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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026

HIS NAME
SHALL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL

Out of Egypt I Called My Son
The Ancient Promise
...and more

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

From the Editor

The Name of Jesus

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12



by George T Ferrier

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In Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," Juliet asks, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet." Yet, often in Scripture, a name was given that testified to the only God—who He is and His wonderful works. For example, the prophet Joel ("*Jehovah is God*") prophesied that the Lord is the sovereign God who will bring desolation to His people Judah, yet ultimately deliver them.


Though carried into captivity, Daniel ("*God is my judge*") governed his entire life according to His faith in and knowledge of the one true God, who reveals truth and is the ultimate judge of empires, civilizations, and people. Ezekiel ("*God strengthens*") who was led away into Babylon a few years after Daniel, also carried a name that would encourage the faithful remnant to strengthen themselves in the Lord.

Micah ("*Who is like Jehovah*") marveled, "*Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy*" (Mic. 7:18). Micah knew that the Lord would show mercy to His wayward people, because that is who He is. Zephaniah's name ("*Jehovah hides*" or "*Jehovah treasures*") demonstrates that the Lord always protects His people. Israel is His treasure (Deut. 14:2; Ps. 135:4); they are His firstborn (Ex. 4:22); He hides them under His wings (Ps. 17:8; Matt. 23:37); and even in judgment He will not cast them away (Rom. 11:1, 25-27). Instead, He will restore them (Zeph. 3:14-17).

It was Isaiah ("*Salvation is of the Lord*") who prophesied that the future Messiah would be both God and man: "*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel...For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*" (Isa. 7:14; 9:6).

Isaiah also prophesied that in the future, the restored remnant of Israel would proclaim that salvation is only of the Lord: "*Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid...*" (Isa. 12:2). When Mary was with Child by the Holy Spirit, the Lord told Joseph through an angelic messenger, "*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us' "*" (Matt. 1:21-23). The name "Immanuel" declares Him to be God. The name "Jesus" means "*Jehovah is salvation*" and it declares Christ to be the only Savior. The Lord Jesus is the only one who can save us (John 6:68) and His name testified that He is "*our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13).

Joined to Christ, the Lord's heavenly people, the Church, are called to bear the name of Christ. The early Church referred to themselves as saints, beloved, and brethren, but it was outsiders who first derisively labelled them "Christians" meaning "followers of Christ" (Acts 11:26). Bearing His name may mean reproach (1 Pet. 4:14) and other forms of suffering (Matt. 10:22; 1 Pet. 2:21). May we not be ashamed, but joyfully adorn His Name by reflecting and testifying to His glory (2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Pet. 4:16). Hymnwriter Lela B. Long wrote:

Jesus is the sweetest name I know,
And He's just the same as His lovely name,
And that's the reason why I love Him so;
Oh, Jesus is the sweetest name I know. 



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Volume 10 | Number 1

January-February 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 His Name Shall Be Called Wonderful

Jim Comte

4 Out of Egypt I Called My Son

Joe Wilbur

6 The Ancient Promise

Shane Johnson

8 Gospel Herald

Mark Kolchin

10 Foundations of the Faith

Jim Paul

12 Voices from the Past

John Wilson Smith

14 The Drink Offering

George T Ferrier

16 Issues & Answers

Gary McBride

17 News & Notices

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL

Today boredom, fear, loneliness, emptiness, and a feeling of uselessness grip the hearts of millions. Ultimately, only the One who is called “Wonderful” can restore wonder to anyone’s life.

His Name Is Wonderful

Isaiah, the prophet, introduces us to one of the most majestic portraits of the Lord Jesus, “*And His name shall be called Wonderful...*” Unfortunately, some translations remove the comma between “Wonderful” and “Counsellor,” which relegates wonderful to being a mere adjective rather than a divine title. W. E. Vine wrote, “These two are not to be combined into one phrase as if the first was an adjective describing the Counsellor as wonderful: each is a noun.”¹ Keil & Delitzsch in their commentary wrote, “And the wonderful Counsellor...we must necessarily reject it, as resting upon a misunderstanding and misinterpretation.”²

As we consider His name, “Wonderful,” we are obviously considering the Lord Jesus. Two delightful expressions are used by the Holy Spirit, “*unto us a Child is born*” and “*unto us a Son is given*” (Isa. 9:6). “*A Child is born*” speaks uniquely of His humanity. He became one of us, and therefore He understands us, knows us, and cares for us. “*A Son is given*,” speaks uniquely of His Deity, the Father’s Son, the only begotten and therefore eternal in His being.

He Is Wonderful In His Birth

We stand in awe and wonder at the Savior’s humble birth. God sent His beloved Son into this world, not in a blaze of glory nor to a majestic palace, but to unknown Bethlehem, “*But you Bethlehem Ephratha, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to me the One who is to be Ruler in Israel*” (Mic. 5:2).

Did you notice “little” Bethlehem? It was an unknown, insignificant place, not much more than a widening in the road, and it was here the Son of God was born. The Savior of the world was laid in a stable. The Sovereign of the universe was welcomed by a few despised temple shepherds. This One who will one day be the Lion of the tribe of Judah, was Mary’s little lamb, and God’s pascal lamb.

All those who heard it marveled (wondered) at those things which were told them by the shepherds but Mary “*kept [treasured] all these things and pondered them in her heart*” (Luke 2:18-19). No wonder Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds marveled when they heard this news. It was so wonderful and too amazing for them, as well as for us, to fully comprehend. Are we not amazed at the eloquence of Mary’s silence? Do you ever wonder what thoughts coursed through her mind?

He Is Wonderful In His Creation

How often have you stood out in the country, far from the city lights, and gazed at the myriad stars glittering in the night sky? The psalmist wrote, *"He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name"* (Ps. 147:4). Elihu reminded Job, *"Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God."* (Job 37:14). Elihu continued to remind Job about the wonders of God in creation—the heavens, the clouds, the lightning—and then summed it up with these words, *"Do you know how the clouds are balanced, Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge"* (Job 37:16)?

He Is Wonderful In What He Does

In Judges 13, we read of Manoah's wife, who was barren and had lost the joy and wonder in her heart and soul because she could not conceive. However, in verse 3 we read, *"And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.'"* The question has been often asked: who was the *"Angel of the Lord"*? I am convinced that this was none other than a pre-incarnate visit of the Lord Jesus. The *"Angel of the Lord"* in verses 3 and 4, gave instruction for her personal conduct and care, and then revealed that she would *"bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."*

One can only imagine her excitement, joy, and wonder as she ran to tell her husband, Manoah. He was undoubtedly mystified by what his wife had just told him, *"A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name"* (vv.6-7). Manoah, then prayed to the LORD, saying, *"O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born"* (v.8). The conversation then continued between Manoah and the Angel of the LORD (vv.9-16). Thereafter, Manoah asked the Angel of the LORD, *"What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You"* (v.17)? The Angel of the LORD replied, *"Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful"* (v.18, NKJV)? *"Wonderful"* in Isaiah 9:6 is the same word used here and therefore it must be a divine title.

Wonderful comes from the word *"surpassing"*, meaning inscrutable or beyond understanding. There are heights and depths of this One that can never be revealed. His name is *"Secret"* (Jdg. 13:18, KJV) only because of our limitations. Zophar, speaking to Job, asked him, *"Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty"* (Job 11:7)?

He is wonderful not only by what He says or does, but simply because of who He is. Consider the unfathomable mysteries of His Person, *"No one knows the Son except the Father"* (Matt. 11:27).

The Lord Jesus could say, *"...before Abraham was, I AM"* (John 8:58). Prophesying His future return to earth, John says, *"He had a name written that no one knew except Himself"* (Rev. 19:12).


Because He is Wonderful, He Disperses The Dullness of Life

The Lord Jesus was a daily wonder to all who crossed His path. The shepherds marvelled. The Wise Men marvelled. Old Simeon and Anna marvelled. The teachers, lawyers, and doctors of His day marvelled; *"And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers"* (Luke 2:47). Even His mother, and undoubtedly His adoptive father marvelled, *"So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, 'Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously'"* (Luke 2:48). Even Pilate marvelled as the silent and bloodied Sufferer stood before him, *"But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly"* (Matt. 27:14).

What Does Wonderful Mean To You?

Edersheim wrote with wonder: *"That on such a slender thread as the feeble throb of an Infant life, the salvation of the world should hang and no special care for its safety, no better shelter be provided than a 'stable,' no other cradle but a manger."*

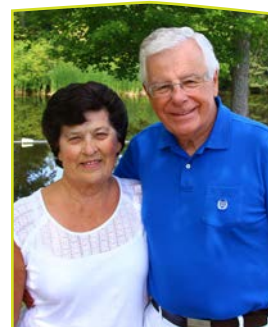
On that starlit night, as the temple shepherds huddled around their fire, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared with a most wonderful announcement, *"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"* (Luke 2:11).

Guided to the Babe, the shepherds undoubtedly stood in silent awe. It was so sudden, so strange, and yet so wonderful. The *"Wonder of all wonders"* had been born, *"a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* The name *"Wonderful"*, when used of our Lord, is unique in its meaning; it is not based on ignorance, but on personally knowing this Wonderful Savior. The more we know Him, the more our hearts will be filled with joy, wonder, and love. 

ENDNOTES

¹ The Collected Writings Of W.E. Vine, Isaiah (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1996), p.83.

² <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/kdo/isaiah-9.html>



by Jim Comte

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“Out of Egypt I called My Son”

MATTHEW 2:15

It is often claimed by unbelieving Bible critics that Matthew pulled Old Testament Scriptures out of context to make it appear that Jesus had fulfilled prophecy. Such perspectives can influence the way believers themselves approach Scripture. Some genuine believers have even suggested that the Holy Spirit Himself at times changes the meaning of Old Testament passages to suit His legitimate New Testament agenda.

If this were true, the implications would be catastrophic. It would destroy our confidence in the New Testament. If the Holy Spirit changed the meaning of Old Testament Scripture to fit a new divine agenda, then why should we not expect Him to one day do it again with the New Testament? Thankfully, in both the Old and New Testaments, God Himself promises that He does not do this (Num. 23:19; Ps. 119:89; Isa. 40:8; Matt. 5:18).¹

This does, however, leave us with some honest questions. At first glance, it can look as though the critics are correct, that Matthew was just hunting for Old Testament Scriptures to “proof-text” what he wanted to be true. One of Matthew’s regularly cited “offenses” is Matthew 2:15.

Out of Egypt I Called My Son

After Matthew presented the genealogy of Jesus Christ and events associated with His divine virgin conception and birth, he tells us of the “*wise men from the East*” who came to worship the new King. Herod, the sitting king of Judea, along with “*all Jerusalem*” was troubled. He searched of the Scriptures and found that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem and he told the

wise men. When these Gentile wise men found the Child, “*they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy,*” presented their gifts and departed for home (Matt. 2:1-12).

After the wise men left, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to quickly flee to Egypt because Herod was planning to destroy the Child. “*When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son’*” (Matt. 2:14-15). Here, Matthew is quoting Hosea 11:1 which says, “*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.*” Skeptics rightly point out that Hosea is not making a prediction. He is likely not even talking about the coming Messiah.² Based on this, the skeptics conclude that Matthew either misunderstands the Old Testament reference or is being dishonest with his readers. What the skeptics do not understand, however, is that far from misusing this reference, Matthew is actually counting on his readers to know the context of Hosea.

To begin with, when Matthew uses the word “*fulfilled*” here he is not claiming Hosea 11:1 is a prediction. Rather, He is drawing our attention to something God did in the past which He is now doing again at a higher level. This is the essence of typology, and there are many examples like this throughout the New Testament (e.g., John 19:36; Jam. 2:23).³

The timeframe of Hosea’s writing is approximately 700 years after the Exodus, and throughout his book, he warns that the northern kingdom is about to face judgment. Hosea 11:1 recalls how God, in the days leading up to the Exodus, called Israel “*My*

son” (Ex. 4:23) and in the next verse Hosea says, “... *They sacrificed to the Baals, and burned incense to carved images*” (Hos. 11:2).

God had brought Israel out of Egypt for a purpose. They were to be His “*treasured possession among all peoples*” (Ex. 19:5 ESV) and an example to the entire Gentile world of who God truly is (Deut. 4:5-8). To this end, soon after leaving Egypt, God brought them into a covenant relationship with Himself (like a marriage which serves as the backdrop of Hosea). Eventually God led them through the Jordan and into the promised land. Sadly, it did not take long before Israel completely forsook that covenant and fell headlong into the most depraved forms of idolatry (Jer. 32:30-35). By the time of Hosea, judgment was inevitable for the northern kingdom. By quoting Hosea, Matthew is telling us things are different this time. God has once again called His Son out of Egypt, and unlike Israel, this Son will never fail.

A New Exodus

In his next “*fulfill*” statement (Matt. 2:16-18), Matthew draws our attention to another Old Testament context. He quotes Jeremiah 31:15 in connection with Herod’s slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, driven by his satanically inspired lust for power. Herod, as king, represents “all Jerusalem” and all Israel. Matthew is not pointing to a failing, idolatrous Israel of the distant past, but to the unfaithful Israel of his own day.

This quotation from Jeremiah comes just a few verses before the promise of a New Covenant, where God declares, “*not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke ...*” (Jer. 31:32 ESV). It is important to note that it was God, through the angel’s instruction, who sent Jesus into Egypt. God Himself, is setting the stage for a new exodus and the establishment of the New Covenant through His faithful unique Son, “*called out of Egypt*.”


Furthermore, Matthew tells us that Jesus was “*called a Nazarene*,” something which was “*spoken by the prophets*” (Matt. 2:23); note here that the word prophets is plural. Matthew isn’t quoting a specific prophet. Through apparent wordplay, Matthew is indicating that Jesus fulfills the entirety of what the Old Testament foretold about the Messiah.⁴ In contrast to Herod, Jesus came from humble beginnings, fully devoted to God, and is the One whom Jeremiah, two chapters later, calls the “*Branch of righteousness*” who will “*execute judgment and righteousness in the earth*” (Jer. 33:15).

Next, Matthew presents Jesus at the Jordan, a reminder of Israel’s ancient journey from Egypt as they entered the promised land. Jesus, the “*beloved Son*” of God in whom God was “*well pleased*” (Matt. 3:17) was there to “*fulfill all righteousness*” (Matt. 3:15). Fulfilling righteousness stands in stark contrast to what is reflected in Israel’s history.

Now to demonstrate the reality of His righteousness, Matthew tells us of Jesus in direct confrontation with the devil. After the Exodus, God brought Israel to a “*land flowing with milk and honey*” (Ex. 3:8) and there, amidst the fullness of God’s blessings, they fell into serving and worshipping every pagan god they encountered.

The Son of God, by contrast, in a barren wilderness and without food for 40 days, resists all temptations, refusing to “*fall down and worship*” Satan even in exchange for “*all the kingdoms of the world and their glory*.” Instead, He chooses the path He knows will take Him straight to the cross, saying, “*You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve*” (Matt. 4:1-11).

The final “*fulfill*” statement in this section of Matthew has Jesus bringing light to “*Galilee of the Gentiles*,” to “*people who sat in darkness*” (Matt. 4:12-16). In the end, by His sacrifice and resurrection, He won our salvation, becoming “*the propitiation ... for the sins of the whole world*” (1 John 2:2 ESV).

The Son of God has proven to be everything Israel failed to be. He completely fulfills the meaning behind Hosea’s words, “*Out of Egypt I called my Son*.” Contrary to the claims of skeptics who accuse Matthew of misusing the Scriptures, and unlike the tendency of some well-meaning believers to reinterpret the Scriptures for new purposes, God’s Word remains consistent in every conceivable way. Although this consistency may not be immediately obvious, it challenges us to seek understanding through prayer and diligent study of both the New and Old Testaments in their full context. The more we undertake this, the more we will marvel at the wisdom of God and come to better learn who our Savior truly is (Matt. 11:28-30). 

ENDNOTES

¹ Obviously Scripture can be misunderstood. This has always been a danger. But whatever we understand, the Holy Spirit never makes the Word of God that He *Himself* inspired to mean something now that it never meant before.

² Some believe there may be a prophetic Messianic link by way of the Septuagint translation of Numbers 24:7-8 but this is debatable and still would require an understanding of context. See Kaiser, W. C., Jr. (2001) *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, pp. 50–51.

³ Much has been written on the NT use of the word *fulfilled*. An excellent example: Gooding, D. (2013) *The Riches of Divine Wisdom: The New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament*. Coleraine, Northern Ireland: Myrtlefield House (Myrtlefield Expositions), pp. 102-115. <https://www.myrtlefieldhouse.com/online-books/the-riches-of-divine-wisdom>.

⁴ No doubt Matthew is playing on the sounds of some words like Nazirite for one who devotes himself in a special way to God (Num. 6) and the Hebrew word for “branch” [*nêṭ-ser*] (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15, etc.). See also Malcolm Horlock’s Monday Musings 171 from 04/22/2024 (<https://voicesforchrist.org/writings/316>).



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.

A man in a turban and robe stands on a rocky ledge, looking out at a vast, starry night sky. The sky is filled with numerous stars of varying brightness, and a few constellations are visible. The man is seen from the back, looking towards the horizon. The title 'The Ancient Promise' is written in a large, white, gothic-style font across the upper right portion of the image.

The Ancient Promise

Abraham rejoiced (John 8:56) to see the incarnation of the promise made to him and awaited the city with rock-solid foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10). It would have brought him great joy to read the first verse of the New Testament which says, “*This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ . . . the son of Abraham.*” After so many centuries, the ancient promise had finally arrived, that in him “*all the families of the earth would be blessed*” (Gen. 12:3). From that promise, from that seed, because it fell into the ground and died, so much more fruit has come.

Perhaps he finally understood what the Lord had said to him shortly after he separated from his nephew Lot, when God told him to look northward, southward, eastward, and westward. God had promised him, “*And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered*” (Gen. 13:16). But Abraham could never have imagined the number of children he would actually have, both Jews and Gentiles, through Jesus Christ. Two thousand years later, the number just keeps increasing.

Perhaps he finally understood what the Lord said to him after he was so disappointed that he was past childbearing age and still had no children. In a desperate prayer, Abraham lamented, “*Lord GOD, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?*” (Gen. 15:2). Never in his wildest imagination could he have dreamed of the answer. Eliezer would not be his heir; an heir would come from his own body!

Then God went a step further. He took him outside and gave him an unforgettable object lesson saying, “*Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them*” (Gen. 15:5). Abram must have been puzzled. Then the unbreakable promise was made: “*So shall your descendants be.*” In both belief and disbelief, Abram must have fallen to his knees in worship. Perhaps one of those faintly shining stars represented the future Messiah, “*the son of Abraham.*” One day, a caravan of wise men would see it shining in the East and come to worship.

Little did he realize, looking up at the stars that night, that the *Sun of Righteousness* would one day arise with healing in His wings. Little did he know the *Bright and Morning Star* would ultimately come down from the sky and shine so brightly that He would light the entire world. Anticipating the prophecy of Balaam, Abraham might have said, “*I see him but not now; I behold him but not near;*

a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17).

I wonder what he would say about the quiet way the promised seed eventually did come. Would he have marveled at how the eternal Son was planted in that small garden of Nazareth, in the virgin soil of Mary's womb? Would he have been absolutely dumbfounded that "our dear Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend, leaving riches without number, would be born within a cattle stall" (*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*, Charles Wesley)? Would he have wondered, "how silently, how silently the wondrous gift was given" (*O Little Town of Bethlehem*, Phillips Brooks)? No doubt, with pure wonder, he would have looked upon that "star of wonder, star of light, star of royal beauty bright" (*We Three Kings of Orient Are*, John H. Hopkins, Jr.) and rejoiced to see His day.

When many of the Jews were challenging Him, Jesus said, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad*" (John 8:56). In what way did Abraham see the day of Christ? He must have seen the promise "*afar off*," as the writer to the Hebrews puts it. He embraced it and was assured of it, dwelling in the land of promise, looking and waiting for the God who promised. With the eye of faith, Abraham saw the day of Christ—the evidence of things unseen—and the grand vision of it shaped his whole life.

Sarah, on the other hand, laughed when she overheard the angel announce that she and Abraham would be having a son in the coming year. Why did she laugh? She laughed in disbelief.

Evidently, she thought it was completely impossible for God to make a dead womb work again. She and Abraham were well advanced in age, "*past the age of childbearing*" (Gen. 18:11), and she had probably given up hope of ever having a child. Yet the God of hope had different plans.

Perhaps we should not be too hard on Sarah. After all, she had not yet witnessed many miracles. No deliverance from the Red Sea had occurred. No water had flowed from the rock. The walls of Jericho still stood firm. All those miracles awaited a future day. And certainly, Abraham had his weak moments too (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18).

Then again, could not the One who flooded the whole earth—the One who destroyed everything and made it flourish once again—make Sarah's womb conceive? Could not the One who plagued Pharaoh's house "*with great plagues*" (Gen. 12:17), in order to rescue her from his harem, also opened her barren


womb? Surely the One who made the waters teem with life could make her womb teem again?

The Lord then proceeded to exceed Sarah's expectations with His own incarnation. This time, He would do something that surpassed anything He had done in the past. He would produce a child without the participation of a man.

Although it had not yet been written, the advice Sarah needed to hear was this: "Ponder anew what the Almighty can do, if with His love He befriend thee" (*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation*, Joachim Neander). If God can create a world out of nothing, He certainly can create a child without the help of a man.

By contrast, when Mary heard the angel's news, she did not laugh. She believed that the "*power of the Highest would overshadow her*," and that the Holy Spirit would give her the power to conceive. Perhaps she had learned not to laugh from Sarah's story. Perhaps she remembered the Scripture that said, "*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given*" (Isa. 9:6). Perhaps her greatest hero in the Bible was Hannah, who had also received a miraculous child from the Lord.

Although the introduction of Abraham's seed into this world had been inaugurated with a miraculous conception by way of Sarah's dead womb, it culminated in a birth event even more miraculous, a birth from a virgin womb. What Sarah thought was impossible was only a foretaste of what God could do. He could and would do so much more. What Sarah thought was the end was only the beginning. What she thought was too hard for the Lord was easy for the Almighty.

Indeed, is anything too hard for Him? 

*"Look now toward
heaven, and count
the stars if you are
able to number
them." And He
[God] said to him,
"So shall your
descendants be."*

Genesis 15:5



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

God's Grace *to* Me

THE TESTIMONY OF MARK KOLCHIN

My testimony truly emphasizes the goodness and mercy of the Lord. I did not have the privilege of growing up in a Christian home. It was a good home in many ways, but Christ was not present. My mother divorced my father when I was very young, because he became interested in another woman. Years later, my mother told me that she read the Bible while she was going through this personal turmoil prior to my birth, even though she was not a believer at the time. I often think about the influence the Scriptures may have had on me even before I was born, and I wonder if this played a role in my becoming a Christian later and eventually entering "full-time" Christian ministry.

My mother eventually remarried a very nice, gentle man who was a self-employed auto mechanic. We did not have much money as I was growing up—actually, we were dirt poor—but I did not realize it, since it was just normal for me. However, I was always concerned when I had friends over to my house that they might trip over a transmission or some other auto part lying around in the backyard.

When I was seventeen, my life dramatically changed. During my childhood, no one in our family knew the Lord, though we attended a large Methodist church in a nearby town. I do not

recall ever hearing the gospel preached, but if it was, we were deaf to it. Eventually, our family lost interest and stopped attending.

For several years, we were part of the "unchurched" segment of society until an illness in our family providentially stirred interest in attending church again. At first, my ten-year-old sister began attending a Friday night Bible club hosted by a New Testament assembly in town. She had been invited by a friend who brought her one Friday night to earn points awarded to those who brought guests. There is value in adopting these kinds of incentives. My sister was the first in our family to profess faith in Christ after coming under the sound of the gospel. As a result, my mother then became interested in attending services on Sunday mornings. Part of the reason for this renewed interest in the things of God was my stepfather becoming gravely ill with colitis. It seemed he was at death's door.

This new turmoil in her life heightened her sense of needing the Lord's help and intervention. Once again, life's challenges proved instrumental in having a spiritual impact on our family. After the gospel was clearly and faithfully proclaimed, she also trusted the Savior, just as my sister had done the year before. Simply put, God was at work in our family. As a result, my mother encouraged me to attend youth group activities. At first, I was

very reluctant since I had my own circle of high school friends, but my mother countered by arranging to have a family from the assembly come over. Introductions were made, and a few days later, a member of this family followed up with a phone call to invite me to a youth group activity. The invitation caught me off guard, but I accepted. To this day, I don't know why I said yes, other than the Lord was directing my steps. With some reticence, a few nights later I hopped into a car with total strangers to head off to a youth group event, not knowing what to expect. God works in mysterious ways!

When I arrived at the home where the youth gathering was held, I witnessed a group of teens my own age who genuinely seemed to be enjoying themselves. It was obvious to me that these were a different kind of people. They were not like the friends I kept company with - friends who put each other down and strove for popularity. These teens were different in their attitudes and in the way they spoke to one another. They were very kind to me and included me in every activity that night. Near the end of the evening, someone shared a brief message from the Bible and closed in prayer. I do not recall what was said that night, but I do remember the effect: there was a warmth and friendliness toward me, and a joyful, spiritual atmosphere that filled the group. It made a deep impression on me, and there was no question in my mind that I wanted more.


This experience opened the door for me to visit that local assembly the following Lord's Day. What I witnessed was even more astounding. The preacher that day was easy to understand. The environment was bright and cheerful - no burning candles or somber atmosphere. When the speaker began his message, tears rolled down his cheeks, but that did not derail him from continuing. What a powerful impression it made on my soul. In time, after repeated visits, my spiritual eyes were opened, and I responded to the gospel. I too, joined my sister and mother in trusting Christ as my Savior.

In the years that followed, I took an active part in the life of this New Testament assembly. I participated in the youth group, then college and careers and regular Sunday morning services followed. There were Bible conferences and weekly gatherings to remember the Lord with like-minded believers. All these activities were vital aspects of my early development as a Christian. The constant spiritual encouragement I received from older brethren was truly a blessing and of inestimable value during my formative years as a young believer. It launched me into the Christian life and helped me understand that we all have a ministry and opportunities to serve the Lord, wherever we are and whoever we may be. In my estimation, this made up for not receiving the benefits of being raised in a Christian home.

After going off to college, I returned to reconnect at the place where I had come to know the Lord. I became involved in youth group leadership and later established a statewide College and Career fellowship in New Jersey. I enjoyed serving the Lord and bringing other believers together to enjoy fellowship and receive solid teaching from capable brethren in the Lord. I worked in secular business for several years and even pursued securities licensing for a career in financial planning—which was a major trend at the time. Financially and professionally, I was advancing in my career, but I always felt a greater interest in the activities of the local assembly and in serving in whatever way I could.

At times, I was given the opportunity to share in the ministry of the Word and enjoyed this, mainly because it forced me to study and come to know the Word. It was far more rewarding than climbing the corporate ladder. In time, I married my wife, Cindy, who was a graduate of Emmaus Bible College in Dubuque, Iowa. In 1993, after meeting with the elders, we were commended to the grace of God for the work of the ministry wherever He would lead us as we served Him by faith. In 1995, Cindy and I established "Know the Word Ministries" to offer conferences and special events to strengthen the Lord's people wherever they are.

Having now served the Lord by faith for over thirty years, we can truly say, *"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"* (1 Sam. 7:12). We have four grown children, all of whom have made a profession of faith in Christ. We enjoy a ministry that keeps us busy both at home and internationally through speaking, writing, serving on several Christian boards, and organizing conferences and special events for the Lord's people. Who would have thought that all this would come from a simple invitation to attend a youth group event many years ago? Only the goodness and mercy of the Lord can do these things. Praise His Name!

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy." Psalm 107:2 

**"I did not have the
privilege of growing up
in a Christian home.
It was a good home in
many ways, but Christ
was not present."**



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 to the Lord's work in 1993 from Bethany Bible Chapel in Toms River, NJ.

FOUNDATIONS *of the* FAITH

Winning Souls

"...As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'"

Romans 10:15

King Solomon, regarded as one of the wisest men who ever lived, said, *"He who wins souls is wise"* (Prov. 11:30). The term "evangelism" encompasses a variety of approaches to reaching people with the gospel. While the message of the gospel remains unchanged, its methods of communication are many. Furthermore, both men and women are called to participate in the task of evangelism. Many devoted women have become remarkable soul winners, both on the mission field and on the home front. Everyone can play a role as a link in the chain that brings others to the Lord.

In the early church, those scattered by persecution proclaimed the Word wherever they went, though Scripture does not specify the methods they employed (Acts 8:4). Each generation has developed distinct means of sharing the gospel. Previous generations saw great results from approaches that may not yield the same outcomes today. For instance, open air preaching was once highly effective in some countries, leading many to faith in Christ. However, in some countries government regulations permit this method only in a few designated places, making it largely impossible today.

Despite these changes, the present generation has wonderful opportunities to share the gospel through modern technology. Then, too, while some may consider older methods outdated, this is seldom the case. Lack of visible results from a particular method does not mean that the Lord is not working through such. Sometimes, methods from the past have ceased to bear fruit simply because they are no longer practiced.

Practical Ways to Evangelize

To my younger friends, one of the best ways to begin serving is by getting involved in your local church through Sunday School, Kids' Club, and children's camp ministries. Under the guidance of older believers, you will learn how to explain God's Word in

simple terms so that children can understand. This experience will build your confidence to share the truth with peers and others as opportunities arise.

To the faithful teachers who have spent years sowing the seed of God's Word in young hearts, you may never know the eternal impact of your efforts until you reach heaven. Many believers have come to faith later in life because of the Scriptures they learned as children.

Here are a few more suggestions for reaching others:

1. Door-to-door visitation, offering gospel tracts and Gospel of John booklets
2. Participation in community events, where your presence allows you to bear witness to those you meet
3. Welcoming new residents to your community with a basket, a new Bible, and a personal invitation to offer help in any way
4. Organizing regular community outreaches, such as monthly lunches for seniors, barbeques, car washes, and celebrations for holidays like Christmas, Easter, and family days
5. Visiting nursing homes which normally are grateful for church services or personal visits where you can simply sit and talk with residents
6. Using modern technology to share the Good News far beyond your local surroundings, reaching a global audience

Remember, you cannot do this in your own strength; you must rely on the Holy Spirit to work through you. Be encouraged that you may be a link in the chain of events that leads someone to salvation. Whether you are the first to speak to one about Christ, a connecting or even the final link, your role matters in God's plan to draw others to the Savior.

Opposition to Evangelism

Every athlete understands the necessity of overcoming opposition to achieve victory. Regardless of their preparation and training, they must recognize the nature of the opposition they face if they hope to succeed. In a similar way, those seeking to share their faith face a formidable adversary in Satan, who is relentless in holding on to those under his influence. Scripture speaks of his many names and roles within the kingdom of darkness. Notably, the Bible says, “. . . *For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works*” (2 Cor. 11:14-15). He is also described as the god of this world who has blinded the minds of the perishing 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*” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

After many years engaged in outreach, particularly door-to-door evangelism, I have observed that most responses people give can be grouped into recognizable categories. Careful reflection on these responses will help in preparing meaningful answers to those to whom we testify. These common responses include:

1. “There is no God”
2. “I have my own religion,” or “I attend my own church”
3. “I am too sinful to be saved; God could never forgive me.”
4. “I am a good person and do not need to be saved”
5. “There are too many hypocrites in the church”
6. “I was baptized in the church, so I am fine”
7. “Believing is too simple; surely there must be something more required”
8. “I have plenty of time to think about it later”
9. “If there is a God, why does He permit so much suffering in the world?”
10. “Christianity is just a crutch for people in trouble”

These are just a few of the objections you may encounter. Certainly, others can be added to the list. Thoughtful preparation to address such responses is crucial for anyone engaged in sharing the Christian faith.

Readiness to Evangelize

We can discuss this important subject at great length, but it is only when we put our words into action that a real impact is made. The old saying holds true: “actions speak louder than words.” Effective outreach begins with prayer, careful preparation, earnest pursuit, perseverance, and heartfelt praise to the One who has laid it on our hearts to reach the lost.

As followers of Christ, we serve as His ambassadors, committed to helping others to be reconciled to God. Just as an ambassador represents his homeland in a foreign country, we represent the Lord while traveling through this world—which is not our permanent home—as we seek to advance His interests here. In the song “The King’s Business,” E.T. Cassel wrote:

I am a stranger here within a foreign land
My home is far away upon a golden strand
Ambassadors to be to realms beyond the sea

I’m here on business for my King
This is the message that I bring
A message Angels faint would sing
O be ye reconciled
Thus saith my Lord & King
O be ye reconciled to God.¹

For those already engaged in this vital work, keep persevering! The window of opportunity for mankind to turn to the Lord and accept Him as personal Savior is rapidly closing, making our mission more urgent than ever. “*Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation*” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Evangelism Quotes

“To be a soul winner is the happiest thing in the world. With every soul you bring to Christ you seem to experience heaven here on earth.” C. H. Spurgeon

“The greatest form of praise is the sound of consecrated feet seeking the lost and helpless.” Billy Graham


“Today, Christians spend more money on dog food than missions.” Leonard Ravenhill

“We talk of the second coming of Christ while half of the world has never heard of His first coming.” Oswald J Smith

“If I thought I could win one more soul to the Lord by walking on my head, and playing the tambourine with my toes, I would learn how to do it.” William Booth

“The salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies of the world.” C S Lewis

“I would rather have people hate me with the knowledge that I tried to save them.” Keith Green

“*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*” (1 Thess. 2:19-20) 

ENDNOTES

¹Redemption Songs: 1000 Hymns and Choruses (London, UK: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., c. 1900), No. 75



by Jim Paul

Jim was commended to the work of the Lord by his assembly in Broxburn, Scotland in 1981 and by the Bridlewood assembly in Ottawa, Ontario in 1991. Jim has been involved in prison ministry, camp work, volunteer on call hospital chaplaincy, and has preached the Word throughout Canada and the US. He presently lives in Port Colborne, Ontario with his wife, Elizabeth.



Voices from the Past

JESUS THE SON OF GOD

These words stand out bold and clear as a statement of the Spirit of God which allows no kind of qualification. They bind together the humanity and the deity of our Lord. They present, in blessed union, His lowly name as Man and His divine title as God.

Their setting is exquisite. We read in Hebrews 4:14, *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, which is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."*

The enormous difficulty of maintaining the Christian profession, in power, is only too well known by the true believer. He has a profound sense of his own spiritual weakness and tendency to yield to the foe, so that he values, all the more, the care and support, the sympathy and succour of our Great High Priest, who has left us in an adverse world, has passed through the heavens, where, none the less, He sustains us in the path of faith, and who comforts us in all the tribulation of our heavenward journey. He is possessed of all power. We are to make a constant use of the throne of grace, in order to receive, thence, the grace and mercy needed for each and every exigency and trial. We may connect the mercy with the name of Jesus and the power with the Son of God.

A wonderful combination of words are these: *"Jesus the Son of God"*! It is not *"Jesus the Saviour of sinners,"* nor *"Jesus the Christ,"* nor *"Jesus the Head of His body the church,"* but *"Jesus the Son of God."* He comes before us in Deity.

But this dignity had already been noted of Him in the first chapter of this epistle. There we read that God has spoken to us by the Son (in Son); that He is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person; that He upholds all things; that He made expiation by Himself, and then sat down on high; that He receives the worship of angels; that He is saluted as God; that He created all things, and will, by and by, cause them to pass away, while He remains the same. He is God the Son as well as Son of God, Creator and Sustainer of all things. This prepares us for our Spirit-given phrase: *"Jesus the Son of God."*

How glorious His priesthood! How able is He to carry His people through, and how full of encouragement to them to hold fast their profession. He met their sins by expiation; He meets their infirmities by priesthood; but, whether in the work of expiation or in the execution of priesthood, it is in each case *"Jesus the Son of God."* For God He always was and God and Man He ever remains.

I need hardly say, however, that this Epistle to the Hebrews is not the only scripture which, in definite terms, declares His deity. If, in an ordinary biography, the writer happened to state, but once, that his subject was a scion of nobility, the reader would unquestionably accord him that distinction; but if the writer repeated the same statement and gave, at the same time, varied and incidental proofs of it, all uncertainty would be removed from the mind of the reader.

Further, if other and separate biographers, who, on account of the distance of time could not possibly have written their different books together, stated the same fact, then, surely, there could be no room for disbelief. *“At the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”*

First, in the very earliest chapter of Genesis we have an intimation of the plurality of the Persons, in the Godhead. *“Let us,”* we read, *“make man in our image, after our likeness.”* The statement is significant even though we are not given anything beyond the fact of plurality. But, here and there in the Old Testament, which rather teaches the unity of the Godhead than its trinity, we discover the existence of those three divine Persons who are explicitly and purposely and fully revealed to us in the New Testament.

If we turn to Psalm 110, spoken *“by the Holy Ghost”* (Mark 12:36), we find the words, *“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand”*; in Micah 5:2, *“A Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting”*; in Zechariah 13:7, *“My Shepherd ... My fellow, says the Lord of hosts.”*

In the pages of the New Testament the declaration is full. To acknowledge it is highest bliss; to deny it is fearful sin; only how necessary it is to apprehend the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, as indeed His manhood in its essential sinlessness, in a spirit of becoming reverence and lowly grace. Controversy thereon should be eschewed, and the simple and yet majestic truth accepted. Reason is beggared here. Revelation is worthy of the highest exercise of reason, and that is faith in what God has declared. For nothing is so rational as faith in God. *“Jesus the Son of God”* must be allowed to stand before the bowed and adoring heart, in all the dignity, glory, majesty, and deity, and His Person as *“God manifest in flesh.”*

In the close of the Gospel by Matthew we have the formula of Christian baptism. It is to be in the name of *“the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”* the Godhead in Trinity, and each Person is to receive equal honour in this initial rite. The dignity of Each is the same, as is the honour to be accorded. It will be remembered that, in the synoptic Gospels, the accounts of the baptism of Jesus are practically similar. *“My beloved Son”* is the salutation of the Father in each. In the Son the Father had found His pleasure. So in the


Transfiguration, He was again spoken of as the beloved Son, and was to be heard as such. It is still *“Jesus the Son of God.”*

The fourth Gospel introduces Him in deity—*“The Word was God”*! But the same Word *“became flesh”*—a brief, decisive statement of what we call the “Incarnation”—and, as such, He dwelt among us *“full,”* thank God, *“of grace and truth”*; and, as *“the only-begotten Son, which is (mark the word—it signifies subsisting there ever, and that as Son) in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”* How complete! Who but the Son of that bosom could adequately declare or express the Father? None but He! And so, in chapter 10, He affirmed that He and the Father were one. In chapter 8, He pronounced the eternity of His existence in saying: *“Before Abraham was I am.”* Later on, Thomas confessed Him as both Lord and God.

Passing on to Paul, once the inveterate hater of the name of Jesus, the very first thing he did after conversion was to preach in the synagogues: *“Jesus, that He is the Son of God”* (Acts 9:20, R.V.), and this initial text was only developed and emphasized during the course of his Christian ministry; for the Christ he ministered as Saviour, Lord, and Head of the church was also *“the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him”*—*“God manifest in flesh”* *“over all, God blessed for ever.”* His highest theme was the deity of Jesus.

Then Peter in his second epistle tells how he had been an eye-witness of the magnificence (is the word) of the Lord Jesus as seen on the holy mount, when he actually heard the voice of God the Father saying, *“This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”* Hence, to him, after such a vision, the glory of Christ, and His coming kingdom, was no *“cunningly devised fable.”* It was a mighty and all-controlling fact.

Finally, John, in closing his general epistle, says, *“We know that the Son of God is come ... and we are in Him that is true. This is the true God and eternal life.”*

Thus the deity of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is abundantly confirmed throughout the length and breadth of the Word of God. Such is the Great High Priest of our profession.¹ 

ENDNOTES

¹https://www.stempublishing.com/authors/J_Wilson_Smith/Jesus_the_Son_of_God.html

by **John Wilson Smith**
(1842 – 1922)



The Drink Offering

Like the burnt offering, drink offerings seem to have been offered before the giving of the Mosaic law. The first mention in Scripture of a drink offering is when Jacob returned to Bethel. While fleeing from his brother, the Lord had appeared to him in a dream (Gen. 28:17), confirming the covenant He had made with Abraham and later confirmed with Isaac. At that time, Jacob named the place “*Bethel*,” meaning “*house of God*.” Many years later, in obedience to the Lord, Jacob returned to Bethel and built an altar (Gen. 35:7). He named the place “*El Bethel*,” the God of Bethel, demonstrating that he had come to know the God of Bethel more deeply through both experience and direct revelation (Gen. 31:13). He now appreciated the Person more than the place. Later, after the Lord promised to give him the land He had guaranteed to Abraham and Isaac, Jacob poured a drink offering onto a pillar of stone, and then anointed it with oil (Gen. 35:14).

Wine, used for the drink offering, is symbolic of joy (Jdg. 9:13), and the act of pouring it out signified a deep sense of worship and thanksgiving. Later in Israel’s history, when the Lord judged His people for their idolatry, He rebuked them for pouring out their drink offerings to foreign gods (Jer. 7:18). Conversely, it was a time of joy when the drink offering of wine was poured out to God.

The drink offering is not mentioned again until the giving of the Law after the Lord had redeemed Israel out of Egypt. However, in the introduction of the five Levitical offerings with detailed instructions (Lev. 1-7), the drink offering is not mentioned. Even later, no specific instructions are given other than the measurement of wine to be used. The drink offering prescribed in the Mosaic Law, foreshadowed the joy which both God and man find in Christ Jesus.

Normally offered with the meal and burnt offerings, the drink offering was performed by completely pouring out a quantity of wine, at the base of the altar. None of it was to be consumed; it was all for God. A supplemental offering under the Mosaic Law, it was never commanded apart from a sacrifice.

The Lord instructed Moses that after the children of Israel entered the land, when anyone, whether native-born or alien, brought a burnt offering as a freewill offering, or for the appointed feasts (Lev. 23:13; Num. 28:16-29:40), or to fulfill a vow (Num. 6), or for the Sabbath and monthly offerings (Num. 28:9-15), they were also to bring a meal (grain) and drink offering. The amount of wine for the drink offering varied according to the size of the animal one chose to bring: one-fourth of a hin for a lamb or young goat; one-third of a hin for a ram; and one-half of a hin for a young bull (Num. 15:1-16). Estimates of the modern equivalency for a hin vary from about four to eight quarts. One-sixth of a hin was a day's supply of drinking water.¹ Similarly, the greater our sacrifice for the Lord, the deeper our appreciation will be of Him and greater will be our joy. The Lord takes great pleasure in us when we offer ourselves up as a living sacrifice in our service for Him (Rom. 12:1-2).

The Lord Jesus is our greatest example for He delighted in completely doing His Father's will. Even though it meant the cross He said, *"Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God"* (Heb. 10:9). Completely pouring out the contents of the drink offering symbolized Christ's complete surrender (Isa. 53:12). Since wine is symbolic of joy; in this context, it represents the absolute joy that the Son brought the Father through His sacrificial, obedient service.

Drink offerings of one-fourth of a hin of wine were to be offered daily with the morning and evening burnt offerings (Ex. 29:38-42; Num. 28:1-8). The burnt offering was entirely for God. The continual burnt offering typified Christ's constant and uninterrupted devotion to His Father during the entirety of His first advent (Isa. 53:12; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 9:14; 10:7-9) and the drink offering symbolized the joy accompanying it.

Drink, burnt, and grain offerings were presented with the sin offering for unintentional sins, *"then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one kid of the goats as a sin offering... And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering."* (Num. 15:22-31). Our faithful High Priest knows our weaknesses and when He makes us aware of sin, a peaceful joy follows upon confessing it, knowing He will always forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

The amount of wine offered in the drink offering was the same as the measurement of oil used in the grain offering (Num. 15:4-10). In His spotless life and in His death, Christ was always in perfect fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. After His baptism, the Lord was anointed by the Holy Spirit for ministry


with His Father's full approval (Matt. 3:16-17). John 3:34 says, *"For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure."* Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit in a way unlike any other person and the Father gave testimony to the pleasure He found in His Son. The Old Testament prophets and other individuals (Ex. 31:1-11) were temporarily anointed by the Spirit for specific purposes. Today, we know the help of the indwelling Spirit in ministry and in life, but none of us has ever had such a Spirit-filled ministry as Christ. Our omniscient Lord spoke the very words of God and demonstrated through His words, actions, and the whole tenor of His life that He was the wisdom and power of God (1 Cor. 1:24).

While sitting in prison, Paul rejoiced at the possibility that he might be poured out as a drink offering upon the Philippians' sacrificial service (Phil. 2:17). Then, a few years later, again in prison, Paul viewed his impending martyrdom as a drink offering poured out to God at the base of his many years of sacrificial service (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Looking back on our lives, can we likewise look forward to our departure with confidence and joy?

"The Lord Jesus personified the drink offering more than any other person. The prophet Isaiah said the Lord poured out His soul unto death."

The Lord Jesus personified the drink offering more than any other person. The prophet Isaiah said the Lord poured out His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12). Indeed, He shed His blood for us (Luke 22:20); He was poured out like water (Ps. 22:14); and He *"made Himself of no reputation"* temporarily veiling the visible manifestation of His glory (Phil. 2:7-8). The Lord Jesus demonstrated the joy of obedience in a way no other person ever did or could. It was not only a *future* joy awaiting Him in His glory (Heb. 12:2), but also a *present* joy in His suffering. He learned obedience through His suffering (Heb. 5:8), and He delighted to do the Father's will (Ps. 40:8). In spite of the cruelty He endured from man, He knew that His offering to

God was accepted and that it would bring redemption to those who believed upon Him. He was truly God's drink offering. Knowing this, He refused the wine offered to Him on the cross (Mark 15:23). The drink offering was not to be consumed but to be poured out.

We will experience the deepest joy during difficult times if we submit to His will. The knowledge of His will gives meaning to our circumstances and leads us to thank God for the hour He has given us. Like Christ, we can find joy in our suffering as we obey Him and anticipate our future joy in glory (Rom. 8:18). 

ENDNOTES

¹The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013), Olive Tree Electronic Edition

by George T Ferrier

ISSUES & ANSWERS

“SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES...”

JOHN 5:39

How should we interpret the parable the “pearl of great price?”


“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Matthew 13:45-46

The seven parables in Matthew 13 depict the Kingdom of Heaven. Within this Kingdom are those who merely profess to be Christians—false believers—as well as those who truly possess Christ and His salvation. Today, this Kingdom is represented by Christendom, comprised of both the true and the false. The above parable illustrates what is genuine and valued by the Lord Jesus.

There are two very distinct views regarding the meaning of this parable. One perspective suggests that it represents the unsaved searching for value and purpose in life. When the pearl of great price is found, that is, when someone discovers the Lord Jesus, it is worth giving up everything to receive Him as Savior. The other interpretation holds that the merchant is the Lord Jesus Himself, who gave everything to purchase what was most precious, the Church.

The second interpretation better fits the context of the chapter and the imagery presented. At the end of Matthew 12, the Lord’s earthly family is outside the house, seeking to speak with Him. The Lord Jesus responds by saying that His family consists of those who do the will of His Father. In Chapter 13, He leaves the house and goes down to the seaside, where He tells four parables describing the kingdom of heaven. In each of these parables, another force is at work: Satan snatching the seed, the enemy sowing tares, birds finding a place in the tree, and leaven being introduced into the meal. After telling these parables, the Lord goes back into the house and speaks to the disciples.

The second of the three parables told in the house is the “*One Pearl of Great Price*.” The context indicates a shift in what is valued in the Kingdom: the treasure in the field, the pearl, and the good fish. Although pearls are not mentioned in the Old Testament, they appear prominently in Revelation 21:21, where each of the twelve gates is made from a single pearl. The precious pearl in the parable was exceedingly valuable, and the merchant sold all he possessed to acquire it. This reflects the Lord Jesus, who gave everything—even His very life—to purchase us.

Devotionally, it is worth noting the following. The pearl is unique in that it is the only gem produced by a living creature. The oyster responds to a grain of sand that has penetrated its shell by secreting mother-of-pearl to coat the irritant. Thus, the gem is formed as a result of a wound in the oyster’s side. This serves as a reminder of the wounded side of the Lord Jesus and what was accomplished through it. The pearl also symbolizes the unity that exists in Christ—one body in the Lord—and the ongoing growth of the Church. The devotional insights associated with this story are truly valuable and precious. 



by **Gary McBride**

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

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A CALL TO PRAYER

PREPARED BY CHRIST

"Follow Me, and I will make you..." Matt 4:19



APRIL 13-17, 2026

We urge you to prayerfully consider participating in the Week of Prayer.

**Boulevard Bible Chapel
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In April 2025 the North American Week of Prayer theme ("Follow Me") was taken from our Lord's invitation to His disciples in Matthew 4. Throughout the week, we prayerfully followed the Saviour through various aspects of His earthly ministry, highlighting characteristics of His life that should be reflected in our own.

This year our intention is to pick up where we ended last year: "Follow Me and I will make you..." Not only was Jesus calling them to something great, He was also committing to the process of preparing them for greater usefulness. Join us this year as we prayerfully consider what it means to be a Church that is "Prepared by Christ"



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What Herald Is This

By Gordon Struve

What "herald" is this to a young maiden's ear
In the small town of Nazareth, so far from here.

"You shall bear a Son who will be mightiest of all
And the name JESUS is what He will be called."

Joseph too was told the glad news of the birth of a Son
But to Bethlehem they would travel for the expected One.

The city was packed, "No room in the Inn"
The manger housed creatures with animal skin.

The Shepherds were watching their sheep that night
When suddenly all around them there shone a great light!

Imagine the Shepherds surprise to be told of the Messiah's birth
There on the lonely hillside when Jesus came to earth.

They had no gifts to give the Babe; they came only to worship Him
But rejoiced at the sight because of the praise in the Angels' Hymn.

Far away were the three Wise Men involved in their daily affairs
But they loaded their camels with gifts. Their destiny? They were unawares.

They travelled far from the East to the city of Jerusalem
King Herod helped them on the way to the town of Bethlehem.

Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, were the gifts these wise men did bring
To give to the young Child, Israel's newly born King.

God manifest in the flesh, the Savior of the world is born
From the humble manger scene for the entire world to adorn.

God's Gift to mankind is He, for God you see, is Love
And gave the best that He had. Jesus Christ came from above.

The gifts, decorations, foods, and such are special at this time of year
But Faith in the Baby of Bethlehem—God's Son—will bring your salvation near.

