

GRACE *in* FOCUS

The **Magnificent** **NEW** **CREATION** of the Heavens and Earth

Also in this issue...

*Begin at the Beginning | Rewards and Grace | Jesus and the Holocaust
The Condemned Believer | Sad Saga of Saul | The Angel of the Lord
Lordship Salvation | Plus many more!*

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it would be greatly appreciated.



Letter from the Editor

Our country and our world are in turmoil. Anti-Semitism is on the rise around the world. Support for terrorism is growing. Israel is at war with Hamas and Hezbollah. Iran is involved in the conflict as well. Russia and Ukraine are still at war. The U.S. elections are about to occur, and they will have a major impact on the lives of all Americans.

We are also in turmoil spiritually. Universalism and near-universalism are on the rise. The pope recently said that all who do good will go to heaven, including members of all non-Christian religions. He went so far as to say that even atheists will go to heaven if they live good lives.

In a 2005 interview with Larry King, Joel Osteen said the same thing.

Lordship Salvation and works salvation are still the dominant positions among professing Christians.

Free Grace is not a widely held position. We are an extreme minority. We have lots of work to do to bring the message of life to a thirsty world.

Grace in Focus magazine is one way that we are spreading that message. If you enjoy



our magazine, please share it with others. It is free for all who have U.S. mailing addresses. It is also available free online.

He's coming soon. Until then, *let's keep grace in focus!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bob Wilkin". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Robert N. Wilkin

BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING

By Dix Winston



Imagine reading the great Russian novel *War and Peace* by starting at the book's midpoint. It would make no sense to you. Who is Pierre Bezukhov, or Audrey Bolkonsky, or the Kuragan and Rostov families? And why is Napoleon invading Russia? It would be difficult, if not impossible, to understand the author's reason for writing. You would miss the connections and implications of people, places, and events.

One reviewer noted: "The two key themes in the novel are spirituality in the main characters and family as the ultimate reward for spiritual suffering."¹ If you skipped the first hundred pages of this 1,200-page book, you would miss this thematic structure.

A book's beginning serves a purpose. In it, the author introduces the antagonist, protagonists, conflicts, and themes that will propel the story forward.

This is true of the Bible. While it is so much more than a mere narrative (i.e., the revealed Word of God), it is still a book with an ongoing story. It has a beginning, middle, and end. To understand the Bible, you must begin at the beginning—the first three chapters of Genesis.

THE PROTAGONIST

Any good book quickly introduces the reader to the protagonist—the leading character. In the Bible, we meet Him in Gen 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God is the One beginning, superintending and eventually ending the Biblical narrative.

Therefore, He is eternal and without beginning or end. He speaks, and worlds come into existence. He is the Creator; everything else is created. Therefore, the Bible is His story. As the story begins, He creates a man, Adam. He then creates a woman, Eve, and places the man and woman in a garden.

THE PRECEPT

He entrusts them with a monumental task: "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Gen 1:28). This is called *the creation mandate*.

Our first parents were God's stewards or caretakers of planet Earth. He blessed or enabled them for this work and then charged them with four responsibilities. First, they were to have lots of children. Second, this was to continue until the earth was filled with human beings. Third, they were to subdue the earth and its animals, bringing all under their control. Finally, they must rule over God's creation.

THE PROHIBITION

And there was one prohibition, "...the Lord commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'" (Gen 2:16-17).

Without this prohibition, Adam and Eve would have had no choice or free will in the garden. Instead, there would have been only blind, robotic obedience. There would have been no consequences for disobeying by disregarding God's word. The prohibition allowed Adam and Eve to demonstrate their faith in God's word.

However, they did not fully comprehend the cost of disobedience and unbelief.

THE PROBLEM

God permitted the evil one to come into the garden. But Adam and Eve allowed the Serpent's word to come into their hearts. He convinced them that God was withholding something from them, that He could not be trusted, and that He is not a good God, but a bad God. When God looks bad, sin looks

I hope
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final promise:
"I am coming
quickly."

good. Doubting both God and His Word, they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Dr. Elliott Johnson insightfully frames Adam and Eve's rebellion and the problem it caused, saying:

Unexpectedly, the serpent appears (Gen 3:1) to induce humanity to question God's Word which warranted rebellion against His Word (Gen 3:1-5). This conflict between the Creator and His creatures was spawned by God's enemy, the serpent. Rebellion against God's Word was rebellion against the structure God had spoken into existence in creation. When Adam took a bite of the fruit, his relationship with God died (Gen 2:17). When Adam listened to the serpent, the serpent's word took control of Adam and the realm he once ruled was lost to the enemy. Under God's permission of evil, His universal kingdom remained intact, from which judgment against the serpent was pronounced (Gen 3:14-15). And this verdict framed the conflict that would inform the interpretation of history.ⁱⁱ

To understand the Bible, you must begin at the beginning.

THE PROMISE

This transgression would not derail God's plan. As Johnson points out, God is still God, and He judges rebellion in His garden. While invoking a curse upon the Serpent, He promises that the Seed of the woman will triumph over the Serpent's seed (Gen 3:15). This "Seed War" ends with the Serpent's being "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev 20:10). It would be through the Seed of the woman that our Lord and Savior would come, and with Him, His eternal kingdom.

He promised them that a solution to the rebellion in their hearts would be solved by the offspring of their union. In what has been called the *proto-evangelium* (first Gospel) God promises a future solution. To the Serpent He says, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Gen 3:15).

God was not done with Adam and Eve. As they obeyed the creation mandate to procreate, the Savior would one day come.

Even though no child had been conceived at this time, Adam—recognizing God's extreme mercy—named the woman *Eve* "because she was the mother of all living" (Gen 3:20). Adam believed God's promise that the solution would come through Eve. Of course, this promise is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ.

These three chapters are essential to understanding the rest of the Bible. We meet our Creator—the only One who can solve the problem of sin. We understand that there is an evil being who will always oppose God's work in our lives. And we learn that God is always good and always great!

While you may never get to the end of *War and Peace*, I hope you will get to the end of the Bible and its final promise: "I am coming quickly," to which we all should say, with the Apostle John, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev 22:20). ■



Dix and his wife, Cynthia live in Colorado and have been married for nearly five decades. Dix and Bob Wilkin have been friends since their seminary days, having graduated from DTS in 1982.

ⁱ Jordan Gray, "War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy: Summary, Themes & Analysis" at [https://study.com/academy/lesson/war-peace-themes-analysis.html#:~:text=War%20and%20Peace%20by%20Leo%20Tolstoy%20\(1869\)%20provides%20a%20broad,ultimate%20reward%20for%20spiritual%20suffering](https://study.com/academy/lesson/war-peace-themes-analysis.html#:~:text=War%20and%20Peace%20by%20Leo%20Tolstoy%20(1869)%20provides%20a%20broad,ultimate%20reward%20for%20spiritual%20suffering). Last accessed 9/10/24.

ⁱⁱ Elliott Johnson, *A Dispensational Biblical Theology* (Allen, TX: Bold Grace Ministries, 2016), p. 35.



Voice from the Past

The Doctrine of Rewards Part 1:

Rewards and Grace

This article originally appeared in the September-October 1994 issue of *Grace in Focus*.

By Zane Hodges

A totally passive view of the Christian life,
in which we make no effort to do right or to please God,
has no foundation in the Bible.

Among the very last recorded words of our Lord Jesus Christ are these: “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My *reward* is with Me, to give to every one according to his *work*” (Rev 22:12, emphasis added).

This is a clear and definitive statement on the subject of rewards by the Lord Himself. Not believing in rewards is not believing His words. The Grace Evangelical Society *does* believe in rewards!

Some Christians are troubled by the doctrine of rewards because this doctrine seems to suggest “merit” instead of “grace.” They argue that a doctrine of meritorious good works contradicts the truth that we are not under the law but under grace (Rom 6:14).

This point of view is a serious misreading of the Scriptures. As a matter of fact, it badly confuses the doctrine of *divine grace* with the truth of *human responsibility*.

Look again at the words of Jesus quoted above. Our Lord says clearly that His “reward” is according to each man’s “work.” There is no way to escape the obvious implications that “rewards” are *earned*.

Salvation, of course, is *not* earned. Therefore it can be said to be “by grace...through faith” and “not of works” (Eph 2:8-9). Our works have nothing to do with whether we go to heaven or hell. Salvation is a gift and it is absolutely free. Faith in Christ is the means by which this gift is received.

Paul taught us clearly that grace and works are mutually exclusive. His words are important: “And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work” (Rom 11:6).

In light of this clear-cut statement, we dare not confuse the Bible’s teaching about rewards with the truth of God’s unconditional grace to us. If we claim that rewards must be “by grace,” then we are

saying they can have nothing to do with “works.” But if we say *that*, we contradict our Lord’s words which relate His “reward” to each man’s “work.”

If we try to “redefine” works in terms of “grace,” then according to Paul, we change the character of one or both of these. Either what we call “work” is no longer really work, or what we call “grace” is no longer really grace.

There is no getting around this Biblical truth. God *gives* us His salvation, but He *pays* us for our good works.

Lordship Salvation illustrates this unavoidable result. Since Lordship theologians claim that people must do good works to reach heaven, they cannot really call their doctrine salvation *by grace*. But, of course, they *do* claim to teach salvation by grace. Yet, according to Paul, what they call “grace” is no longer really grace!

But Christians who deny that the works considered at the Judgment Seat of Christ are really rewarded on the basis of their spiritual merits fall into a similar error. They are trying to fit “works” and “grace” together in a way that Paul says is impossible. In the process they will either distort the true meaning of grace or distort the meaning of work.

Let us hear Paul again: “Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt” (Rom 4:4).

In this verse, Paul uses precisely the same Greek word for “wages” that Jesus used in Rev 22:12. It is the Greek word *misthos*, which basically means “pay, wages.” It clearly carries the suggestion of getting what one has *earned*.

There is no getting around this Biblical truth. God *gives* us His salvation, but He *pays* us for our good works.

To confuse these two lines of truth is to subvert the doctrine of grace and the doctrine of works in Scripture. It is an attempt to mix spiritual apples and oranges. The result can only be confusion



about the true nature of both of these great themes in the Bible.

This is *not* to say, of course, that there is *no connection* between God's grace to us and the works that we do for Him. Of course there is a connection! We would not even be able to do rewardable good works if we had not been regenerated by grace through faith. As the Apostle Peter makes clear to us, at the moment of salvation we receive "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3). That is to say, God has given us—by grace—all that we need to live a godly life.


But we must utilize this provision *diligently*. Peter says this quite plainly too: "But also for this very reason, *giving all diligence*, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge..." (2 Pet 1:5, emphasis added).

Thus God graciously supplies the means by which we may serve Him, but the decision to serve, and the diligence employed in doing so, are *our* contribution. Thus our works involve *our* efforts and are rewardable.

A totally passive view of the Christian life, in which we make no effort to do right or to please God, has no foundation in the Bible. We are not

Some Christians
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mere passive vehicles for the Holy Spirit, but active ones who must apply "all diligence."

As we do, we *earn* rewards! 



Zane Hodges taught New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary for 27 years, authored over a dozen books, and was passionate about the grace of God.



Believer

By Kathryn Wright

INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, I lived in a small town in Texas. Once a fairly affluent area, the city had fallen on hard times. Certain businesses had moved away, as had many of the wealthy citizens. Many of the town's buildings, especially its houses, stood vacant.

Beautiful Victorian-style homes lined the streets. Three-story houses with grand staircases, ornate stained-glass windows, and wrap-around porches were common. One in particular stands out in my memory. A stunning yellow Victorian,

it had half-moon arches framing the wrap-around porch. However, the floorboards around the entry were warping, and the once sunshiny-yellow paint had faded and was chipping away. The house, which had stood empty for some time, could have been the set for a horror film.

The history of the house was equally grim. The man who owned it had gone through a divorce. During the legal proceedings, it was determined that when he sold the property—which was worth a small fortune—his ex-wife would get half the profit. In order to cheat the system and keep his ex-wife

Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

from the money, the man never sold the home. He moved out and allowed the architectural beauty to rot and fall apart.

CONDEMNED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By the time I saw the once-magnificent house, it had been *condemned*, a legal term meaning that the property was dangerous and uninhabitable. The NT also uses the terms *condemned* and *condemnation*. When people see the word *condemned* in the Bible, most probably assume that it refers to being cast into the lake of fire. They believe it almost always refers to unbelievers who are being condemned to hell.

However, in the NT the word has a much broader meaning. It usually means “sentencing someone or something to destruction” or “passing judgment.” These concepts can be applied to a variety of situations, so context must determine how the word is being used in any specific occurrence.

For example, in Matt 20:18 the Lord Jesus predicted that the Jewish religious leaders would “condemn Him to death.” Obviously, the Lord was not cast into the lake of fire. He was sentenced to physical death.

In Noah’s day, the entire worldⁱ was condemned: “Noah...condemned the world [to destruction]” (Heb 11:7; see also 2 Pet 2:5).

God turned “...the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, *condemned them to destruction...*” (2 Pet 2:6, italics added).

None of these examples concern unbelievers’ being cast into the lake of fire.ⁱⁱ Instead, they describe Jesus’ death sentence and the physical destruction of the world and two cities. Like a condemned house, they were sentenced to be torn down.

The Scriptures warn believers of possible condemnation. This has caused some confusion. Since born-again people cannot lose eternal life (John 4:10, 14; 10:28-29; 2 Tim 2:13) a believer’s being condemned must refer to something other than being cast into the lake of fire.

It might be helpful to see how a believer can be condemned.

THE CONDEMNED GRUMBLER

James 5:9 speaks of a condemned believer. James makes this sobering statement:

Do not grumble against one another, brethren, ***lest you be condemned***. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

Notice that James identifies his readers as *brethren* (also see 1:2, 16 and eleven other times in the letter). These are believers who have been “brought

forth by the word of truth” (Jas 1:18). He admonishes them to be patient in light of the Lord’s soon return. If they do, there will be a spiritual harvest (5:7-8). These instructions would be irrelevant to unbelievers. In verse 9, he gives instructions on how to treat other believers. We are not to grumble against one another. Unfortunately,

this is a common sin within the church. This was of particular concern to James in light of the trials the readers were going through (1:2). There was a temptation to grumble against other believers during those difficult times.

James, therefore, reminds them of the Lord’s soon return. He stands at the door, ready to judge the Church at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Jas 5:9; 2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10).

Our Christian
experience can
bring ruin and
judgment due
to sin.

Hodges comments:

Like a Roman licitor announcing a judge's impending entry, as it were, James cries "Quiet!" His Christian readers must fully silence their complaints against each other in the realization that their Lord and Judge can at any moment appear and sit down on the Bema. ("James" in *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, p. 559).

The danger is that grumbling believers will stand before the Judge and give an account that results in disapproval at the Bema. James offers two possible outcomes for the believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Either he will have a fruitful crop and be rewarded, or he will be condemned. James is not threatening his readers with losing eternal life if they grumble against others. Such condemned believers will, however, have an unfruitful experience at the Bema.

The Scriptures warn believers of possible condemnation.

THE CONDEMNED EATER

In another passage addressed to believers, the Apostle Paul states:

But he who doubts **is condemned** if he eats, because *he does not eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin (Rom 14:23, emphasis added).

Paul addressed the church in Rome regarding dietary sensitivities. Many Jewish believers had been taught that eating certain foods was wrong; they were therefore grieved when others in the church—this included most Gentile believers—ate such food (Rom 14:15). Paul stated that the meat,

in and of itself, is not unclean (v 14). But he also admonished those believers who do eat it not to grieve their fellow Jewish believers who do not. They should respect one another's dietary restrictions and not judge each other (v 3-4).

Paul said, "Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not *condemn himself* in what he approves" (Rom 14:22, italics added). But what about the person who eats what he believes he should not? "But he who doubts is *condemned if he eats*, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23, italics added).

Hodges summarizes Paul's point this way:

In other words, the way in which we live the Christian life is by living out what God has impressed upon us from His word (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18). If our actions are not by faith, that is, if our actions contradict what we believe the Scriptures teach, then they are sinful actions, not godly ones (Hodges, *Romans: Deliverance from Wrath*, p. 418).

The condemnation here cannot refer to a believer being condemned to hell. Instead, Paul says that the believer who eats meat that he is convinced is a sin has condemned himself. That is, he has judged himself as sinful.

THE CONDEMNED MIND

Paul describes another kind of condemned believer in Titus 3:10-11. He warns Titus about contentious believers:

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being **self-condemned**.

The Greek term for *condemned* here adds the term *auto* (*autokatakritos*, used only here in the NT).ⁱⁱⁱ It means that this condemnation is self-inflicted. Once again, the apostle is describing certain believers. They are within the church and cause divisions over frivolous issues, such as genealogies or the Law (v 9). Wilkin comments:

Unlike teaching that promotes the maintenance of good works, which is “good and profitable” (v 8), this sort of teaching is unprofitable and useless. Whereas Titus was to avoid foolish disputes and the like (v 9), Paul commands him to reject a divisive...man after the first and second admonition...Clearly, this refers not to false teachers, but to men within the local church (Wilkin, “Titus” in *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, p. 503).

While the church today might not debate genealogies, believers have been known to participate in equally foolish and profitless disputes. Issues such as what clothes to wear or what style of music a church uses—to name just two examples—have caused great damage to churches. A believer who engages in such petty disputes should be rebuked and stopped from causing pointless divisions.

In Noah’s day, the entire worldⁱ was condemned.

Paul warns that such a believer is warped. His mind is fixated on the wrong issues. Like the floorboards of that yellow house in Texas, the believer who engages in such profitless debates will become twisted and useless. This kind of believer condemns himself to an unprofitable Christian experience. Like the abandoned, condemned house in Texas, such a believer’s work in the church will only come to ruin.

CONCLUSION

It is often profitable to do word studies in the NT. The word *condemned* is a case in point. When we see it in various passages, we should consider the context. We should not assume that it always describes unbelievers.



While believers can never be condemned to hell, we can experience a form of condemnation due to our sinful activity. When I think back on my time in Texas, I’m saddened when I remember the story of the man and his yellow house. His bitterness and resentment resulted in the total condemnation of his beautiful home. Because he did not sell the house when he could have made a good profit on it, he probably lost his savings and perhaps his retirement. Believers can live in such a way. They can experience the loss of their life’s work. Our Christian experience can bring ruin and judgment due to sin. Such a life could be compared to that yellow house in a small Texas town. How sad.

To avoid such an outcome, we should let James’ words echo in our minds as we look forward to our Savior’s soon return.

Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! 



Kathryn Wright and her husband, Dewey, live in Columbia, SC. She is the GES missions coordinator, women’s conference speaker, writer, and Zoom teacher.

ⁱ The exceptions were those on the ark: eight people and two of each kind of animal.

ⁱⁱ While most of the people in Noah’s day and in Sodom and Gomorrah were probably unregenerate, the condemnation the Scriptures speak of was their physical deaths.

ⁱⁱⁱ Without the *auto* prefix, the verbal cognate *katakrinō* occurs seventeen times in the NT, including four times in Romans (2:1; 8:3, 34; 14:23) and once in 1 Corinthians (11:32).

What's in a Word?

Jesus

and the

Holocaust

By Ken Yates

Whenever you see the phrase *burnt offering* in your English Bible, it is translating the Greek word

holocaust.



INTRODUCTION

It is fascinating to study how the meanings of words develop and how different languages use a word. Recently, I heard a Spanish speaker use a word over and over again in a sermon. It was a word with which I was unfamiliar. At first, I thought he was saying *causto*. I looked it up and saw that it meant “toxic.” In light of the sermon, that didn’t make any sense. Then I realized that he was saying *holo-causto*. He was saying “holocaust.”

But that didn’t make sense either. When I hear the word *holocaust*, I immediately think of the extermination of six million Jews by Nazi Germany during WWII. This Spanish speaker was not talking about the Jews or WWII. In his sermon, he was reading from Hebrews 10. He was talking about Christ and His sacrifice. It drove me crazy trying to figure out why he was talking about the Holocaust.

I found out that the word means different things in different languages.

DIGGING DEEPER

It was clear that the Spanish-speaking preacher was saying that in Hebrews 10, the author refers to a holocaust. I found a Spanish Bible and looked

it up. Sure enough, the word is found in Heb 10:6 and 8. In English, verse 6 says, “In *burnt offerings* and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.” In verse 8, the author repeats his reference to *burnt offerings*. In both cases, the Spanish word for burnt offerings is *holocausto*.

In both verses, the author refers to Ps 40:6-8. The psalms were originally written in Hebrew. The Hebrew word for *burnt offering* is *olah*. I wondered. Based on the way we use the word in English, I couldn’t figure out why the Spanish equivalent is *holocaust*.

Fortunately, I found the answer very quickly. When the OT was translated into Greek, it rendered the Hebrew word *olah* as *holokaustōn*. Whenever you see the phrase *burnt offering* in your English Bible, it is translating the Greek word *holocaust*. The Greek word *holo* means “whole.” The Greek word *kaustōn* means “burnt.” In Greek, the word *holokaustōn* literally refers to an offering that is completely burned up. That is the Greek word in Heb 10:6 and 8.

The Spanish language simply transliterated the Greek word. It seems that when a native Spanish speaker hears the word *holocaust*, he does not think of WWII or of Jews. Neither did Greek speak-

If we consider the meaning of the word in Greek, Spanish, and Hebrew, we could say that Christ was our holocaust.

ers when the books of the NT were written. In both languages, the word means an animal sacrifice that is “completely burned up” on the altar.

WHY DO WE USE IT THAT WAY?

If the word refers to a religious sacrifice to God, why do we refer to the slaughter of six million Jews as *the Holocaust*? How did the word acquire this meaning in English? I doubt there are many—if any—native English speakers who hear the word *holocaust* and think of an OT sacrifice.

Though it did not happen immediately, the term *Holocaust* came to be widely used in English to refer to the WWII atrocity because of the final fate of the Jews killed by Nazi Germany. Their bodies were completely burned up in the crematoria in the death camps. After WWII, various writers began using the Greek (and Spanish) term as a metaphor to describe the horrific events. Just as the bodies of certain sacrificial animals were completely burned up, so were the bodies of the Jews killed during WWII.

NOT EVERYONE AGREES

In the English-speaking world, *holocaust* has come to mean something radically different from its original meaning, and not everyone thinks it is appropriate to use it that way. Immediately after WWII, the extermination of the Jews was not called *the Holocaust*. Especially among those who survived the events, the deaths of their friends and families became known as *the catastrophe* or *the destruction*.

As the term *Holocaust* became more popular in English, many Jews pointed out that the Greek word *holokaustōn* and the Hebrew word from which it came have strong religious overtones. A burnt offering in the OT was something that was pleasing to God. Certainly, Jewish writers pointed out, the Nazis were not offering up a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God when they slaughtered Jewish families. Unlike those who had offered burnt sacrifices in the temple, these writers’ fellow Jews had not been atoning for the sins of those who killed them. Those who were burned up in the ovens were unwilling victims whose very deaths were the result of profound evil and sinful activity. To use any kind

of reference to something offered to God is entirely inappropriate.

I must admit, I see their point. If I had lost family members in the death camps of WWII, I probably wouldn’t want their deaths referred to as a sacrifice to God on the part of the men who killed them. I would much prefer that it be called *the catastrophe*. In fact, when we use the word *Holocaust* in English, that is the meaning we ascribe to it.

Among those who survived the events, the deaths of their friends and families became known as *the catastrophe* or *the destruction*.

Greek speakers in the first century, native Spanish speakers, and Jewish OT scholars see the word much differently than most of us probably do. That explains why I was so confused when I heard the word in a Spanish sermon.

I think we can learn by looking at the way the word is used in other languages. In doing so, maybe we can apply those meanings to what the author of Hebrews says about Christ in Hebrews 10.

CHRIST AS A HOLOCAUST

In Heb 10:4-10, the author speaks of the OT sacrifices. None of them, including the whole burnt offering, or *holocaust*, could take away our sins. They were a shadow in that they pointed to the sacrifice that would truly take away the sins of the world (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2). That would be the sacrifice Christ made on the cross.

What a sacrifice it was! Since He took away the sins of the world, the gift of eternal life is available to all who believe in Jesus for that gift. That sacri-

When a native Spanish speaker hears the word *holocaust*, he does not think of WWII or of Jews.



fice allows God to declare righteous all who believe in Christ so that they have access to Him. That sacrifice set the believer free from the power of sin so that we now can walk by the power of the Spirit. That sacrifice is the means by which believers receive the ongoing forgiveness of sins when they confess those sins. This forgiveness allows those who already have eternal life to continue their fellowship with the Lord. That fellowship allows us to learn more about Christ and to become more like Him.

The author of Hebrews, then, says that Christ was a whole burnt offering for us. In His case, He *was* a sacrificial victim. His offering was pleasing to the Lord. We could say that He gave Himself completely. He was abandoned by all who knew Him. He was beaten, scourged, mocked, rejected by both Jewish and Roman society, and died outside the gates of Jerusalem because He was unworthy even to die in front of polite company.

If we consider the meaning of the word in Greek, Spanish, and Hebrew, we could say that Christ was our *holocaust*.

But I suggest that we could also call Him our *holocaust* in the way we English speakers use the word. Was a greater injustice ever experienced by anyone who has ever lived? From a human perspective, there was no greater catastrophe. He was completely innocent. He had done nothing but good His entire life, and He spoke only the truth. He was the only perfect Man who ever lived, yet He was murdered by evil men. When they killed Him, they did not do so in order to offer something to God. There is no greater example of sinful activity.

Christ's sacrifice also leaves us an example to live by. As He sacrificed Himself, we are to do the same in service to Him and others (Rom 12:1-2; Mark 8:34-37). To whatever degree we are faithful to Him, we are called to be a *holocaust* as well.

CONCLUSION

It is interesting to examine how different cultures and languages use the same word. It can surely be confusing. In some cases, the way one language uses a word can be offensive to those who speak a different language. The word *holocaust* is a case in point.

It probably speaks to the greatness of Christ that the various ways people use the word can all apply to Him. His death was the grossest miscarriage of justice in the world. It was a *Holocaust* in the English sense.

But He was also a *holocaust* in the sense that other languages use the word. His death was full of religious significance. It was the perfect sacrifice, perfectly acceptable to God. In fact, all the OT *holocausts* made at the temple pointed to Him.

In whatever culture you live, and in whatever language you speak, Christ was our *holocaust*. ■



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WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT GES?



Truth Fellowship Live
Sunday morning,
August 18th in
Bismarck, ND



Ken and
Faith at
Truth
Fellowship
Live

Ken and
Kathryn
with Terry
Kern, the
Amundsons,
and the
Hansons



This YouTube video released in August had
32,000 views in the first three weeks!



James, Ken, Brad, Bob, and Letitia at the August Board
meeting



The Magnificent
NEW CREATION
of the Heavens and Earth

By Ken Pierce

When the Son of God creates a new heaven and earth, the spectacle will be at least as exhilarating as the original event described in Job 38.

Each Fourth of July, many of my neighbors spend a chunk of change on fireworks purchased from pop-up vendors along the main road through town. The buying starts in late June. People really look forward to the holiday, many of them mainly because of the fireworks. Sporadic launches start a few days before the Fourth, as buyers give in to the temptation to test-fire “just one or two.” The real show starts at sundown on the Fourth as neighbors set up lawn chairs to watch the display. The show usually culminates in a mesmerizing ripple-fire barrage, a grand finale evoking “oohs and ahhs” and a round of applause. Why do people enjoy fireworks so much? Most of the dogs in my neighborhood would testify that such fascination is confined to the human species alone.

The Book of Job preserves a conversation that took place during ancient times between Yahweh and His servant, Job. The LORD described Job as

“a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil” (1:8; 2:3). After Job endured an extended period of torment—aggravated by his ersatz counselors—Yahweh appeared in a whirlwind to engage His servant (38:1). Job was not alone. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, along with the younger Elihu, were present when the LORD began to speak.

Like the angelic beings who responded with overwhelming joy at the Master’s creation so long ago, Christ’s redeemed can look forward with great hope to that future event.

Besides human spectators, the first two chapters of Job mention the sons of God (*Bene ha-Elohim*), an assembly of sentient beings subordinate to Yahweh (1:6; 2:1). Though they go unmentioned after chapter 2, the lack of further explicit mention does not rule out their continued presence and active interest in Yahweh’s conversation with his servant (cf. 1 Pet 1:12).

Many reading Job 38 perceive a condescending, even mocking tone in God’s words. After all, He began with the question, “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” (38:2).

That inference, however, stands at odds with the instructive content in Yahweh's speech. By way of comparison, the Prophet Isaiah employed a similar technique of posing questions as he comforted Israel (Isa 40:12-14, 18, 21, 25, 27-28). Isaiah did not ask questions to mock his countrymen, but to offer eternal perspective on God's plan, will, and providential care for the nation. Similarly, in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, He asked the credentialed Sanhedrin member, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things" (John 3:10)? Jesus was no more mocking Nicodemus than Yahweh was mocking Job. On the contrary, He was leading the senior Pharisee toward a spiritual understanding of regeneration that was conditioned on faith alone in Israel's Messiah—insights that eluded Nicodemus despite decades of intensive Torah study and meditation.

As the LORD spoke to Job from the whirlwind, He recounted His creative work: laying the earth's foundations (cf. Ps 104:5; Prov 8:29c; Isa 40:21; 51:13, 16), establishing its dimensions, and placing its cornerstone (cf. Ps 102:25).ⁱ He then posed two rhetorical questions, the first in 38:4. "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" He asked, followed in 38:6-7 by, "[W]ho laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Yahweh's aim was to nudge Job out of his subjective stance so that he might gain an appreciation of God's transcendent power and authority. His question carried the same didactic sense as His query to Adam in Gen 3:9 ("Where are you?"). Like Isaiah's questions to Israel and Messiah's questions to Nicodemus, Yahweh's questions to Job were designed to get him to reflect and think more deeply.

The Lord recalled two ecstatic responses as He described His work in primordial creation. First,

He said that "the morning stars sang together" (Job 38:7). The phrasing pictures an angelic choir bursting forth in choral doxology at the overwhelming spectacle of His creative work. The scene was so exhilarating that "the sons of God shouted for joy." Their response amounted to an involuntary reaction to the intense stimulation of minds and senses wrought by God's creative genius. Though on a much grander scale, their reaction is similar to the way humans respond to a spectacular fireworks display.

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In his Gospel, John clarifies that the member of the Trinity who performed and now sustains the work of creation was none other than the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:3; cf. Ps 102:25-27; Neh 9:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:3b, 10). Because all who place faith in Him for eternal life are permanently adopted by God the Father as sons and daughters (cf. Luke 20:34-36; Rom 8:14, 16, 19; Gal 3:26; 1 John 3:1-2), they enjoy the right to witness and appreciate God the Son's creative work in the future.

Scripture points to a coming creation event of even greater magnitude than what is recorded in Job 38. It will be greater and more wonderful because the looming shadow of sin and rebellion will be eliminated. After Christ's thousand-year kingdom (Rev 20:2-3, 6) comes the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15), where the last vestiges of human and angelic resistance to His authority will be eradicated. Jesus Christ will destroy the present, sin-stained universe (2 Pet 3:12), so that He might present to His Father a pristine new creation (Rev 21:1-5). To accomplish that, He will speak into existence new heavens and a new earth (Isa 51:16b; 65:17; 66:22; Heb 12:26-29; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1).ⁱⁱ When He does so, all of Adam's redeemed progeny will be on hand to witness the thrilling display.

The phrasing pictures an angelic choir bursting forth in choral doxology at the overwhelming spectacle of His creative work:

So much of the popular culture's depiction of the believer's life in glory—especially the interminable harp strumming and halo polishing—grossly under-portrays the ecstatic reality that awaits. Human beings enjoy fireworks for a reason. God put something into the human soul that enables mankind to appreciate the spectacle of lights bursting out of darkness, appearing as though from nowhere and arcing across the expanse of the heavens. As ecstatically as people in fallen flesh may respond to a grand Fourth of July display, such enjoyment pales against the spectacle that awaits the regenerate in God's exciting future.

When Yahweh spoke to Job from out of the whirlwind in Job 38, His indirect audience included the men with Job and the sons of God mentioned in chapters 1 and 2. Prominent in their midst was Satan, the disgraced rebel formerly known as “the anointed cherub who covers” (Ezek 28:14). With him were his horde of fallen rebels. Before the rebellion, he was called *Lucifer*. Ezekiel revealed one of his traits before he fell: “The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created” (28:13). Such wording hints at great musical prowess. When the morning stars sang for joy in response to original creation (Job 38:7), pre-rebellion Lucifer may well have been privileged to lead them.ⁱⁱⁱ Those times are forever past.

When the Son of God creates a new heaven and earth, the spectacle will be at least as exhilarating as the original event described in Job 38. This time, however, Satan and his minions, along with all who die apart from faith in Christ, will be denied access. But Adam's redeemed progeny from every age and generation will be privileged to witness our Great High Priest and Savior in action, accompanied by myriads of elect angels. Just as in the beginning, all who see Jesus Christ's work

exploding across the expanse of the heavens will rejoice in song, erupting in shouts of pure joy that will be remembered and celebrated long into an endless future.

The One who made Adam and breathed life into his nostrils (Gen 2:7) instilled in him a capacity to appreciate and respond to the spectacle of His creative power. He did so for a reason, perhaps with just such a day of future creation in mind. Like the angelic beings who responded with overwhelming joy at the Master's creation so long ago, Christ's redeemed can look forward with great hope to that future event. ■



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ⁱ Note parallels to His work building the Church in 1 Cor 3:9-13; Heb 1:10; Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:4-6.

ⁱⁱ It is called “new heavens [plural] and earth” in Isa 65:17; 66:22; and 2 Pet 3:13. It is called “a new heaven [singular] and a new earth” in Rev 21:1.

ⁱⁱⁱ Scripture does not specify the timing of Lucifer's fall, but it must have preceded the serpent's infiltration to subvert Eve into sinning (Genesis 3). The time span between Adam and Eve's creation and their fall also remains unknown. If Lucifer's fall occurred after Adam's creation (or just prior), and assuming Adam and Eve lasted perhaps a month before they fell, that would imply that the recruitment of a third of the angels into Lucifer's rebellion would also have occurred within that month.



Believers must
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not be disqualified
from ruling with Him.

SAD SAGA OF SAUL

Part 1

A Believer Who Lost His Crown

By Philippe R. Sterling

Saul was Israel's first king. The Bible's first mention of him paints a picture of physical perfection: "... choice and handsome...There was not a more handsome person...he was taller than any of the people" (1 Sam 9:2). His physical stature fit the ideal king's description and was a significant factor in his selection.

Yahweh's choosing of Saul—which was an intervention in Israel's history—marked the beginning of Israel's monarchy. During this phase of the monarchy, Saul's failure to obey Yahweh led to Yahweh's rejecting him. The divine hand in Saul's selection and subsequent rejection is a key aspect of this Biblical narrative.

REQUEST FOR A KING (1 Samuel 8:1-22)

When Samuel was old, he appointed his sons as judges, but they were corrupt. In response to the Israelites' demand that Samuel give them a king to judge them, Yahweh instructed Samuel to *make a king* for Israel. This set the stage for Saul's appointment as Israel's first king. God may sometimes discipline His people by giving them what they want (Numbers 11).

PRIVATELY ANOINTED KING (1 Samuel 9:1-10:16)

Yahweh led the physically impressive Saul to Samuel (9:1-14). Saul's father, Kish, sent Saul and a servant to find some lost donkeys. After a long and fruitless search eventually brought them near Samuel's home in Ramah, they encountered Sam-

uel. They met by God's providential arrangement. As God's people are faithful in our ordinary affairs of life, God will providentially lead us.

At this point in his life, Saul was a humble man.

Samuel privately anointed Saul and told him that Yahweh would regenerate him (9:22–10:8). Samuel made Saul the guest of honor at the sacred feast, publicly indicating that Saul was a man of importance. After the meal, Saul and Samuel went to Samuel's home in Ramah. There, Samuel spoke further with Saul. In the morning, Samuel poured oil over Saul's head and explained that Yahweh had anointed him "commander over His inheritance." Pouring oil over someone's head symbolized a setting apart for divine service.

We are at our
best as believers
when we rely
upon the Holy
Spirit and give
glory to Christ
for whatever we
achieve.

As confirmation that Saul was God's choice, Samuel said that Saul would see three signs fulfilled that day as he returned home. The signs were specific as to the people he would encounter, the places where he would encounter them, the things that would be said and done, and the transformation he would undergo by the Spirit of Yahweh. He would "be turned into another man." That change would occur as he encountered and joined a group of prophets who were prophesying. After those things happened, Saul was to do whatever the occasion required, knowing that "God [was] with [him]." Samuel told Saul to meet him in Gilgal in seven days for further instructions.

Yahweh confirmed the word of Samuel to Saul by the fulfillment of the signs Samuel had indicated (10:9-16). After Saul departed from Samuel, "God gave him another heart." This would actually happen during his encounter with the prophets but is mentioned first because of its importance. This was an OT reference to the new birth. Saul prophesied with the prophets, was "turned into another man" (v 6) and was given "*another heart*."

We may surmise that the content of the prophecies included aspects of Israel's Messianic hope. Saul believed what was being proclaimed, and the Spirit regenerated him. Saul became a new man with a new heart. Saul, like believers of any age, believed in the Messiah for everlasting life and was born from above (John 3:1-16). People were amazed that Saul prophesied with the prophets and wondered what had happened to him. Their questions simply indicated their surprise at the sudden change in Saul.

After Saul returned home, his uncle questioned him about where he had gone and about Samuel's words. Saul told him what Samuel had said about the donkeys but said nothing "about the matter of the kingdom." This may have been a demonstration of wisdom on Saul's part in not prematurely revealing his anointing to be king.

PUBLICLY ACCLAIMED KING (1 SAMUEL 10:17-27)

Samuel gathered "the people together to the LORD at Mizpah" and reminded them that Yahweh had delivered them from Egypt and from those who had oppressed them (10:17-18). Samuel had gathered the people at Mizpah before to pray for them and to tell them of Yahweh's intervention in subduing the Philistines (7:5-14). He now reminded the people that from the time they left Egypt until the present day, Yahweh had continually delivered them.

After proclaiming that they had rejected God by demanding a king, Samuel publicly chose by lot from the tribes of Israel a reluctant Saul to be their king (10:19-22). Saul had hidden himself. He may have been hesitant to undertake such a role. After the people inquired of Yahweh, He revealed, "There he is, hidden among the equipment."



After the people acclaimed the physically impressive Saul as their king, Samuel explained and wrote down what a king would do and then dismissed them to their homes (10:23-25). The people acclaimed Saul, saying, “Long live the king.” This expression is still used to express the desire for the health and success of a new monarch. Samuel then instructed the people regarding what to expect from a king, wrote it down in a scroll, and deposited it before Yahweh in the Tabernacle in Mizpah. This might have been an exposition of God’s laws for a king found in Deut 17:14-20. After the instruction, Samuel dismissed the people to their homes.

Saul’s public proclamation as king attracted valiant men to his side and repelled others, whom he chose to ignore for the time being (10:26-27). As Saul went home, some “valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched.” God provided everything that Saul needed to rule successfully, such as the enablement of the Spirit, the guidance of the Law, and the assistance of brave people. God provides all that those who believe in Him need in order to successfully serve Him (2 Pet 1:2-11). There were some rebels who despised Saul “and

brought him no presents.” Saul was aware of those who refused to honor him with the gifts typically given to a king, but he wisely chose to ignore them. Thus far, Saul had shown the admirable qualities of humility and forbearance. By relying on God’s help, Saul could be a successful leader of God’s people.

INITIAL OBEDIENCE AND SUCCESS (1 Samuel 11:1-15)

The divinely authorized Saul successfully led Israel in war against the Ammonites and gave God the credit.

Nahash the Ammonite came and besieged Jabesh Gilead (11:1-3). The Ammonites, descendants of Lot, occupied territory east of the Jordan. Jabesh was an Israelite city in the region of Gilead east of the Jordan. After the men of Jabesh offered to serve Nahash, he made the gouging out of their right eyes a term of their servitude. This would humiliate them, render them unable to fight, and bring reproach on all Israel. Nahash agreed to their request of seven days to see if a leader of Israel would come to their aid. Perhaps he thought that was an unlikely outcome and wanted to avoid taking the city by force.

Messengers from Jabesh Gilead went to Gibeah west of the Jordan to inform them of their plight (11:4-8). The people of Gibeah cried in despair, not knowing what to do. When messengers told Saul of the matter, “the Spirit of God came upon [him].” Although Saul had been appointed king, he had not yet assumed governmental authority. The Holy Spirit came upon him and empowered him to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. In a dramatic way, Saul called the Israelites to arms. He dismembered a pair of oxen and sent the pieces to all the tribes. This functioned as both a call to arms and a threat should they fail to come (cf. Judges 19–21). *The fear of Yahweh* came upon the people, and they rallied to Saul in great numbers. The fear of Yahweh is a faithful awareness of who He is, which should lead to worship and obedience. Three hundred thousand came from the tribes of Israel, including thirty thousand from Judah.

Under Saul’s leadership, Israel defeated the Ammonites (11:9-13). Saul employed good military

tactics by dividing his troops into three companies that simultaneously attacked at dawn after giving the Ammonites a false sense of security. The victory over the Ammonites elicited the tribes' full allegiance to Saul. They even suggested executing all those who had earlier opposed his rule. Saul wisely declined to do so and attributed the victory to Yahweh. This was the highlight of Saul's life. He was empowered by the Spirit, expressed mercy, and gave full credit to Yahweh. We are at our best as believers when we rely upon the Holy Spirit and give glory to Christ for whatever we achieve (Acts 3:11-16; 14:8-18).

As a result of the victory, the tribes of Israel gathered at Gilgal and enthusiastically endorsed Saul's kingship (11:14-15). Samuel called the tribes to Gilgal to renew the kingdom. After the victory over the Ammonites, the nation—before Yahweh—joyfully affirmed Saul's kingship by making “sacrifices of peace offerings.” The peace offering was an offering celebrating that all was right between God and His people, with a portion of the offering given to God and the rest enjoyed in a fellowship meal (Lev 7:11-15). When believers today partake of the Lord's Supper, they look forward to the kingdom of Christ and enjoy fellowship with each other (Matt 26:26-29).

PRAYER FOR THE NATION AND THE KING (1 Samuel 12:1-25)

Samuel addressed the nation. He warned about the future and promised to pray for the nation.

The people of Israel affirmed that Samuel had been righteous in his dealings with them. There were no grounds for accusing him.

Samuel reviewed how, since the Exodus, Yahweh had faithfully raised up leaders to deliver the people of Israel and had now set a king over them. He explained that their premature and wrongly motivated request for a king was, in essence, a rejection of Yahweh as King. Samuel emphasized the seriousness of that through a display of God's power that elicited the fear of Yahweh. The nation could either fear Yahweh and serve Him or rebel against His commandment and experience the consequences of covenant unfaithfulness

(Deut 28:15-68). The success of the newly instituted monarchy would depend on the nation's continual “fear of the LORD” and obedience to His commands.

Samuel encouraged the people to serve Yahweh and promised to pray for them and teach them to honor Yahweh lest they and their king be “swept away” through continual wickedness. Intercessory prayer is a responsibility of all believers and especially of spiritual leaders (Eph 6:18; Jas 5:13-18; 1 John 5:16-17).

LESSON: FINISHING WELL IS VITAL

Saul began his reign well. He believed in the Messiah for everlasting life, and the Holy Spirit regenerated him and enabled him to lead the nation against its enemies.

Saul was initially obedient to Yahweh. He then became disobedient to the point that Yahweh would reject him as king. Yahweh granted him the kingdom and later took it from him.

Believers must finish well in their service to Christ to not be disqualified from ruling with Him in the ages to come. The Apostle Paul expressed this concern in 1 Cor 9:24-27:

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do* it to obtain a perishable crown, but *we* *for an imperishable crown*. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. ■



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Did You Know that
Jesus Christ Is
***the Angel
of the
Lord?***

By Bob Wilkin

It is Yahweh himself in the person of the preincarnate Christ who comes to vindicate himself.

About twenty years ago, at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, I heard a speaker present a message about the Angel of the Lord (*Malak Yahweh*). The speaker suggested that the Scriptures show that the Angel of the Lord is never the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ.

After the talk, I asked Dr. Arnold Fructenbaum, who had been in the audience, what he thought of the talk. He said, “I know my Messiah appeared many times to believers as the Angel of the Lord.” I agree with him.

We know that the term *angel of the Lord* often refers to God in the flesh because the text tells us so. Since Scripture also tells us that no one has ever seen God the Father (John 1:18), *the Angel of the Lord*, in these instances, must be God the Son. There are several OT examples of such appearances.

The Angel of the Lord saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem and its inhabitants by taking the lives of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

After the Angel of the Lord met with Gideon, he said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face” (Judg 6:22). The Lord then told Gideon not to fear, for “you shall not die” because of having seen the Lord (Judg 6:23).

Before Samson was conceived, the Angel of the Lord met with Manoah and his wife. Afterward, Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die because we have seen God!” (Judg 13:22).

Moses met with the Angel of the Lord at the burning bush (Exod 3:2). We then read: “God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’” (Exod 3:4). The Angel of the Lord is identified as God. Moses was told to take off his sandals “for the place where you stand is holy ground” (Exod 3:5).

The Angel of the Lord met face-to-face with Hagar, the mother of Ishmael (Gen 16:7-11). Moses reports: “Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, ‘Have I also here seen Him who sees me?’” (Gen 16:13). She knew she had met with the Lord God.

Abraham also met the Angel of the Lord. When he was about to take Isaac’s life on Mount Moriah, the Angel said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (Gen 22:12). The Angel of the Lord identified Himself as God.

In his commentary on Zechariah 12:8, Eiselen writes:

Any angel might be called “angel of Jehovah” (1 Kings 19:7; 2 Sam. 24:16), but there are passages in the Old Testament in which the phrase has a peculiar meaning (Gen. 31:11–13; Exod. 23:20, 21, etc.). To the latter class belongs this verse [Zech 12:8]. In these passages the “angel of Jehovah” is “not a created angel; he is Jehovah himself,” manifesting himself without men, that is, in the external affairs of men, just as

in the Old Testament “spirit of Jehovah” is Jehovah manifesting himself within men (*The Minor Prophets*, Vol. IX, pp. 610-11).

“I know my Messiah appeared many times to believers as the Angel of the Lord.”

In an amazing demonstration of His omnipotence, the Angel of the Lord saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem and its inhabitants by taking the lives of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers as they slept, forcing Sennacherib to take his remaining army home (2 Kgs 19:35; Isa 37:36). Some OT commentators consider this number to be exaggerated.ⁱ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown believe the number is correct and that it demonstrates God’s power:

It was the miraculous interposition of the Almighty that defended Jerusalem. As to the secondary agent employed in the destruction of the Assyrian army, it is most probable that it was effected by a hot south wind, the simoon, such as to this day often envelops and destroys whole caravans.ⁱⁱ

Rob Phillips comments, “It is Yahweh himself in the person of the preincarnate Christ who comes to vindicate himself. That the angel is Yahweh seems borne out in Yahweh’s words to Hezekiah: ‘I will defend this city and rescue it for my sake’ (Isa 37:35, emphasis added).”ⁱⁱⁱ

The expression *the angel of the Lord* occurs only once in the NT. An angel met with Joseph and told him not to divorce Mary because she was with child by the Holy Spirit, in keeping with the prophecy of Isa 7:14 (Matt 1:20-25). However, since that angel is first called “an angel of the Lord” (Matt 1:20), the definite article in Matt 1:24 merely refers to the specific angel who had met with Joseph.^{iv}

Gotquestions.org says:

It is possible that the appearances of the angel of the Lord were manifestations of Jesus before His incarnation. Jesus declared Himself to be existent “before Abraham” (John 8:58), so it is logical that He would be active and manifest in the world. Whatever the case, whether the angel of the Lord was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (Christophany) or an appearance of God the Father (theophany), it is highly likely that the phrase “the angel of the Lord” usually identifies a physical appearance of God.^v

I agree with Dr. Fructenbaum. It is very meaningful to me that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared many times to believers before His Incarnation. His appearances demonstrate His love for us. ■



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ⁱ See, for example, Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, Vol. 11, p. 239.

ⁱⁱ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 244.

ⁱⁱⁱ “Slaughter of the Assyrians” at <https://oncedelivered.net/2022/11/15/slaughter-of-the-assyrians/>. Last accessed July 11, 2024.

^{iv} Mary was already pregnant, so this would not be a preincarnate appearance. Were the messenger *the* Angel of the Lord, that would mean the seemingly impossible: Jesus was present in two places at once in His physical body.

^v See <https://www.gotquestions.org/angel-of-the-Lord.html>. Last accessed July 11, 2024. As previously mentioned, John 1:18 says that no one has seen God the Father. That would suggest that all theophanies were Christophanies, including the appearances of the Angel of the Lord.



Mirrors Can Be Deceptive

By Ken Yates

INTRODUCTION

When I was a boy, I was really thin. In fact, some called me “Skinny Kenny.” The nickname didn’t bother me because it was never said in a mean way. It was simply stating a fact.

There were times, however, when I did not like being skinny. Back then, some advertisements talked about “90-pound weaklings.” Muscle-bound guys would push the weaklings around. Such poor souls could send in their money to buy protein shakes. They would become real men with large muscles if they only drank those shakes. It was easy for me to identify as one of those 90-pound weaklings, even

though I doubt I even weighed that much then. I longed to be like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

I think I grew out of such desires. Somewhere along the way, I figured out that the shakes wouldn’t turn me into a body builder. Those advertisements were deceptive.

But through the years I’ve learned that many other guys want the same thing I did as a boy, and some even reach their goal. I realize, however, that they’ve been deceived in at least one respect.

WORKING OUT AT THE GYM

I joined the military when I was a very young man. It's a macho profession, and many of us visited the gym often. Our superior officers rated us on how physically fit we kept ourselves. Such fitness would help us get promoted, get pay raises, and allow us to assume higher levels of responsibility.

Spiritually speaking,
good works are like
working out with
weights.

Through the wisdom that comes with age, I had learned that obtaining muscles in one's chest and arms was not the result of drinking a magical protein elixir. Watching my fellow soldiers spend a lot of time in the gym showed me that such muscles resulted from a lot of hard work. I often saw them strain as they lifted weights. They would work on different muscle groups and follow certain patterns learned from the experts. They spoke of light days, heavy days, reps, spotters, cardio, carbs, and many other things I had no clue about.

I would dabble in lifting weights only because my job depended upon it. But I told myself that it wasn't worth my time or effort to get too serious about it. I suppose I was too lazy. At any rate, I convinced myself that my genes would never allow me to be muscle-bound.

But I have to admit that when I did visit the gym, I experienced at least a tinge of jealousy. I would see guys in my unit who were like the men in the advertisements I saw as a boy. If we were ever in a physical fight, they would make short work of me. They were better physical specimens than I was.

They knew it, too. In almost all these gyms there were large mirrors surrounding the weight machines. When these guys finished lifting, it was all too common to see them stand in front of these

mirrors. They would flex their muscles and admire their handiwork. They were proud of what their hard work had accomplished.

At such times, I would sometimes wish I looked like that. Fortunately, I also experienced times of clarity that put it all in the proper perspective. I realized that those mirrors did not tell the whole truth.

OLD GUYS AND MIRRORS

As an old guy, I still visit the gym. My workouts now revolve around simply staying active and trying to stave off the aches and pains that come with getting older. I have zero desire to develop big muscles, and I never find myself the least bit jealous of the young guys who do. That ship has sailed.

But I also see guys my age who still flex before the mirrors. They have larger arms and chests than I do. They can certainly lift more weight than I can. I know that these are guys who are like so many of the men I saw in the gyms in my younger days. They are proud of the way their bodies look. The mirrors remind them of what years of working out have accomplished.

But it's different now. Those muscles are sagging. They're not as firm. The skin around them is wrinkled. Those muscles get really sore. The aches and pains of old age are obvious as these men position themselves in front of those mirrors. They walk around in front of those mirrors much more slowly.

In 1 Cor 15:40-45, he
reminds us that our
earthly bodies are
corruptible.

I know these guys understand all these things. But sometimes, I wonder if they can push such thoughts from their minds. Can they look in the mirror and be fooled? It seems to me that those

mirrors can keep us from seeing reality. They can deceive us into thinking that our physical bodies are what is most important. With the gratification those mirrors give us, we can believe a lie.

ETERNAL MUSCLES ARE MORE IMPORTANT

The lie those mirrors tell is that we should concentrate on the muscles in our current bodies. On two occasions, Paul tells the believers in Corinth that other muscles are more important.

In 1 Cor 15:40-45, he reminds us that our earthly bodies are corruptible. We may think they look great in a mirror, but in reality, they are weak. They will perish. The old guys in front of the gym's mirror can see it, even if they can push such thoughts from their minds.

Paul encourages those believers to work out for the body they will have in eternity. He says that their good works can contribute to the glory of that future body. He uses the illustration of light. Some bodies will be brighter than others. To continue my analogy: Some bodies will have bigger spiritual muscles in the world to come.

Paul tells the believers
in Corinth that other
muscles are more
important.

Paul says the same thing in another letter to the Corinthian church. He says that their physical bodies are perishing. However, the inner man can be renewed (I would say strengthened!). If a believer does that through walking in obedience to the Lord, his future body will be one with “an exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor 4:16-18). Spiritually speaking, good works are like working out with weights. In eternity, it will be obvious who has been pumping spiritual iron.

Not surprisingly, in both these passages, Paul lets us know which set of muscles are more important. The muscles we develop in this earthly body are temporary. The muscles we build up for the world to come are eternal. As all the Bible teaches, the things we do for the Lord will bring eternal rewards.


Some bodies will
have bigger spiritual
muscles in the
world to come.

CONCLUSION

It is wise to take care of ourselves. Insofar as it's within our power, being healthy is a good idea. This involves what we eat. It also involves engaging in physical exercise. If we do such things, we'll have more energy to fulfill our responsibilities and serve others. We will also probably avoid many of the problems associated with poor health.

But we need to keep it in perspective. If a mirror at the gym convinces us that our physical efforts are what life is all about, then the mirror is lying.

We should be more concerned about our bodies in the world to come. What rewards will He give us when we stand before the King at the Judgment Seat of Christ? It will depend upon how healthy we were spiritually and what kind of “weight” we lifted for Him.

What will we see when we look in the mirror on that Day? A 90-pound weakling or a muscle-bound weightlifter? 

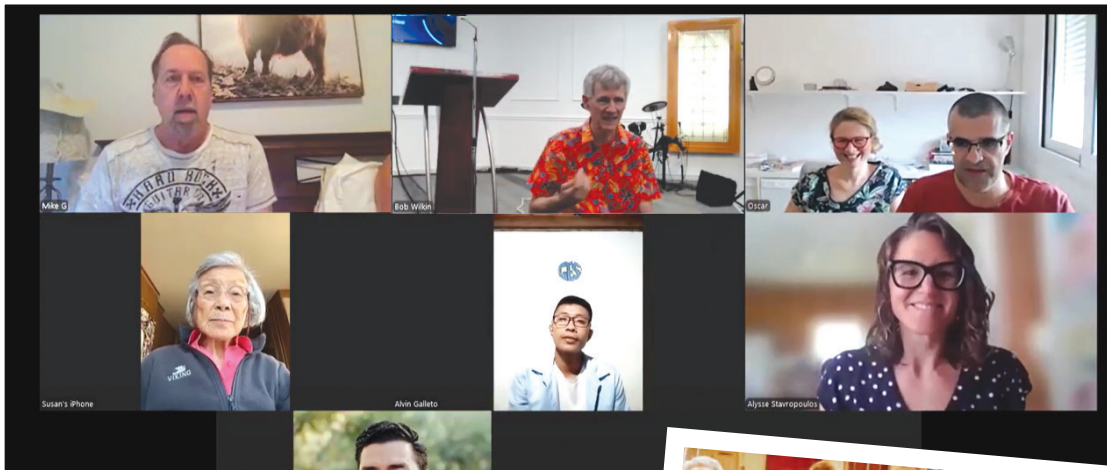


Ken Yates is a retired Army chaplain (Lt. Col). He has many theological degrees, including a Ph.D. from D.T.S. in New Testament. He leads the GES international ministry, cohosts the daily podcast, and assists Bob in all aspects of the GES ministry. His new book, *Elisabeth*, is a powerful testimony to the power of God manifested in a Christ-centered family. He and his wife, Pam, live in Columbia, SC.

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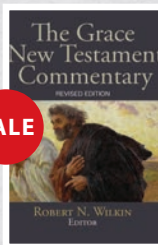


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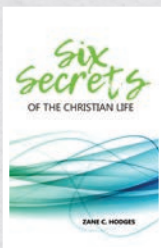


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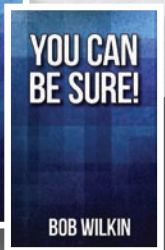
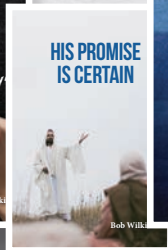
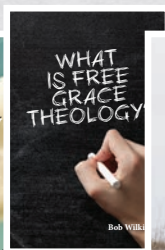
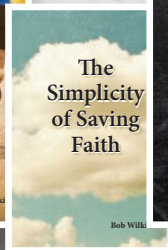
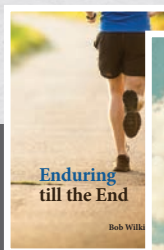


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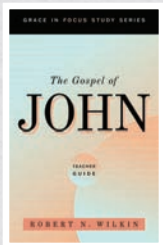
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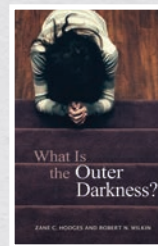
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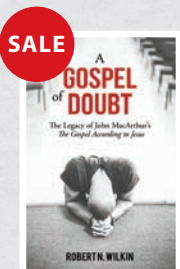
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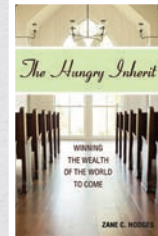
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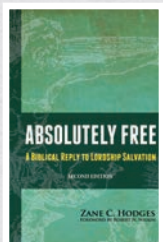
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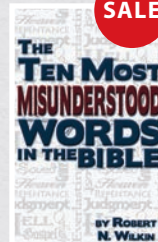
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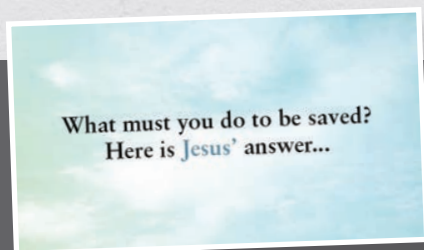
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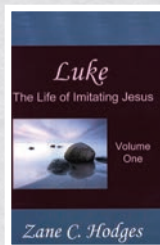
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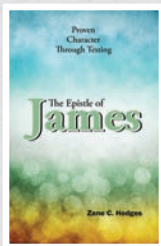


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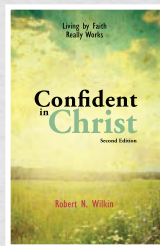


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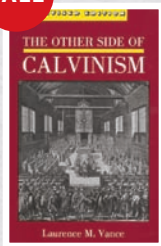
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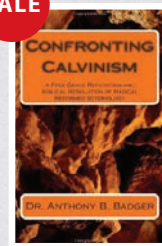
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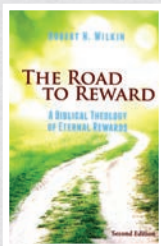


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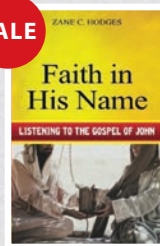
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By Mike Lii

In my family, I'm notorious for being a bargain hunter. I get a thrill when I can purchase a high-value item at a heavily discounted price. For example, my wife and son get hot during parts of the day during the summer months here in Texas. Why? I selected a nights-free electricity plan and have asked them not to turn on the air conditioning until 8:00 pm unless we have guests. (Needless to say, they very much appreciate daytime guests during the summer!) The motto of one of my favorite stores is: "Good stuff cheap."¹

¹ Ollie's Bargain Outlet.

Now, let's apply bargain-hunting to everlasting life. What is the value of everlasting life? What is a good price to pay for everlasting life?

VALUE OF EVERLASTING LIFE

Everlasting life is everlasting. It is Christ's life in us (John 11:25-27). Once a person has it, he is guaranteed to be with Jesus forever. This life can be experienced more abundantly now and in the future as we enjoy fellowship with Him and His people (John 10:10). It is a life that will ultimately

This is the great tragedy of Lordship Salvation.

have no death, no sorrow, and no crying throughout eternity (Rev 21:4). What is the value of such a life? Everlasting life is of infinite value and infinite worth for infinite time. Even a finite price for something of infinite worth would make everlasting life the ultimate bargain.

EVERLASTING LIFE IS FREE, NOT A GREAT DEAL

The Lord indicated that receiving everlasting life costs us nothing: “Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely [or, without cost]” (Rev 22:17).

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cheap.

Everlasting life is free, not cheap. *Cheap* would imply a bargain price to be paid by the buyer. Everlasting life is not the ultimate bargain; instead, it is absolutely free to all who believe Jesus’ promise.²

LORDSHIP SALVATION AS A GREAT DEAL

What is the gospel according to Lordship Salvation? Lordship Salvation teaches that everlasting life is received if one commits to obeying Jesus as master of his life, gives up his known sins, and perseveres in following Him. Lordship Salvation, therefore, teaches that there is a cost to receiving everlasting life.

Lordship Salvation’s cost for everlasting life is relatively cheap. If true, Lordship Salvation is the ultimate deal. Some may think the cost is high, but what is promised is worth infinitely more. Lordship Salvation teaches that everlasting life requires sacrifice and the forsaking of known sin during one’s lifetime. Instead of interpreting Jesus’ encounter with the rich young ruler as pre-evangelism (e.g., highlighting the ruler’s sinfulness and misconception of Jesus’s deity) and an explanation of how one receives eternal reward,³ Lordship Salvation teaches that Jesus’ gospel offer to the rich young ruler was: “Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Luke 18:22). In interpreting the Gospel of Luke (a book written for believers), Lordship Salvation mistakenly equates “treasure in heaven” (a promise of eternal reward) with “everlasting life.”

Now assume for a moment that Lordship Salvation’s gospel offer is true. By sacrificing all for the remainder of one’s life (probably ninety years at most), one receives in return life forever in God’s wonderful kingdom. Even though the cost is very high, what is received in return far outweighs the sacrifice.

Under Lordship Salvation, everlasting life is received on the cheap. If true, it would be the best deal anyone could ever receive. The cost is finite, and the return on investment is infinite. A finite temporal sacrifice (one’s life here and now) is all that is needed to receive a benefit of infinite value

² Although everlasting life is offered to us freely, it cost Jesus His life and extreme sacrifice on the cross to provide it.

³ See Chapter 5 of *Grace in Eclipse*, Zane C. Hodges, Grace Evangelical Society (2016).



and unending duration (everlasting life). What a deal! What a bargain!

LORDSHIP SALVATION AS A FRAUD

In commercial transactions, *fraud* occurs when one pays the specified price for something but does not receive what was promised. For example, about twenty years ago, I paid a street vendor in San Francisco's Chinatown \$10.00 for eight rechargeable batteries. I thought I'd gotten a very good deal. However, when I got home, I discovered that these batteries couldn't even hold a charge. They weren't worth the \$10.00 I paid for them. I had been a victim of fraud.

How is Lordship Salvation a fraud? First, let's look at the truth: Scripture teaches that everlasting life is received only by believing in Jesus specifically *for* the promise of everlasting life (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; 11:25-27). Lordship Salvation, on the other hand, teaches that one must be committed and must give up one's known sins—in other words, do works—in order to be saved. One who accepts this teaching is a victim of spiritual fraud. If he believes this teaching, it is impossible that he is also believing in Jesus for everlasting life in the sense that Scripture teaches. He is doubting Jesus' clear promise of everlasting life to all who simply believe in Him, and Him alone, for it. He will, therefore, not have eternal life if he continues in this way of thinking.

⁴ Note: This is not to say that one who currently believes the message of Lordship Salvation has never believed in Jesus alone for everlasting life. If one has at any time believed in Jesus for everlasting life, they have everlasting life. Everlasting life, once received, is irrevocable, even for believers who later lose their faith in Jesus or come to believe a false gospel.

This is the great tragedy of Lordship Salvation. If one believes the works message of Lordship Salvation and tries to live up to it, at the end he will not have everlasting life.⁴ Since Lordship Salvation's message is false and one does not receive what is promised, it is a fraud. Lordship Salvation should be more accurately named *Fraudulent Grace*.

Everlasting life is not the ultimate bargain.

CONCLUSION

We can't buy everlasting life. It is an absolutely free gift and can only be received as a gift by believing in Jesus' promise to give it to everyone who believes in Him for it. The Lord Jesus paid the price with His death on the cross. Lordship Salvation, if true, would make everlasting life the ultimate bargain and the best deal ever offered to mankind. But Lordship Salvation and any other works-related salvation is the saddest fraud ever perpetuated. Do not be a victim of this fraud. Believe in the saving message of Jesus. He said:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). ■



Mike Lii is a finance attorney. He and his wife, Letitia, a member of the GES board, and their son, Payton, live in Dallas and serve at Vista Ridge Bible Fellowship in Lewisville, Texas. Mike and Letitia also run the Zane Hodges Library online (zanehodges.org).



Did the Thief on the Cross Ask for Salvation?

By Bob Wilkin

Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:42-43).

Casey sent me an actual handwritten letter. He asked a series of super questions about this exchange:

Did the thief on the cross believe in eternal security when he asked the Lord to remember him? He did believe eternal life was possible or he wouldn't have asked. He did believe Jesus was innocent and probably believed a lot more about Him. He obviously believed Jesus was capable of saving him. He was humble and admitted his sin. He called on Jesus to save him.

I want to camp on Casey's suggestion that the thief on the cross “probably believed a lot more about Him.”

Let's analyze the thief's request and the Lord's answer.

The man said, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

The Lord did not talk about the future and the kingdom. He talked about that very day: “Today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

He clearly believed the following:

- Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (cf. John 20:31).
- Jesus will rise from the dead and come again.
- Jesus will rule and reign forever.
- He himself will rise from the dead.
- He will be in Jesus' kingdom.
- Jesus may give him some rewards in the coming kingdom.

Yes, the man believed in eternal security when he asked for the Lord to remember him when He comes into His kingdom. The thief on the cross had already believed in Jesus *for everlasting life*. He already knew that he would never hunger, never

Did the thief on the cross believe in eternal security when he asked the Lord to remember him?

thirst, never perish, never be cast out, and never die spiritually.

We are not told *how* he came to believe Jesus' promise of everlasting life. It is possible that he had previously heard Jesus share the promise of everlasting life. He might have heard people in the crowd who were mocking Him saying, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him" (Matt 27:42). Of course, Pilate had put a sign above His head saying, "King of the Jews." By watching how Jesus handled Himself on the cross, he came to believe that Jesus really was the Messiah and that He guaranteed eternal life to all who believe in Him.

He was not calling on Jesus to save him. He knew that Jesus had already saved him, and his request demonstrated that.

Remember General MacArthur? He promised to return to the Philippines when he was forced out by enemy forces. Let's say there were a young Filipino man who had just met him and who was helping him escape. Let's say he said, "General, remember me when you return." He would have been asking the general to reward him for his service when he returned. True, the young man did not do a lot. He just helped MacArthur for a few hours. But he knows the general will return, and he wonders if there might be some reward for him when he does.

The Lord's answer is revealing as well. The man asked the Lord to remember him *in the future when He comes into His kingdom*. However, the Lord did not talk about the future and the kingdom. He talked about *that very day*: "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." I think the emphasis there is on the words *with Me*. The man would be close to Jesus in Paradise that very day, Friday before sunset.

At that time, Paradise was not the third heaven. It was the part of Sheol/Hades that was for the saved, where Abraham was (Luke 16:19-31) and where the Lord Jesus and this man would soon be as well.

The fact that he would be close to Jesus immediately *implied that he would also be close to Jesus when He comes into His kingdom*. That is, the Lord was probably saying that this former thief would be one of Jesus' co-rulers in the kingdom!

Remember that Jesus had said that whoever confessed Him before men, He would confess before His Father (Matt 10:32). Paul interpreted that to mean that whoever endures in his confession of Christ will rule with Him in the life to come (2 Tim 2:12). The thief on the cross confessed Christ until he died. He was the only one at the cross, other than the centurion, who did so. Even though he only confessed that Jesus is the Christ for a few hours, he did endure.

The lesson of the thief on the cross is not that we are regenerated by faith alone, apart from works. That is true, of course (John 3:16; Eph 2:8-9; Rev 22:17). But the thief on the cross did do a good work—a very good work. He boldly confessed Christ and accepted the ridicule of the other thief and likely many in the crowd as well. The lesson of the thief on the cross is that the Lord Jesus remembers what we have done for Him and will reward us for those things when He returns. ■



Bob Wilkin is Executive Director of Grace Evangelical Society. He and Sharon live in Highland Village, TX. He has racewalked eleven marathons.

Voice from the Past

Read Your Bible!

By Art Farstad

Many have heard the story of the man whose devotional reading consisted of cracking his Bible at random and reading the first verse his finger touched. One morning this was his verse for the day: “And Judas went out and hanged himself.”

That can’t be it, he thought. So he tried again. “Go thou and do likewise” was his second hit.

Chagrined, he thought, The third time is a charm! It wasn’t. It read: “What thou doest, do quickly!”

Maybe you’re just not a book person, but by all means be a Book person.

Few of us are as off-base as that man, but since we have a fresh New Year ahead, let’s look at seven ways we can improve our Bible reading.



1. READ!

The most obvious advice is: “Just do it!” Millions of Christians don’t, and it shows in their attitudes and life-styles. A Charles Schulz cartoon from the book *Young Pillars* shows a gangling teenager on the phone with his girlfriend. The caption reads: “I’m beginning to unravel the mystery of the Old Testament; I’m reading it!”

2. READ PRAYERFULLY

You’re not reading a secular book or even a great Christian one; you’re reading God’s inspired message to you. Ask His blessing and the Spirit’s enlightenment every time you read.

3. READ SYSTEMATICALLY

Read entire books of the Bible, not just snippets. And remember to keep a record of what you’ve read. Whether you use a one-year system (see *Our Daily Bread* for an example) or a three-year one doesn’t matter. Make a commitment to read seven minutes a day to start with.



4. READ GRACIOUSLY

Don't make Bible-reading a legalistic fetish: "I missed this morning, so everything will go wrong today" or "No Bible, no breakfast." When you're ill, under special pressure, or rushed to leave home, a short passage read with care is worth three chapters rushed through to assuage your conscience!

This is God's love letter to His people and when cynics read it to ridicule or find fault *they're reading someone else's mail!* (If you're one of those, dear reader, do keep reading, but look for God's grace in Christ, not faults!)

5. READ ATTENTIVELY

A liberal New Testament scholar admitted on his death bed that he "had never read the New Testament *with attention*" (although, no doubt, he had read with attention many scholarly books and articles *about* the New Testament). Let's not be guilty of such a cavalier handling of God's Word. Shut off all the world, especially radio, TV, records, CDs, and tapes, and give the King your *undivided attention*.

Visualize the historical narratives, meditate on the poetry, and apply the exhortations.

6. READ EXPECTANTLY

As you search for wisdom to live each day, continue your reading for that day until you find it. God will speak through His Word!

7. READ JOYFULLY

Our pioneer ancestors laboriously traced out God's words in big family Bibles. It showed in their stable and righteous lives. We ought to give the Bible that kind of respect.

Keep reading and eventually, you will enjoy the Bible. It will gradually change from the "bran

Ask His blessing
and the Spirit's
enlightenment every
time you read.

flakes" stage (dry but nourishing) to the "peaches-and-cream" stage ("Hey, I'm enjoying this!").

Maybe you're just not a book person, but by all means be a Book person.

The late Dr. John Mitchell, a graduate of Dallas Seminary's first class and long-time professor at Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, Oregon, used to lecture students when their ignorance of some text surfaced. With his Scottish burr, he would say, "Don't you fellas ever read you Bi-bles?"

I pass on his fatherly command to those who didn't have the privilege of sitting under his ministry: "Read you Bi-bles!" ■



Art Farstad earned a Master of Theology in Old Testament and a Doctor of Theology in New Testament from Dallas Theological Seminary, where he also taught Greek for five years. He was the editor of the *New King James Version*, the *New Scofield Study Bible*, and the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*. He passed in 1998.

¹ This article was published in the January-February 1993 issue of *Grace in Focus*. It is available online at faithalone.org.

H A P P Y

new year

By Bill Fiess

Happy New Year

(round)

Thank You for
Eternal life

Through Jesus Christ, Your Son!

Happy New Year!
Happy New Year!
Happy New Year, friends!

Thank You for the
Holy Spirit!
May He lead our lives!


Thank You, Father,
For this new year!
Glorify Your Name!

Happy New Year!
Make us always
Thankful for Your grace!

Happy New Year

(A Round)

Words & Lyrics
by Bill Fiess, 2024

1	2	3	4
			
Hap - py	new year!	Hap - py	new year!
Thank You,	Fa - ther,	for this	new year!
Thank You	for e -	ter - nal	life through
Thank You	for the	Hol - y	Spir - it!
Hap - py	new year!	Make us	al - ways

Hap - py new year, friends!
Glor - i - fy Your Name!
Je - sus Christ Your Son!
May He lead our lives!
thank - ful for Your grace!

Each measure a new part will begin. The round continues throughout the entire song.

Are You Enjoying Our Daily

Each day from Monday to Friday, Ken Yates, Bob Wilkin, and Kathryn Wright discuss important passages and topics. These are very short articles of 500 to 1000 words. You can have these emailed to you daily by going to faithalone.org/Resources/Subscribe by Email. You can also go to our website each day.

blog Posts?

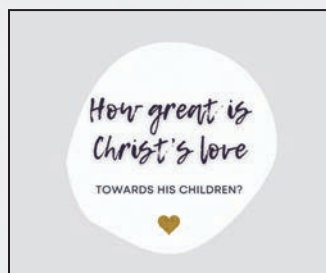
Here are some of the blogs from August and September:



August 9, 2024
Ken Yates
Sitting on the Front Row



August 12, 2024
Ken Yates
Rewards, Rewards, Rewards



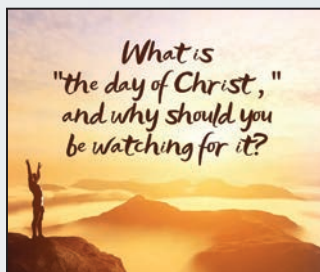
August 26, 2024
Ken Yates
The Power of Grace



August 30, 2024
Ken Yates
Wisdom Calls Out



September 2, 2024
Bob Wilkin
Did You Know that Jesus Is the Exact Image of the Invisible God?



September 3, 2024
Bob Wilkin
Why is the Word "Day" Vital to Understanding Human History?



September 6, 2024
Bob Wilkin
How Do We Keep Going When the Going Gets Tough?



September 10, 2024
Bob Wilkin
Training Time for Reigning Time

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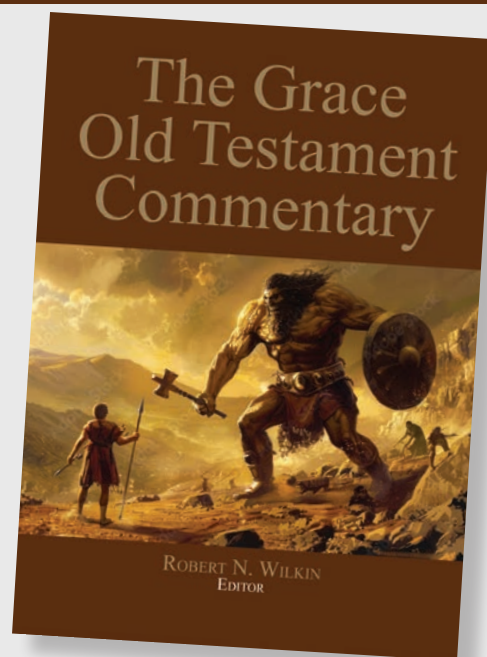
ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Did you know that GES is producing a one-volume commentary on the Old Testament?

**Expected Release Date:
December 31, 2026**

Books Already Completed with author: Leviticus (Wilkin), Deuteronomy (Yates), Judges (Stevens), Ruth (Sterling), 1-2 Samuel (Sterling), 1-2 Kings (Yates), Nehemiah (Badger), Ecclesiastes (Dorskocil), Jeremiah (Yates), Lamentations (Badger), Daniel (Dorskocil), Jonah (Thurman), Nahum (Fink), Haggai (Badger), Zechariah (Badger), Psalms Book 2 (Lewis), Psalms Book 4 (Yates), and Malachi (Fink).

Books Nearly Complete with author:
Genesis, 41 of 50 (Wilkin), Job, 36 of 42 (Pierce), and Psalms Book 1, 33 of 41 (Wilkin).



Please pray for this important project!