

EXALTING CHRIST · EQUIPPING BELIEVERS · EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

CORNERSTONE

MAY-JUNE 2026



HARD LESSONS *from an* EARLY PATRIARCH

Kept, Safely Kept

It's a Boy!

...and more

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

From the Editor

Trials and Tribulations

"...Greetings. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials." James 1:1-2



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.


A young college student had her scholarship cut, a family member fell seriously ill, and someone at school spread slander about her. During her daily Bible reading, she read James 1:1–4 and began to see her trials as a testing ground for her faith. She chose to keep trusting God, praying, and serving. By the end of the semester, she was not the same person. Her suffering had not vanished, but through it she became *"mature and complete, lacking nothing"* (v.4, HCSB), the kind of character that only tested faith can produce.

The Greek salutation translated as *"Greeting"* is written in the imperative and conveys the idea of "keep on rejoicing," corresponding with the ensuing phrase *"count it all joy."* In Christ's strength, we are to count (esteem)¹ trials as a cause to rejoice (Acts 5:41). Consider three reasons why we should "keep on rejoicing" in all circumstances of life—even the difficult ones.

First, suffering is a gift from God. Philippians 1:29 says, *"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."* *"Charizomai"* translated as *"granted"* means to "to grant as a favor." It comes from *"charis,"* translated as *"grace"* in Ephesians 2:8: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith..."* Both our salvation and our trials are gifts, a demonstration of God's grace. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above"* (Jam. 1:17). The Lord gives and permits tribulations for our spiritual benefit and His glory. Though often difficult, each trial is granted by a loving Father and is specifically designed for us.

Next, we are called to follow the path of our Savior who said, *"Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"* (Luke 24:26) First Peter 2:21 says, *"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps."* Like Christ, we are not of this world, and this invites suffering (John 17:14; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:3-4). We are on the road to glory but in this world we will experience tribulation (John 16:33). One might object and say that we are blessed to live in a nation that guarantees religious freedom. So did Job. Yet, he became a target because he was a believer. He had no idea of the conversations between our sovereign God and the devil (Job 1-2). Though not always obvious or stated openly, the thorn in the flesh, employment layoff, or tragic loss we experience may result from our identification with Christ.

Last, trials promote spiritual growth and equip us to serve Him. James 1:3–4 says, *"knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."* For example, someone who has experienced the tragic loss of a loved one is equipped to comfort another person who is experiencing a similar grievous trial (2 Cor. 1:3-4). They can identify with and be empathetic toward them.

Suffering is a means through which God instructs (Ps. 119:65–71), disciplines (Heb. 12:5–11), trains in obedience (Heb. 5:7–8), prevents pride (2 Cor. 12:7–9), gives assurance (1 Pet. 4:13–14), refines, and conforms us into the image of Christ. It is the pathway to spiritual maturity, producing endurance, character, and hope (Rom. 5:3–5). Suffering serves as a powerful witness to the world, demonstrating the sustaining grace of God and the reality of a hope that transcends present circumstances. The promise of resurrection, glorification, and eternal fellowship with God provides the ultimate assurance that suffering will not have the final word. Peter reminds us that we not only have an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance reserved for us in heaven, but that we are also kept by the power of God in our present circumstances (1 Pet. 1:3–5). We have a living and certain hope of being with and like Christ, and in this we greatly rejoice (v.6). 

¹Complete Word Study Dictionary (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2013), electronic version

Managing Editor:

George T Ferrier, editor@cornerstonemagazine.org

Editorial Committee:

George T Ferrier, Ontario, Canada
David Dunlap, Florida, USA
Brian Gunning, Ontario, Canada
Mark Kolchin, New Jersey, USA
Craig Shakarji, Maryland, USA

Advisory Council:

Rick Morse (Nova Scotia, Canada)
Fred Schwertfeger (Wisconsin, USA)

Proofreading Assistants:

Richard and Virginia Strout, Florida, USA

Address Changes or New Subscriptions:

subscriptions@cornerstonemagazine.org

News & Notices:

Submit online at cornerstonemagazine.org/news or
email: news@cornerstonemagazine.org

Design and Layout:

Hosanna Milbrath

Website Design:

Matt Williams, Louise Street Marketing

Treasurer:

Eileen Lee (USA) • George T Ferrier (Canada)

Accountant:

Eileen Lee (USA) • Brian Gunning (Canada)

www.cornerstonemagazine.org

Donations:

U.S. Donors: please send gifts to
Cornerstone Magazine Inc.
PO Box 690096, Charlotte, NC 28227

Canadian Donors: please send gifts to
Cornerstone Magazine Trust
PO Box 246, Waterford, ON, N0E 1Y0

Online Donations and e-Transfers: please visit
www.cornerstonemagazine.org

Purpose: *Cornerstone Magazine* seeks to build up and encourage the Lord's people by publishing Bible teaching articles and reports of the Lord's work. Its aim is to present truth in words that are easy to understand in regard to the person of Christ, His church, and evangelism. *Cornerstone Magazine* does not intend to be the official voice of any group of churches. The editor takes responsibility for the content that is published. For any spiritual blessing, to God be all the glory.

Copyright: *Cornerstone Magazine* is copyrighted only to preserve the integrity of the material. All rights reserved. Articles may be translated into other languages and used in English periodicals, provided no changes are made to the sense of the article, while showing a credit line "— *Cornerstone Magazine*." Sorry, unsolicited manuscripts cannot be acknowledged or returned. Printed in USA.

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

All Scripture quotations are from the KJV or NKJV unless otherwise indicated.

Photo credits: Adobe Stock

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 Hard Lessons from an Early Patriarch

Sam Thorpe

4 Kept, Safely Kept

Adrian and Audrey Ferguson

6 It's a Boy!

James and Elizabeth Heikoop

10 Foundations of the Faith

Jim Comte

12 Taking the Jonah Assessment for my Ministry

Viji Roberts

14 Generational Curses?


Alexander Kurian

16 Issues & Answers

Gary McBride

17 News & Notices

HARD LESSONS from an EARLY PATRIARCH



AS you open the Book of Job, you discover that God chose a righteous man who was full of pride, and that His method of bringing brokenness and humility to Job was through suffering. Chapters 1 and 2 establish the foundation for this divine work, which is shrouded in mystery and unanswered questions. God uses man as His imperfect instrument to bring beauty out of ashes. Admittedly, this book is difficult to read, but what is even more challenging is accepting the personal application of the Book of Job to our own lives.

Job Was a Real Person (1:1-5)

- He is mentioned alongside Noah and Daniel (Eze. 14:14)
- He was a native of Uz, in present-day Iraq
- He lived between the time of the Tower of Babel and the call of Abraham
- He was a very wealthy and respected judge in his region
- He was extremely righteous in the eyes of God and devoted to the worship of Jehovah

Questions Raised

- Does God promise to protect us from the devil?
- How do God and Satan share an audience together?
- Why was God's hand so heavy upon Job?
- Why do some righteous, godly saints undergo severe tragedies?
- How do we know if our troubles are from God or Satan?
- What was God's purpose in releasing Satan's power on Job?
- What are the lessons of Job for New Testament believers?

The author of the Book of Job is unknown, yet we accept it as God's inspired voice. Since Job lived 140 years after the events

described in the book, he is considered the most likely author. It is evident that God's hand upon him produced a humble spirit, enabling him to record the dialogue, even when it was not always complimentary to himself.

The Purpose of Writing

- To reveal the character and mysteries of God with mankind
- To show the kind of trust He wants His children to have
- To reveal His favor toward His own and His control over Satan
- To show why the righteous may suffer and the ungodly benefit
- To accomplish these things, God chose to use pain
- Pain is expressed on three levels: Physical, Mental, Spiritual

To address the problems of pain and suffering, we must accept who God is. This acceptance determines what He does and therefore calls us to trust Him without reservation. The best example can be seen in Job's response to the two horrific trials he experienced.

In response to his loss of wealth and family we read: *"Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.'" In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong*" (1:20-22).

To the loss of his personal health, respect, and position in the community we read: *"So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. Then*

his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (2:7-10).

I doubt that many of us have experienced this level of suffering. This may explain why God permitted Satan to go to such extremes in his attack on Job. By doing so, we can all, in some measure, relate to the trials God allows in our own lives. If Job could respond in this way, we ought to pay attention to our own responses before God.

Lessons From Job's Experiences

1. Asking "Why me God?" is not wrong; it is a very natural and expected response (3:11-12). However, demanding that God immediately answer that question is wrong (13:22). At some point, He may choose to reveal the reason, whether sooner, later, or perhaps never.
2. God's ways are far above our own; He has many eternal purposes. He may choose to use trials for disciplinary reasons or as an example to others who are suffering. He may have even greater purposes, such as allowing the glory of God to be manifested, as in the case of the blind man (John 9) or the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11).
3. He may use a period of suffering to draw someone closer to Himself, revealing the issues that hinder intimacy with Him. It took many difficult conversations for Job to gain a clearer understanding of God and himself. Through the trials and sufferings of life, he was drawn into a deeper relationship with God
4. Sorrow and loss are normal experiences in this fallen world influenced by sin (Gen. 3:16-19). Sorrow is validated as a natural response; yet as believers, we do not grieve like those who have no hope. Christ Himself was "A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3-4, 10-12a)
5. We can be thankful for God's loving and caring administration of the trials and suffering we face (I Thess. 5:16-18). Just as with the sparrows of the field, His eye is always upon us; He watches each step, and when we fall, He picks us up (Ps. 37:23-24)
6. All that we have belongs to God. Everything we possess will be left behind when we depart this life. Anything we have can be lost before we leave this world. Even if God's sovereign actions bring us sorrow and loss, He is still worthy of all our worship and praise
7. We can rest securely in the arms of the One who has "all things" under control and does "all things" well. We can learn to thank God for everything He brings into our lives, not just the good (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:15; 1 Thess. 5:18)

An overview outline of Job presents three truths that can broaden our understanding of God and His purposes in the suffering and trials we experience:

- I. A Sovereign God controls all the actions of Satan and his evil plans. "And the LORD said unto Satan..." (2:6)
- II. The common person fails to see God's hand behind all things. "Then said his wife...curse God and die" (2:9)
- III. The spiritual man accepts all things from the hand of God. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and...not receive evil" (2:10)

These principles form a broader perspective, a God-sized view of His dealings with us, just as He did with Job. God's sovereign hand is in control of the world and Satan (2:6-7). Satan has blinded the eyes of mankind with his limited control of the world (2:9).

Faith in the sovereign God opens our eyes to His hand at work (2:10).


The life and Book of Job go on to reveal the blessings of God upon this man's life: a doubling of material wealth, a fully restored family life, and a reunion with extended family and friends. There is a biblical principle portrayed in the life of Job that also serves as a prophetic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ—suffering first and then glory! For every suffering saint, the promise of glory is held up before them.

"TO ADDRESS
THE PROBLEMS
OF PAIN AND
SUFFERING, WE
MUST ACCEPT
WHO GOD IS."

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:16-17).

Whether it is short-term or lifelong, as the Lord wills, God offers a double blessing to the suffering believer:

1. Our suffering, whether through outward physical or emotional trials, brings about a daily renewal of our spirit. As we continue to endure these hardships, the process shapes us to become more like Christ inwardly.
2. Our suffering has a predetermined endpoint, which may come after a short time or even a lifetime. Yet, what awaits us at the end is an "eternal weight of glory."

Now that is worth the pain and suffering! 



by Sam Thorpe

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

KEPT, SAFELY KEPT

IN 1994, I had the immense joy of marrying Audrey. We had been friends throughout our teenage years, and this friendship developed into love, nurtured by our mutual devotion to the Lord and His people. Audrey's father was the first person to share the Gospel with our family, which had a transformative impact on us, and I was saved as a boy of nine attending Sunday School. Audrey became a Christian at the age of eight, and she also attended the same Sunday School. As a young couple, we barely knew what trials were. Life was vibrant, filled with boundless energy and many happy adventures. The early years of our marriage were also spent serving God and His people. It was our joy to try to reach children for Christ and to help with the youth work in Perth. Yet, in 1996, our lives changed dramatically. Just as we received the exciting news that Audrey was pregnant, her health took a terrible turn for the worse. Her lungs began to collapse, leaving her fighting for every breath. This became the pattern over the next five months as we entered a period of deep and painful uncertainty, followed by a devastating diagnosis. The doctor telephoned to communicate the results: Audrey had a rare and incurable lung disease called Lymphangioliomyomatosis (LAM). We searched for light in the darkness, but the doctor's words sadly brought little hope to our sorrow. The life expectancy for those with this disease was approximately five years. A single phone call had changed our lives forever.

To stabilize Audrey's condition and help her lungs remain inflated, she underwent urgent surgery. The procedure required anaesthesia, but tragically, recovery from the anaesthetic induced

premature labor. In the theatre recovery ward, Anna Joy Ferguson was born. For the next eight days, we experienced the deepest lows and the highest highs, but on the eighth day, our only child, Anna, left our hands for Eternal and stronger arms. We remembered the words of King David, who, having endured a similar experience, said in 2 Samuel 12:23, "*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*"

We left the hospital with broken hearts, no baby, and Audrey still desperately ill. It brought us to the lowest point in our lives; yet God had not abandoned us! As we passed through a prolonged period of grief, we struggled to lift our spirits; but then a remarkable invitation came. A servant of the Lord, Arthur Pollard, who had both officiated at our wedding and conducted Anna's funeral, stood with us in our grief. He invited Audrey and me to come as leaders to a Christian camp that he organized. We were the most unlikely leaders, suffering grief and bereft of our own child, yet it was exactly what God provided for us. Within minutes of arriving at camp, we were able to tell a young boy of the Savior's love and His wonderful grace. For the next 20 years, we were privileged to help run camp work and, despite our limitations, great blessing was seen over the years. God gave us the abundant provision of thousands of "children," a much larger family than we could ever have expected.

Treatments for Audrey's progressive disease, however, were unsuccessful, and her breathing continued to deteriorate. By 2008, her only hope for survival was a lung transplant. This treatment with extremely high risks, is considered only when life



expectancy is less than a year. The nearest transplant centre was in the north of England, at least three hours' drive away. Audrey was placed on the transplant waiting list, patiently hoping for a suitable organ to become available. Once again, we found ourselves on an emotional rollercoaster, frequently spending late nights driving the long hours to the hospital, only to be sent home for various reasons. After eight false alarms, Audrey was finally matched with a suitable lung. I remember the excitement as the transplant went ahead, and the peace that came from the Lord, never allowing myself to consider that this could be the last time I saw Audrey alive.

When the surgery was completed, instead of the good news of success, the clinical team were deeply concerned for Audrey. The transplanted lung had failed to function, and the harsh reality was that she was within hours of death. Professor Dark, a world-renowned surgeon, gave one final examination – but he offered little hope. By this time, a small team of praying Christians had arrived at the hospital. Our friend Jim McMaster, well known as a prayer warrior, was on his knees in earnest prayer when the surgeon approached after surgery. Respectfully, he waited for Jim to finish praying, then stated, “Your prayers have been answered. Remarkably, Audrey’s new lung has started to work.” The new lung had suffered a reperfusion injury, and normally patients with this condition did not survive. God had intervened, and this marked the beginning of an amazing road to recovery.




Returning home had once seemed a distant hope, but after 25 days in intensive care and a further three weeks in the high dependency unit, Audrey was finally home. The following months were devoted to rebuilding her strength and adapting to life with a transplanted lung. Throughout those days of recovery, Audrey experienced a profound sense of God’s help, and her weakness caused her to depend even more on the strength of the Lord.

With Audrey’s strength returning and a renewed sense that the Lord had preserved her for a reason, we were able to resume serving the Lord, even returning to run the camp and help with other youth activities. New opportunities also began to open up for us, including sharing the story of the transplant and telling others about the miraculous events that occurred when God’s people prayed. We have often observed that God’s plans are not always

exactly as we wish, but they are precisely what we need. Our God keeps the planets in orbit and our breath in His hand; He knows exactly which plans are right for us. It is inevitable that we will all pass through storms in life; these are unavoidable, and they often arrive uninvited. We need a sure and certain foundation to protect us when everything is uncertain around us. The Lord Jesus is described as a “rock” (1 Cor. 10:4); He is also called the “foundation” (1 Cor. 3:11). Christianity is not a theoretical activity for those who live in a rarefied, cloistered environment; it is the greatest bedrock upon which we can build our lives. Ordinary people can live extraordinary lives, with the Lord as our rock.

“Ordinary people can live extraordinary lives, with the Lord as our rock.”

Transplants offer no guarantees, and although Audrey has been blessed with an additional 17 years and has led a remarkably active life, she is now experiencing reduced breath and energy and requires full-time oxygen. This has curtailed some activities, yet she has managed to continue certain tasks from home. In Scotland, we are privileged to conduct Christian assemblies in schools as part of the approved curriculum. Audrey undertakes all the secretarial duties for this work and has arranged over one hundred school visits in this academic year, enabling thousands of children to hear biblical truth that they might not encounter elsewhere. In 2026, she hopes to expand this work further by inviting the children to a Bible exhibition in the Gospel Hall.

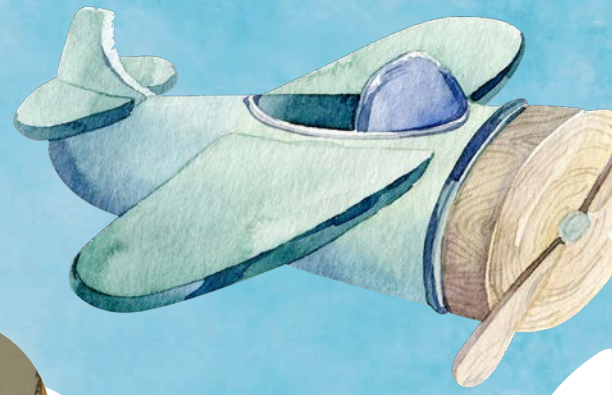
In 2011, we wrote a short book entitled “Kept, Safely Kept” to document the experiences we had encountered throughout our lives. A few copies may still be available from Christian bookshops, but we hope to reprint it in 2026. By sharing our story, we hope it will encourage you, reminding you that God hears and answers our prayers, that He is faithful, and that He walks with us through every circumstance of life. 



by Adrian and Audrey Ferguson

Adrian and Audrey Ferguson live in Perthshire, Scotland, and worship with the Christians at Perth Gospel Hall. Audrey was a banker in Scotland’s largest bank and Adrian has worked in computer support in the Electricity Industry for nearly 30 years. He serves on the oversight at Perth Gospel Hall and preaches in Gospel Halls and school assemblies in Scotland. For a more detailed account of their story, “Kept, Safely Kept” is available at Gospel Folio Press and other Christian book stores.

IT'S A Boy!



"It's a boy!" I gazed at my new son with excitement after a difficult and premature labor. His unusually shaped head caught me off guard as I noticed his large eyes open wide, as if to say, "I made it this far, Mom, now it's up to you." There was only quietness, no cry or first breath, only a sudden flurry as the doctors and nurses from all over the ward rushed in to save our baby.

Reflecting on some of the more dramatic events from the past few years, I am reminded of how God instructed the children of Israel to build Ebenezers, stones of remembrance, on their journey to the Promised Land. Whether it was supernatural miracles or everyday faithfulness, it is through remembering and retelling those stories that faith is strengthened. In doing so, we can thank God, give Him the glory, and keep pressing on. All these memories of what God has brought us through so far, are some of our family's stones of remembrance.

Both James and I came from godly Christian homes, where children were seen as great blessings. We each came to Christ as children and rededicated our lives to Him in our early teens. Despite living many provinces apart—Ontario and Alberta—we met through some mutual friends, and after a long-distance relationship, were married in 2008.

God blessed us with wonderful children, our sixth being Jason—our first son with special needs, Down syndrome.



Michael Andrew

Michael meaning "Who is like God"

Suddenly, a new world opened to us, filled with a lot of joy and some extra challenges that came with this baby. We almost lost him at nine days old after he became septic from a perforated bowel. Weeks spent in the hospital and having family watch over our other children were challenging at the time, but we never dreamed what God would allow just a few years later. Appointments and therapies began as we settled into a new routine with Jason. We cheered him on as he reached his milestones, soaking in his cuteness while encouraging him to try new things.

Then God gave us a sweet daughter, and everything about her and her birth was refreshingly normal. During the time when our world changed with Covid, our next baby (number eight) arrived.

He arrived five weeks early at our local hospital, unlike our previous home births. What a lifesaving gift that would turn out to be. During labor, God brought to mind a favorite song, "The Lord is My Salvation," which I clung to as my spirit felt unsettled about this birth. Then, as soon as he was born, he opened his big eyes and looked at me. He couldn't breathe. They whisked him to the other side of the room, where nurses and doctors rushed in for a "Code Pink," spending eleven minutes resuscitating him. We were in shock. An ultrasound had been done just a couple of hours before birth, and nothing had indicated the physical deformities we now saw.

We named him Michael Andrew – Michael meaning "Who is like God" and Andrew, after one of my brothers. We wondered

if it would be a good fit for him, but weeks later, we saw such confirmation.

I would not be able to hold him until two days later, and our seven children would not meet him for six and a half months. We were transferred to McMaster Children's Hospital in Hamilton, ON, just a few hours after his birth, beginning an entirely new medical journey. The doctors did not know which genetic skeletal disorder Michael had, so they sent his DNA off for testing. However, they suspected it was a fatal condition and that he would only have weeks to live. That first day, we took turns holding his hand through the incubator, overwhelmed with grief. Due to Covid protocols, James and I were never allowed to be together at his bedside. We would switch off, trying to soak in every minute we had.

God surrounded us with so many people who cared for us and prayed for us. Our dear church family held an online prayer service for Michael, and what a blessing that was. We are still amazed by how many people from all over the world say they continue to pray for Michael and our family.

A couple of weeks into our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) life, a nurse allowed James to sit with me for 15 minutes while I held Michael. Through tears, we sang "Jesus Loves Me" and his song, "The Lord is My Salvation." The chorus, coincidentally, echoes the meaning of Michael's name—"Who is like the Lord our God, strong to save, faithful in love..." It was such a special gift to be together with Michael, but it hurt so much. We wanted to keep him so badly, yet we held him up to the Lord.

Whenever I held him, I was not allowed to move. If his breathing tubes came out, they probably would not have been able to intubate him again before he died. It took two staff members to move him into my eager arms, so I would hold him as long as I could. It was a heavy time, but it was also a time when we felt God hold us extra close through the pain.

At six weeks old, we received his diagnosis—Bent Bone Dysplasia—which means every bone in his body is curved or bent. It is extremely rare, with very little data available; only thirteen recorded cases, most of whom had died, had been aborted, or had been let go for various reasons. We later discovered that, at the time, there were only three other children in the world with this condition.

The main concern the doctors had was whether his misshapen rib cage would grow and accommodate his lungs or suffocate him. Michael had many other complications, including a very small airway, the need for a permanent feeding tube, and numerous

cranial vaulting and reconstructive surgeries ahead. They offered us "options," such as termination, and that was when the gospel was shared with the medical staff. God gave us the words, and even in our grief, His good news went out. We also explained that his life is made in God's image and that we wanted to fight for him. Plans were made for a tracheotomy, and what a day that was, seeing his little face with no tubes for the first time. And praise God, at least up to this point, his ribs have grown right along with him.

God continued to do so many wonderful things at the hospital, giving His peace and strength when I felt exhausted. After hours of holding Michael and pumping, I would head to the restroom, banging my hands on the stall and crying, "How can I keep going? How long can we be separated as a family?" All the while, I wondered how long we would have with him. I even started to plan a few things for his funeral. But dear Jesus kept us, providing what we needed. We continued homeschooling with the help of different babysitters as well as family. Meals and gift cards were given, sometimes from people we had never met.

One night, early in our hospital stay with Michael, James was reading the Psalms when these verses from Psalm 35:9-10 stood out to us: "*Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord, exulting in his salvation. All my bones shall say, O LORD, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?*" (ESV)

God gave us such assurance with this Scripture! First, it was saying that our *soul*, not our deformed or broken body, that *will* rejoice in the Lord, exulting in HIS salvation, This reminded us again of the song He kept in my heart during labor.

And second, "*all my bones shall say, O LORD who is like you...*" Michael's name means "*Who is like God?*" All his curved and imperfect bones, which the doctors worried would not sustain life, now proclaim, "*Who is like God?*" Michael's life declares God, from his name to his broken body. God can and will use whatever He desires to proclaim and glorify Himself.

To bring Michael home, we had to train at the hospital for four months. Another person was required to train with us, and the Lord provided through a dear sister-in-law. We also had to secure night nursing, as he would need 24/7 care at home, and we would need sleep. Despite it being during Covid, God made a way when there seemed to be no way. I posted his picture and request online, and after about 1,300 shares in a week or so, we had 30 nurses interested. I brought that list back to the hospital, and they were shocked and asked, "How?" I said, "It was God." Eventually,

“Michael’s life declares God, from his name to his broken body. God can and will use whatever He desires to proclaim and glorify Himself.”



The Heikoop FAMILY

“Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord, exulting in his salvation. All my bones shall say, O LORD, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?” Psalm 35:9-10 (ESV)



The Heikoop Family Interview

To watch the interview of the Heikoop family, scan the QR code or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Uxq9ROFqvo>

we had the eight or nine nurses that we needed, and they were an amazing fit, as have been all the nurses we have hired since then.

Finally, we brought him home, and it was one glorious day! Meeting his siblings for the first time was amazing. We knew we might only have a few months together, but he just kept thriving and surpassing everyone's expectations. His medical care added an extra three hours of work to my day, but it was absolutely worth it.

After a few months at home, he started to push himself up onto his hands, then began sitting up at 18 months. He walked around furniture at 2, and at 2.5 years old, he took his first steps. We kept being amazed. In January 2024, he came off the ventilator during the daytime, which was a huge step, one we never dreamed of. We were much more mobile without having to lug that vent wherever we went. Michael is very smart, and while nonverbal because of his trach, he is learning American Sign Language (ASL) and uses Augmentative and Alternative Communication on his iPad. He understands pretty much everything you say and is now being homeschooled three mornings a week by a couple of dedicated nurses. He has the best sense of humor and loves to show us what he has learned. Chris, from YouTube's "Special Books by Special Kids," recently interviewed Michael and our family, which was a wonderful experience (scan the QR code on the previous page to watch the interview).

Our church family has been incredibly supportive. Even during church services, when alarms went off while he was on the vent, everyone was so gracious—we would sit at the back, trying to be as quiet as possible. They always included him and cheered him on.


We went through some frightening times at home, the first and worst being on Michael's one-year anniversary at home. His vent tubes became tangled, pulling out his trach and causing him to completely lose his airway. We did what we had been trained to do, but when your son is pale and unconscious, only God can bring him back without any permanent damage. We cried out to Him while resuscitating Michael and waiting for the ambulance, and Michael recovered incredibly. Another time, I was home with the children when he pulled off his trach ties, and we had to resuscitate him again. Praise God for His mercies. Our children have been amazing as we have navigated both emergencies and daily care. They have learned how to suction and clear his airway, even our nine-year-old can do it. Even our two-year-old tells me when "Michael needs a suction." Now, with two brothers who have special needs, they have truly risen to the challenge of loving and treating them well, yet the same. There have been many sacrifices for each of them, but they are all so proud of and grateful for their little brothers.

I constantly find myself operating with my mind and adrenaline working harder than I'd prefer. As a mom, you already have those proverbial "eyes in the back of your head," but now my ears have become like "elephant's ears," always attuned to Michael's breathing, the alarms, or his silent cries. Even in the middle of the night, I'll sit up in a panic when I hear an alarm go off. I know his night nurse is watching him, but my heart still races. The trauma is real, and it's such a delicate balance to trust God completely while also remaining fully aware of whether Michael is breathing and safe. Life has become much more complicated, and at times, it's lonely since I have had to step away from being as involved in our church as I once was. Nevertheless, I know that God has called me to the ministry of my family and to be faithful in that.

When Michael began walking, I tried hard to see it as a potentially temporary gift. Another child in the United Kingdom with this condition often fractures his bones and is no longer mobile. I hoped that would not happen to us. But this past year, Michael has fractured both of his legs and his right arm. After the first leg break, it took six months for him to walk again, and then, eight months later, another leg break occurred. We are in

the early stages of walking again, and I am once more holding that gift loosely, knowing he may eventually be wheelchair-bound. Allowing him to be as mobile and independent as possible, without being helicopter parents, especially since we have nine other children, is a daily challenge.

We have no idea what the future holds for any of us. However, when you are working hard to keep your son alive, it makes you treasure the gift of life that much more, not to mention the excitement of the joy and wholeness of heaven. Each day, I am learning a little more about what faithfulness looks like, both in God's example to me and in what I am called to do. He who has called us is faithful

to complete it, whether it is here or in heaven. We are called to be faithful with whatever He gives us, remembering what He has done so that our faith is made stronger and He is glorified. 

“We are called to be faithful with whatever He gives us, remembering what He has done so that our faith is made stronger and He is glorified.”



by James and Elizabeth Heikoop

James and Elizabeth fellowship at Bethel Park Bible Chapel in Brantford, Ontario. James serves on the oversight, and is in the early years of running his own company, Boxer. Elizabeth is at home with their 10 children (ranging from 1-16 years) and they manage three Airbnbs on their property.



FOUNDATIONS *of the* FAITH

PRAYING IN THE **NAME** *of our* **LORD JESUS CHRIST**



As a child, I learned the importance of praying in the Name of the Lord Jesus from my parents and from godly men as they prayed publicly. In recent years, I have noticed some brethren closing their prayers with a simple “Amen.” Yet it is through Christ that we have fellowship with the Father, and it is in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ that we can pray to Him. Knowing Christ is our great High Priest and Advocate allows us to approach God confidently. Praying in Jesus’ Name aligns our requests with His will and purpose, ultimately bringing glory to the Father.

It was the Teaching of the Lord Jesus

In the Upper Room, in response to Philip’s request, “*show us the Father,*” the Lord answered that He perfectly manifested the Father, proclaiming His deity and unity with the Father (John 14:8-9). He assured them that He will listen to their prayers and graciously answer them: “*And whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My Name, I will do it*” (vv.13-14). Notice that He says twice that they must ask in His Name. In John 15:16, the Lord again instructed His disciples to pray in His Name, indicating that requests are made based on His merit and authority rather than our own, aligning our requests with His will rather than using it as a magic formula.

The central theme of John 16:23-28 is prayer. In John 16:23 the Lord says, “*And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My Name He will give you.*” Again, in verse 24, “*Until now you have asked nothing in My Name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*” Still again in verse 26 “*In that day you will ask in My Name...*” The phrase “*In that day*” refers to the giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)

and the present Church Age. He is now our Great High Priest, and “*He always lives to make intercession*” for us (Heb. 7:25).

The Greek word *aiteō* for “ask” in verses 23, 24, and 26 speak of an inferior seeking something from a superior. This word is never used to describe Christ asking or praying to His Father. Instead, the Greek word “*erōtaō*” is used when Christ prays to the Father (14:16; 16:26b). He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father (John 10:30), while we come to the Lord as inferiors, asking and seeking His blessing.

Asking in His Name signifies that the Veil has been torn open and we have direct access to the Father, through the Name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord was telling His disciples that He would soon no longer be physically present with them to ask Him questions. Instead, they would be able to ask the Father in Jesus’ Name, and He would answer their prayers for Christ’s sake.

It was the Practice of the Early Church

Peter, preaching in Acts 2:38, said, “...Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ...” First, there must be repentance from sin for salvation, followed by baptism as an act of obedience and identification with the Lord.

In Acts 3:1–10, Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer and met a beggar who had been lame from birth. The beggar asked them for alms, and Peter confidently said, “*Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*” Had Peter simply said, “Rise up and walk” the beggar would never have been healed. The authority and power resided solely in the Name above every name—the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Acts 4, the gospel was spreading and souls were being saved. Peter and John were taken into custody and brought before the authorities, where they were asked, “*By what power or by what name have you done this?*” (v.7) Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter responded, “*let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY YOU BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.'* Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other Name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (vv.10-12).

The two disciples were ordered to leave while the authorities conferred among themselves (v.15). After much discussion, Peter and John were called back in and they “*commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the Name of Jesus*” (v.18). Peter’s bold response demonstrated remarkable courage. Unapologetically, they stood firm and refused to obey their authority, claiming a higher authority—the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Later, all the apostles were arrested, beaten, and commanded not to speak in the Name of Jesus before they were released (Acts 5:40).


In Acts 10:44–48, Peter preached in the home of Cornelius and many were saved. In verse 48, “*He commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.*”

In Acts 19:1–5, Paul arrived at Ephesus and found some who professed to be believers who had only been baptized into John’s baptism. After hearing the truth and believing in Christ, they were baptized by Paul in the Name of the Lord Jesus. It was through that precious Name alone that they were saved and baptized.

It is Taught in the Epistles

To the Corinthians Paul wrote, “*To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*” (1 Cor. 1:2). Again, Paul reminded the Ephesians, “*giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph. 5:20). Paul exhorted the Colossians to “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another... And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Col. 3:16-17).

Hebrews 2:17 reminds us that our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, “*had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*” Hebrews 4:14-16 exhorts, “*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace [our Mercy Seat], that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*”

“*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow...*” (Phil. 2:9-10). As we approach the Father, how can we not offer our prayers in the Name above every name, who always lives to make intercession for us. In our time of need and total dependence, both in private and public prayer, we must ask in the Name of the Lord Jesus. 

"Praying in Jesus' Name aligns our requests with His will and purpose, ultimately bringing glory to the Father."



by Jim Comte

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

TAKING *the* JONAH ASSESSMENT *for my* MINISTRY

The book of Jonah is a prophetic book, yet it does not present prophecies in the same way as other biblical books in its genre. Instead, it is a story about the prophet himself. As we read Jonah, one important question must be asked: If God were to write a book about me and my ministry, how would it read? The following seven questions invite us to assess both ourselves and our ministries. I am confident that you will be challenged, just as I was.

1. Faithfulness: Do I understand this book is about God and His faithfulness in pursuing mankind?

Jonah is the antithesis of a prophet. His name means “dove,” and his father’s name means “faithful.” Jonah should have been the peaceful and faithful son; however, we know how the story unfolds. In fact, Jonah embodied both sons in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In the first two chapters, he acted like the younger son who ran away. In the final two chapters, Jonah acted like the older brother. He may also be compared to the bad neighbour in the “Parable of the Good Samaritan”—the one who looked the other way when someone was in need.

God’s faithfulness permeates the book, just as it does throughout the Bible. In the New Testament, we see His faithfulness beautifully embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ. In contrast to Jonah, Christ came into this needy world in obedience to His Father. He brought the complete and clear message of God to sinful mankind, who are headed toward destruction.

As we assess ourselves in the area of faithfulness, we must acknowledge that any success in our respective ministries is due solely to God’s goodness and faithfulness in the ministry He has entrusted to us. Do we exhibit an anti-Samaritan attitude or the character of the prodigal sons, rather than reflecting the character of Jesus? Is there a pattern of unfaithfulness in my life that resembles Jonah more than Christ?

2. Worldview: How do I react and act when my worldview clashes with God’s will?

Jonah’s prayer in chapter 4:2 reveals why he ran away. He did not desire God’s grace and mercy for his national enemies. When Jonah’s worldview clashed with God’s purposes, he chose to disobey, preferring his own will over God’s.

Obedience is easy to preach but difficult to practice. True obedience is not convenient; it is not simply doing what one would have done anyway. Imagine if God had decreed that brushing our teeth every morning was part of holy living. I can see how that would have helped. We would have loved such a law and might even have thanked Him for it. However, when God’s commands clash with our way of thinking, obedience becomes challenging.

A lack of unreserved and immediate obedience spells disaster in any ministry. Look at Jonah. First, it costs to disobey (1:3). Second, his journey is described as a repeated descent: down into the ship, down into the inner part of the ship, down into sleep, and finally down into the sea. In running away, Jonah seemed to have assumed that God would be incapacitated by his nonparticipation, but instead it only took him further down. At the crossroads of obedience, Jonah chose his own will over God’s. How often have we done the same?

When I have my “Genesis 3 moments,” do I disregard God’s command in favor of logic, culture, or personal opinion? Does my head knowledge of God consistently align with the response of my heart?

3. Faith: Do I rely on the wisdom of the all-wise God even when I cannot understand His command?

Jonah is described as a nationalist prophet in the Book of Kings (2 Kgs. 14:25). He desired the prosperity of his nation even in the face of wickedness, prophesying the expansion of Israel’s borders under Jeroboam II, a wicked king. Later, Amos tells us that those gains were lost because of sin. Jonah could not trust God’s wisdom—that repentance and salvation were better options than destruction. The Book of Jonah is God’s invitation to Jonah to join His “work of reconciliation.” However, Jonah could not trust God with a happy ending; his faith did not pass the stress test. When under stress, does my faith possess sufficient tensile strength? Is my faith “good elastic?” How much pressure will it take before it breaks?

4. Idols and False Gods: Do I worship the idol of self-righteousness?

From the belly of the fish, Jonah said that those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love (Jon. 2:8).



His prayer did not reveal repentance for sins or a request for forgiveness; instead, it exposed the idols in his heart—specifically the idol of self-righteousness.

Psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt observes that human beings are wired to be self-righteous. It is the belief that grace should be given to others only after the sting of consequences has been felt, except of course when grace is intended for the one demanding justice. That is the bitter incense of self-righteousness. Charles Spurgeon warns that nothing is more deadly than self-righteousness, and that the person who counts himself righteous by his own works is, in effect, worshiping himself.

To my shame, I admit that I have often prayed for grace to be turned off for some, having judged that they do not deserve it. Jonah experienced grace in chapter 2, yet in chapter 4 we see his insistence that grace was not appropriate for those he did not approve of. Do I find grace for everyone in the sacrificial love of God, or do I assume the privilege of granting grace myself? What idols are exposed when it is my turn to offer grace?

5. Message: Do I present a heavily redacted gospel?

The Book of Jonah employs hyperbole to create vivid and intentional contrasts. The word “great” appears repeatedly—a great city, a great wind, a great fish. Jonah himself, however, stands in stark contrast to this greatness. For example, “Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days’ journey” (Jon. 3:3). Yet Jonah traveled only one day into the city and delivered a strikingly short message. There is no indication in Scripture that he provided a reason for the coming judgment or any instruction on how the people might avert destruction. Most significantly, there is no indication in Scripture he ever mentioned Yahweh God. His preaching revealed an alarming lack of concern for their souls. Are my priorities aligned with God’s priorities for souls? Is my gospel presentation complete and rooted in God’s power?

6. Ministry: Do I rejoice at someone else’s success?

In Jonah 4, Jonah became exceedingly angry because God was merciful to the city but, in his view, indifferent to Jonah’s comfort.

The ministry’s success did not meet his expectations. Though 120,000 souls were saved, Jonah remained unhappy. Do I measure ministry success in selfish ways? How do I respond to the success of others in a similar ministry?

7. The Unanswered Question:

The book ends with a question that is left unanswered, “And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?” (Jon. 4:10)

Or does it? In fact, three people respond. First, Jonah responded. The very existence of this autobiographical, self-deprecating book suggests that he finally answered the question in alignment with God.

Second, Christ is the greater Jonah. Jonah descended because of disobedience; Christ, because of ours. Jonah survived; Christ died and defeated death. Jonah delivered a fragmented message; Christ is the message. Christ cared not just for the city of Nineveh, but for the whole world.

Third, will we respond? “Yes, Lord, this great city You have kept me for needs Your mercy and grace. Help me to be faithful as I show these souls that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.”

We can be thankful for a merciful God. We can have confidence that, though we often act like Jonah, He pursues us to complete the ministry given to us. 

“If God were to write a book about me and my ministry, how would it read?”



by Viji Roberts

Viji Roberts serves as an elder at New Life Bible Chapel in Mississauga, ON (NewLifeBibleChapel.com). He also serves on the board of Emmaus University and is a member of Biblical Eldership Resources. He is married to Joyce Roberts, and together they are blessed with a son, Daniel.



GENERATIONAL CURSES?

The false doctrine of generational curses (“ancestral curses”) is very popular within some groups of Christians, especially in charismatic circles. Generational curses refer to judgments or consequences that are believed to be passed on to individuals because of sins committed by their family over several generations. These curses are thought to be transmitted from one generation to another, bringing judgment or bondage into an individual’s life until that person addresses the underlying sin and breaks the curse. Some proponents of generational curses even claim that parents can pass evil spirits on to their children, and that “family iniquity” is transmitted through the family bloodline. This notion leads many people to believe that all the miseries in their lives are caused by generational curses, prompting them to frantically search for ways to escape or break them.

Unscriptural instruction has led many people into bondage and fear, and counseling is often offered to break the so-called generational curse. The idea of breaking generational curses has also been associated with spiritual warfare. Amid such a multitude of confusing theories, it is vitally important that we examine this subject from a scriptural perspective.

The term “generational curse” does not appear in the Bible; rather, the teaching of generational curses is based on faulty interpretations of passages such as Exodus 20:5-6, 34:6-7 and Numbers 14:18. However, the warnings in these verses are given in the context of idolatry: “*You shall not make for yourself an idol*” (Ex. 20:4, NASB). This is the second of the Ten Commandments. This command was a prohibition against making an idol or any likeness of Jehovah as an object of worship. Verses 4-5 state the consequences of disobedience to this command, which would continue for several generations (third and fourth). Yet obedience to the command will result in blessings for countless generations—to thousands. Clearly, the disparity between the consequences for obedience—blessings lasting for thousands of years—and the consequences for disobedience or rebellion, which extend only to three or four generations, demonstrates that God is not vengeful but is abounding in loving kindness, mercy, and grace (Deut. 7:9-10).

Note the words, “*those who hate Him,*” which refer specifically to people who persist in unbelief and rebellion against God and continue in idolatry. However, as the gospel of Jesus Christ promises, anyone can receive pardon and forgiveness for idolatry or any other sin through repentance and faith.

Old Testament scholars point out that people in the ancient world found their primary identity in their clan rather than as individuals. They also believed that the clan was collectively responsible for remaining faithful to their religious beliefs and practices. When the fathers or elders were unfaithful, the entire clan shared in that unfaithfulness. The phrase "third and fourth generation" refers to all those living at that time. It is possible that the verses under consideration reflect this "clan" mindset.

Some natural consequences of sin can persist throughout life. The consequences and harmful effects of one person's sin can impact others and have lingering effects. Human history and experience confirm that sinful behavior by parents can indeed bring suffering to their children and grandchildren. The ripple effects of sin in one generation inevitably impact future generations. In this fallen world, children sometimes experience the tragic consequences of their parents' sins. The children of alcoholic fathers or drug addicts can suffer neglect and abuse as a direct result of their fathers' sinful behavior. The descendants of those who hate God or are involved in idolatry are likely to follow in the footsteps of their forefathers. Physical and sexual abuse might become ingrained in the psychological legacy of certain families. It is a general truth that certain types of sin can be perpetuated from generation to generation. Consequences—*not* curses—are passed on through the generations.

Scripture explicitly declares, "...The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity. The righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself..." (Eze. 18:20, NASB). "The soul who sins will die" (Eze. 18:4, NASB). The Bible clearly teaches the principle of individual accountability. In the Old Testament, the Law stated that parents were not to be put to death for their children, nor were children to be put to death for their parents; each would die for his or her own sin (Deut. 24:16).


Summary and Conclusion:

The word "curse" does not appear in the verses commonly associated with generational curses. In these passages, God warns of His judgment on the sin of idolatry and rebellion against His truth. An idolatrous culture or community can have a disastrous impact on future generations and may negatively influence them. Although there may be cumulative effects of sin, responsibility always remains with the individual. God's judgment falls only on "those who hate Me" (Ex. 20:5). The punishment described here involves successive generations that continue to commit the sins they learned from their fathers. An individual's relationship with God is not determined by the sins of their parents.

Important Points to Consider:

1. The original curse of sin (Gen. 3) affects every human being and all of creation (Rom. 8:19-23). Through the first Adam "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23).
2. A child of God can, by being defiantly disobedient, bring himself under the chastisement and discipline of the Lord. However, he does not "inherit" the sins of his fathers, nor is he responsible for those sins.
3. The Bible assures believers of freedom from condemnation, guilt, and curses. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). The curse of sin was broken by Christ at the cross. God has reconciled us to Himself through Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-19). Christ has redeemed us from all iniquity (Titus 2:13-14). The debt of sin has been canceled by being nailed to the cross of Christ. Christ has made full payment for our sin (Col. 2:13-14). "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). We are no longer under any curse and need not return to bondage (Gal. 4:9).

We do not need to fall into the deceptive trap of erroneous teaching about generational curses, because the concept of generational curses is not found in Scripture. Each person will answer to God for their own choices, not for the choices of their parents. Those who promote this teaching dangerously apply to the righteous the curses and judgments meant for the wicked. Although there are curses mentioned throughout the Bible, none is "generational." Christ

broke every curse at the cross. Anyone carrying the burden of sin, guilt, addiction, or bondage must personally come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and deliverance (Matt. 11:28). The good news of the gospel is that the cycle of sin and its power can be broken by the blood of Christ. "Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). 

“CHRIST
BROKE
EVERY
CURSE
AT THE
CROSS.”



by Alexander Kurian

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

ISSUES & ANSWERS

“SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES...”

JOHN 5:39

What is the parable of the leaven?

Matthew 13:33 says, “Another parable He spoke to them: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.’”

Known as the Kingdom Parables, the “Parable of the Leaven” is the fourth in this series of parables that the Lord gives in Matthew 13. There are two very different interpretations applied to this parable. Some commentators view it very positively, believing it depicts the rapid growth of the kingdom, much like leaven causes bread to expand. In this interpretation, leaven is presented as a good element, in contrast to every other mention of leaven in the New Testament, where it is a symbol of evil.

For example, Paul used the image of leaven in 1 Corinthians 5:6 to illustrate the far-reaching effects of sin. In Galatians 5:9, this imagery is used to show how false teaching can spread and negatively affect many people. In Matthew 16, the Lord Jesus used the word “leaven” to describe the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (see also Luke 12:1) and the liberalism of the Sadducees.


Furthermore, in the Old Testament, leaven was to be avoided, as shown by what the Israelites took with them when leaving Egypt and during the observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:15–20).

The other interpretation of this parable views leaven as an illustration of the effect of introducing false teaching into the kingdom. This is consistent with the context, as the Lord Jesus has left the house and is now at the seaside, speaking to the crowd. Here, He presents four parables that describe the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven includes both those who are truly saved and those who only claim to belong, as seen in the parable of the wheat and the tares.

In the parables given by the seaside, Satanic activity and falsehood are depicted. In the parable of “The Sower and the Seed,” Satan is in opposition, represented by the birds that steal the seed. In the next parable, imitation is clearly evident, as the tares the enemy has sown in the field look like the real thing. In the parable of “The Mustard Seed,” the mustard seed produces a large tree where birds find a nesting place, which is clearly infiltration, since the birds have already been explained by the Lord in the first parable. Considering the context, including where the Lord is speaking and to whom He is giving these parables, helps with interpretation.

Consider also that in Leviticus 2, the Meal Offering is described as an offering of fine flour without leaven (2:4–5). The Meal Offering included oil with frankincense and was to contain no leaven, serving as an illustration of the purity and fragrance of the life of Christ.

“In Matthew 13, interpreting leaven as false teaching about the person of the Lord Jesus is consistent with how leaven is depicted throughout Scripture.”

In Matthew 13, interpreting leaven as false teaching about the person of the Lord Jesus is consistent with how leaven is depicted throughout Scripture and fits the context of the scene by the seaside. It also aligns with the progression noted above: opposition to the gospel, imitation believers, infiltration into the kingdom, and, in this parable, the corruption of the truth. This pattern has persisted throughout the history of Christendom, as many denominations that claim to be Christian hold and present false teachings about the Lord Jesus. 



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.

Do you have a conference, event, or service opportunity you wish to advertise to print subscribers from across Canada and the United States, and to online readers on every continent?

News & Notices

Submit 2-3 months in advance of the issue you would like it to appear in for print, or 3-4 months in advance for two months inclusion.
How to Submit:
online: cornerstonemagazine.org
email: news@cornerstonemagazine.org

Vessels of Honor Conference 2026

► May 22-25, 2026

Calvary University, Belton MO

For ages: 18+ the theme for this year's conference is "Timeless Truth: The Relevant Word of God" with speakers Bob Upton & David Hollingsworth. Elective Speakers are John & Ann Bjorlie, Tammy Hollingsworth, and Cainon Leeds. For more information and to register visit Vesselsofhonor.org.

Ladies Spring Missionary Conference

► May 23, 2026

2514 Cabana Road W, Windsor, ON

A Ladies Spring Missionary Conference will be held at Oakwood Bible Chapel on Saturday, May 23rd, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch and nursery will be provided. Madison Letkeman (ON) will give a report on her trip to Zambia, Carol Clark (Peru) will be their missionary speaker and Barb MacDougall (ON) will be their challenge speaker. For more information contact Stephanie Letkeman at letkeman.stephanie@gmail.com.

Galilee Program

► June 21-July 10, 2026

Southside Bible Chapel, Lafayette, Louisiana

The Galilee Program is a seminar-style, discipleship-based course of biblical studies and practical instruction for Christians (ages 20-35), who are committed to Christ, His service, and their local church, and are passionate about growing in their faith and serving God with their lives. Visit <https://GalileeProgram.com> for more information and to apply.

West Virginia Bible Conference Bluestone Camp & Retreat

► July 19-24, 2026

36 Middle Camp RD, Hinton, WV 25951

The West Virginia Bible Conference invites you to their annual family camp. Please note that there is a minimum requirement of 30 campers or the camp will need to be canceled. For more information contact Brent Jones at 304-466-4738 or brentandhope@frontier.com.

Camp Iroquoia Summer Camps

2341 Camp Rd, Hallstead, PA

- EMERGE INTENSIVE BIBLE CAMP: July 5 – 11, 2026
- BOYS CAMP: July 12 – 18, 2026
- SKILLS CAMP: July 19 – 25, 2026
- GIRLS CAMP: July 26 – August 8, 2026
- FAMILY CAMP: August 9 – 15, 2026

For more information: info@iroquoia.org or (570) 967-2577.

Book Offer

"Climbing Higher in the Trees of the Bible: See the Fingerprints of God in the Trees of Creation"

God loves trees! Over 30 varieties are given in the Bible. Beginning at Genesis and ending in Revelation, Sam Thorpe traces 15 biblical trees, drawing both scientific and biblical lessons from Scripture. The book follows a practical, academic, and devotional approach for both student and teacher alike. Published and distributed by WestBow Press it is available in paperback or ebook formats and listed on many of the common internet book platforms.

Camp Manager


Emmanuel Bible Camp

540 Gay Road, St. Peter's Bay, PE

Emmanuel Bible Camp is situated on Whitlock Pond on beautiful Prince Edward Island. The camp is seeking a Manager/Manager-couple to run the camp for the months of July and August. During this time, EBC hosts seven week-long camps ranging in age from 8 to 18 years old as well as two family camps and three weekend retreats. Each program is highly sought after often resulting in lengthy wait lists. The Manager would be responsible for all volunteers and the daily operation of the camp. For more information, contact Greg MacIsaac at gregmacisaac@live.com or (902) 330-1502.

Homecall: Kathryn Grace Kitching Jones

Born on March 6, 1941, in Los Angeles, CA, Kay Jones, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and friend, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on February 20, 2026, at the age of 84. She married Dewitt Jones in 1963, and they made their home in Greenville, SC, where the Lord blessed them with three children and five grandchildren, and where they fellowshiped and served the Lord at Overbrook Gospel Chapel. Although she suffered many physical limitations for much of her life, she was defined by her joyful spirit and engaging smile. Having taught high school and possessing an avid love of reading and grammar, she thoroughly enjoyed proofreading selected articles for Cornerstone Magazine with thoroughness and enthusiasm. She will be greatly missed. All of us at Cornerstone Magazine extend our deepest condolences to Dewitt and the extended Jones family.



**In the Next Issue of
Cornerstone Magazine:**

- True Discipleship
- The Twelve
- The Doctrine of Adoption

If

By Mary A. Round

If every single day I live
Is crowned with shining sun,
How would I know the difference when
My race on earth had run?

If every step I take down here
Is tireless, light and free,
How would I know the difference when
I reach eternity?

If death and pain are strangers, too,
And only good I see,
How would I know, how could I show
God's peace to all I see?

If I see only sunshine
And the brightness of God's love,
How will I know the difference
When I get home above?

Has God given me the pain
And sorrow of a loss,
Is it to help and mold, and hold
Me nearer to the cross?

God in His wisdom knows what's best,
Knows just how much I need
To fit me and refine me
So He my steps can lead.

So lead me, heavenly Father
Where You want me to go
Until You lead me safely
Throughout this life below.

And when my time on earth is through
And when the race I've run
By Your love and grace, up there
I'll hear Your glad, "Well Done."

*Mary A. Round, Poems to Live By
(Belleville, ON: Essence Publishing, 1997), p.97-98*