the glad tidings. It has been rightly said that there are seasons when to be still demands immeasurably more strength than to act."*<sup>5</sup>

Through patient, courageous, active trusting, seeking, and prayer, we can learn to wait on the Lord. 

## Endnotes

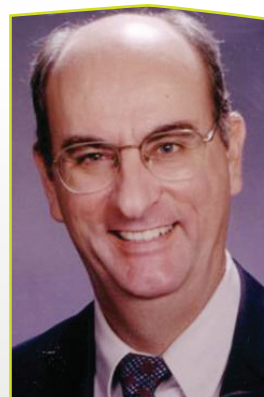
<sup>1</sup>John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 2005), p. 38

<sup>2</sup>All Scripture quotations are from the NIV unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>3</sup>John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms*, Vol. 1, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1987), p. 207

<sup>4</sup>H. A. Ironside, *Psalms*, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1952), p. 165-166

<sup>5</sup>Mrs. Charles Cowman, *Streams in the Desert*, (Los Angeles, CA: Oriental Missionary Society, 1925), p. 114



## by David Dunlap

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

# Conclusion

# ancestry.brethren



While “the doctrine of the secret rapture of believers . . . as now taught . . . was certainly not part of the earliest Brethren thinking on prophetic matters,”<sup>1</sup> it soon became so in both branches of the Brethren Movement through the teachings of John Nelson Darby who rediscovered biblical truth taught by the early church that had been lost over the centuries by most of Christendom. In fact, the fallout between Darby and Newton was occasioned in great part by the latter’s failing to embrace Darby’s teaching. One has even gone so far as to say, “it was a difference of opinion on this subject between two of their leaders which was the primary cause of the rupture.”<sup>2</sup> That the “Blessed Hope” has long been a part of our heritage can be seen from the words of H. A. Ironside (1876-1951) in his defense of the Brethren. “Yes”, said he, “if this be heresy, ‘Brethren’ are heretics; for they do indeed teach that at the coming of the Lord to the air all His saints will be caught up to meet Him, and the world left to pass through the great tribulation.”<sup>3</sup>

Another glorious strand of Brethren heritage is that of global missions. Indeed, the young movement was missionary-minded from the outset.<sup>4</sup> This began as early as 1829 with the departure of Anthony Norris Groves for Baghdad. He would eventually become known as the Father of Faith Missions.<sup>5</sup> Already, in 1825, he had published a pamphlet, “Christian Devotedness,” in which we see the germ of the concept of ‘living by faith’ which became so significant in Brethren missiological thinking.<sup>6</sup> Of Brethren assemblies in Britain, North America,

and Australia, it has been suggested that “it may be that their expenditure, in proportion to their membership, on world-wide missionary work exceeded that of most Christian bodies . . .”<sup>7</sup>

To quote Frederick Tatford, “Many have been the missionary societies and organizations used of God in world evangelism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but no single body perhaps more significantly than the assemblies of the brethren. . . . Over five thousand missionaries have gone from these assemblies to practically every area of the world, depending for their support solely on the faithfulness of God. The impact which has been made has been out of all proportion to their number or to the size and importance of the assemblies from which they went.”<sup>8</sup> As a result, today, based on the 141 countries for which figures are available, there are at least 40,500 congregations worldwide, attended on any Sunday by about 3.6 million adults and children.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, this survey of Brethren ancestry would be incomplete without reference to its hymnody. This is true especially with the remembrance and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ in the weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Its theologically rich and inner, reflective quality are likely due to “the considerable Quaker influx into the churches of the Brethren in the late 1830s.”<sup>10</sup> There is nothing quite like it in the general run of today’s hymnology. It has been described as a “vehicle in sustained thought and language of practical grace and truth which sets the soul in communion with Christ and rises even to the Father.”<sup>11</sup> But for the hymns, we would



not know the inner persons of some of the movement's earliest leaders, men like Chapman, Darby, Deck, Denny, and Wigram, to name a few, whose brief biographies appear in the pages of the book "Chief Men Among the Brethren."

This then is the legacy bequeathed to us by the fathers and early pioneers of the Brethren movement. Given the principle of autonomy which characterizes the Open Brethren, what we do with it varies from assembly to assembly. Among the several features that, by and large, continue to characterize the Brethren today, perhaps none is more unique than the weekly gathering for the Breaking of Bread, a designation that early on came into use among us. Truth be told, it is here that many elements of our DNA find their fullest expression. For instance, based on a shared life rather than a uniform understanding of the Scriptures or on one's particular church affiliation, all true believers are welcomed to the table to participate in the Lord's Supper. The priesthood of all believers, without clergy-laity distinction, allows for all to worship the Lord in "spirit and truth" as led by the Holy Spirit. As part of that worship, the hymns we sing "strike a note of personal adoration and of identification with the sorrows of Christ,"<sup>12</sup> not found in much of today's hymnology.<sup>13</sup> Take, for instance, the hymn of Edward Denny (1796-1889), which, like so many others is addressed to the Lord Himself, whom we know and sense to be present (Matt. 18:20) among us:

To Calv'ry, Lord, in spirit now  
Our grateful hearts repair,  
To dwell upon Thy dying love,  
And taste its sweetness there.

Throughout my life, few have been the Lord's Days that have not found me at the Breaking of Bread. My mother was brought to faith in Christ in the late 1930s and into assembly fellowship through the faithful testimony of a couple in upstate New Jersey. Doubtless, I would have accompanied her to the worship service even before I was born. Happily, my father was saved shortly after my birth. During my childhood, the family frequently moved, always finding an assembly in which to fellowship. Wherever we went we would immediately feel like part of the family, a worldwide family. Even today, when traveling and visiting an assembly for the first time, my wife and I always find that we already share personal friends and acquaintances. Such oneness in the Body of Christ, central to the thoughts of the early Brethren, can be nurtured by attendance at Brethren conferences as well as reading periodicals such as Cornerstone Magazine.

At the age of eleven I was baptized and welcomed to the Lord's Supper. Not long afterwards, in fear and trembling, I

stood and gave out a hymn, the first of many to follow. I can testify to the fact that there is something sobering and salutary to being brought face to face, on a weekly basis, with the touchstone of one's faith, our Lord's death, burial, resurrection, present intercessory ministry, and promised coming again. Maranatha!

*"Remember your leaders,  
those who spoke to you the word of God.  
Consider the outcome of their way of life,  
and imitate their faith."  
Hebrews 13:7 (ESV)*

Conclusion. 

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Timothy Grass, Gathering to His Name, BAHN, Glasgow, 2021, p.106. Darby had started out as a historicist (Brethren Historical Review, vol. 20, 2024, p. 214). To this we might add the system of premillennial dispensationalism which Darby, among others, played an important role in systematizing and spreading. By and large, this system of biblical interpretation held the field throughout the evangelical world, including the Brethren, until the middle of the past century.

<sup>2</sup> Shrubsole, W. (1907). Plymouth Brethren Hymnody. In J. Julian (Ed.), A Dictionary of Hymnology (vol. 2, p. 898) Logos edition.

<sup>3</sup> Henry (Harry) Allen Ironside, The Teaching of the So-called Plymouth Brethren: Is it Scriptural? Reply to an Attack in Dr. Strong's "Systematic Theology", New York, Loizeaux Brothers, p. 15. Unanimity on this matter among Open Brethren, as among evangelicals in general, has significantly eroded following WW2.

<sup>4</sup> Ian McDowell, A Brief History of the "Brethren", Victor Books, Sydney, Australia, 1968, p.19.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Bernard Dann, Father of Faith Missions: The Life and Times of Anthony Norris Groves (1795-1853), Authentic Media, Waynesboro, Georgia, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Grass, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Where Do We Go From Here? The Future of the Brethren. Report of addresses and Discussions at the Swanwick Conference of Brethren, September 1978, p.124

<sup>8</sup> Frederick A. Tatford, That the World May Know, 10 volumes, Echoes of Service, 1982, Book jackets.

<sup>9</sup> Series Preface to Philip Henry Gosse, A Biography by Douglas Wertheimer, BAHN, 2025

<sup>10</sup> F. Roy Coad, A History of the Brethren Movement, Eerdmans, 1968, p.268.

<sup>11</sup> Shrubsole, p.899

<sup>12</sup> Coad, p.231.

<sup>13</sup> There are exceptions of course such as The Power of the Cross by Getty and Townend (2005).



## 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.

# ISSUES & ANSWERS

“SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES...”

JOHN 5:39



## Is God Male or Female?

Is God male or female? This has become a sensitive issue in contemporary Christian theology with feminism (both liberal and evangelical) attaching much significance to the gender issue relative to God. The cultural gender revolution is not only impacting how people think about themselves but also how they view God.

In pagan and polytheistic religions, gods often have genders which would enable them to sexually interact with each other, and even with humans. But the God of the Bible, the only true and living God, is Spirit (John 4:24; 2 Cor. 3:17) and not material. He has no physical form. Moses was very explicit to the Israelites about God's nature: “...for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb...” (Deut. 4:15). God does not have the form of any human, animal, or inanimate thing on earth. Therefore, we can say, according to God's own self-revelation, that God has no physical gender – male or female (see also Deut. 4:10-12, 15-20; Ex. 20:4-5).

Gender has a biological component firmly rooted in the physical body. Gender is not merely a personal mindset or a social construct, but an aspect of God's fixed order in creation. God is Spirit and does not have a physical body or any of the physical markers of gender. Gender and sexuality belong to the created order, and it cannot be attributed to the transcendent Creator God of Scripture who has no form but is Spirit only. Any attribution of sexuality to God is a reversion to paganism.

Some evangelical feminists argue that since man and woman are created in the image of God, God has male and female features. However, being created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) has nothing to do with physical or gender characteristics. Man and woman are created in God's image in that they are greater and superior to the rest of creation since they are created with moral and spiritual capacities.<sup>1</sup> They are patterned after the image of God, and not after any supposed gender of God. Even though God transcends gender, God also is the source of all gender.


It is significant that Jesus referred to God as “Father” and used masculine pronouns in reference to Him. The fatherhood of God is crucial in biblical revelation because it refers to the internal relationship within the Triune Godhead. “Father” is

not simply a culturally conditioned term, but the proper name of God given by divine revelation.

God is frequently viewed through personal metaphors in the Bible. These metaphors primarily speak of God's love and care for His people and reveal God to us in ways we can understand.

God is also depicted as both father and mother of Israel. “You neglected the Rock who begot you,<sup>2</sup> and forgot the God who gave you birth” (Deut. 32:18, NASB). Also, in other biblical texts, maternal features are ascribed to God to highlight His compassion, tenderness, and loving care (Isa. 42:14; 49:15; 66:13).

When God became incarnate in the Person of His Son, Jesus' physical form did not describe God's essence. The gender of Jesus as man belongs to His human nature which must not be confused with His divine nature. Jesus' masculinity no more proves that God is male, than that it proves that God is Jewish or mortal. As a matter of fact, the Gospel writers are careful to note that Jesus never uses the Greek masculine term “*anēr*” (male) for self-description. Jesus always uses the generic or inclusive term “*anthropos*” (human) when speaking of Himself.

We know God through His self-revelation. God has taught us in His Word how to speak of and address Him. We do not have the right to change the biblical concept of God. 

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The image of God in man may also include the idea that God created man to be His visible living image on earth with qualities of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness that give man unique value, and dominion over the world as God's representative.

<sup>2</sup>“You deserted the Rock, who fathered you...” (NIV).



### 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 commanding assembly, Edmonds Lane Bible Chapel in Lewisville, Texas.



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online: [cornerstonemagazine.org](mailto:news@cornerstonemagazine.org)  
email: [news@cornerstonemagazine.org](mailto:news@cornerstonemagazine.org)

## 2025 Northwest Spring Bible Conference

► **May 16-18, 2025**

**1350 Garfield Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI**

The Christians at Northwest Gospel Hall invite you to join them for their Spring Bible Conference. Keith Keyser (PA) will be speaking on the Authority of Scripture. Lodging options are available in the homes of local believers. For more information, please visit [northwestgospelhall.org](http://northwestgospelhall.org) or contact Rob Wagner at (231) 679-5916 or see their Facebook page.

## Timotheos Project Pine Bush Bible Camp

► **June 15-18, 2025**

**76 Bible Camp Rd, Bloomingburg, NY**

Consider attending the third annual Young Men's Intensive Bible Study for men aged 16-26 who are active in their assemblies and serious about being discipled. Register on the Timotheos Project website: [www.timotheosproject.com/register](http://www.timotheosproject.com/register). For more information contact John Jackson or Ezequiel Montes: [timotheosproject@gmail.com](mailto:timotheosproject@gmail.com).

## West Virginia Bible Conference Bluestone Camp & Retreat

► **July 27 - August 1, 2025**

**36 Middle Camp RD, Hinton, WV 25951**

The West Virginia Bible Conference invites you to their annual family camp with speakers Joshua Shelor (VA) and Skip Elliott (SC). There will also be meetings and activities for the children. For more information contact Brent Jones at 304-466-4738 or [brentandhope@frontier.com](mailto:brentandhope@frontier.com).

## Commendation

The saints at Wyecliff Bible Chapel (Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada), have commended Dale Malayko to the work of the Lord as a street preacher. Dale is in active and happy Christian fellowship at Wyecliff Bible Chapel. Sensing the call of the Lord, he has been preaching on the streets in Edmonton and beyond since April 2014. He is appreciated at Wyecliff for his evangelistic work as well as for his service in the assembly. They wish him God's richest blessing as he continues in service for Him.

## 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](mailto:admin@camphopega.org).

## Camp Hope Summer Camps

**7011 Pony Lake Rd. Dahlonega, GA**

In the will of the Lord, Camp Hope will be holding the following summer sessions:

June 1-7 Home School (7-18)

June 8-14 Junior 1 (8-12)

June 15-21 Junior 2 (8-12)

June 22-28 Junior 3 (8-12)

June 29-July 6 Teen 1 (13-19)

July 6-13 Teen 2 (13-19)

July 13-19 Girls Camp (12-17)

Contact Steve Roys at 678-316-7309 or [admin@camphopega.org](mailto:admin@camphopega.org).



## 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

*All amounts shown are  
in US dollars.*

### Gifts Received

From - Individuals	28,719
- Assemblies	7,113
- Foundations & Organizations	15,443

**Total Gifts Received 51,275**

### Expenses

Printing	26,019
Layout and Design	6,000
Postage and Shipping	19,853
Website	1,735
Bank & PayPal Charges	242
Office Supplies	229
Licenses & Permits	61
Miscellaneous	380

**Total Expenses 54,519**

**Net Surplus/(Deficit) (3,244)**

### Current Magazine Circulation:

USA: 2,770 | Canada: 1,057 | Email: 228 (38 countries)

The Cornerstone committee wishes to express their heart-felt appreciation to all who have had a part in prayer or have financially participated in the work of this ministry. God is able.

# THE THORN

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*I stood a mendicant of God  
Before his royal throne  
And begged him for one priceless gift  
That I could call my own.  
I took the gift from out his hand,  
But as I would depart  
I cried, "But Lord! This is a thorn!  
And it has pierced my heart.  
This is a strange, a hurtful gift  
Which Thou hast given me."  
He said, "My child, I give good gifts  
And gave my best to Thee."  
I took it home, and though at first  
The cruel thorn hurt sore,  
As long years passed I learned at last  
To love it more and more.  
I learned He never gives a thorn  
Without this added grace:  
He takes the thorn to pin aside  
The veil that hides his face.*

---

MARTHA SNELL NICHOLSON

