

# Wisdom & Power

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On The Cover: This is a view of Tumwater Canyon near Cashmere Washington. It was taken by Chondra Rankin.	

## Wisdom & Power

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We hope each issue gives you something to think about, laugh over, pray on, and pass around.

Readers are urged to submit articles for publication. We can't guarantee that they will be used, however.

We gladly receive mail from you. Tell us what you think of the magazine.

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# First Words

## About Worship

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I've been giving time recently to the topic of worship. I've spent time in prayer, conversations, and reading on this subject. What comes to mind is, "the more I learn, the more I don't know!" I want to share some of my thoughts, questions and conclusions with you for your consideration.

My thoughts began along the lines of wondering if people who attended our church service experienced Yahweh? This opens the discussion about why people assemble on Sunday morning. I wondered if the songs touched their hearts? Were they engaging in private prayer? Were their souls stirred by the scripture lesson? Did they reach out to bless someone on Yahweh's behalf? If all these questions were answered in the affirmative, that would be great.

Yet I'm not so naive to think that while people are sitting in a service of worship other thoughts aren't running through their minds – like next week's activities, who's late, will the service run overtime, where to have lunch, and so on. You can probably add some from your own experience.

Another thought I had was, should worship be thrilling and exciting? I was thinking of something akin to a rock concert, or a night club act. Perhaps it should be quiet, subdued, or reserved. I've seen people get excited over ball games and chess matches. Is it the function of worship to get the congregation excited about Yahweh? Or is it Yahweh that excites the congregation to worship? I'm leaning toward the idea that if it's necessary to make worship exciting, perhaps Yahweh isn't there. I've heard this comment, "We have to have toe-tapping, hand-clapping music or the people won't come." So I think that it is possible to have a service about Yahweh, tailored to draw people in, that Yahweh doesn't attend. In my mind, it falls into any number of secular concert and entertainment venues that make someone a lot of money. That's not what I'm after.

I'm not making an argument against any type of music, style, songs, or instruments. What I want is a workable, usable understanding of what worship is and what it accomplishes. Gaining this understanding may make it necessary to change what I've been doing. That speaks to traditions.

What if Yahweh broke through to us and our

traditional way of worship was changed? Would that be acceptable to us, if it was acceptable to Yahweh? Would His influence be enough to cause us to forsake some traditions? I don't have any in mind at this point – I'm still investigating the issue. However, the question is: Is what I'm comfortable with more important than what is right?

I thought that if I could discern how the early church "did church" it might give me some insight. I've read that in or about AD 150 a typical service included reading from the Apostles and Prophets, an exhortation on the texts, prayers, communion, and a collection was taken for the needy. We could adopt their methods but it won't insure anything beyond conformity.

I believe worship is beyond methods or styles, hymns or choruses, equipment or instruments. Today, my workable definition of worship is "verbalizing what is great about Yahweh". This includes what He has done in the past, what He's doing in the present, and what He has promised to do in the future. Whether this is expressed in song, poems, conversations, or weeping, I'm coming to the conclusion that this is what constitutes worship!

When we focus on Yahweh's might, faithfulness, mercy, and promises and express our joy, we are worshiping. It can be done anywhere. A pastor asked a man why he didn't come to church. The man replied that he went to the woods and worshiped God there by himself. "After all," the man said, "isn't God there too?"

The pastor didn't want to lose this debate, so he insisted that the man give him some scripture that taught this way of worshiping. The man replied, "It says in Revelation 22:9, 'Worship God alone'. So that's what I do, I go out somewhere I can be alone".

Whether we worship in a group, or alone, it is a good practice to engage in. Spend some time thinking of those three things: what Yahweh has done, what He is doing, and what He will do. You'll find yourself worshiping before you know it.

Blessings as you read on!

Chuck Jones

# Jesus Didn't Come To Start A New Religion!

By Bruce Lyon.

I find it really amazing that anyone who reads the New Testament [Covenant] doesn't realize that Jesus did not come to start a new religion. He came as "that prophet" mentioned by Moses, who would be like unto him and as such brought the provisions of the New Covenant to the Israel of his day. The prophecy specifically states that those who would not listen to him would suffer the consequences – in reality be cut off from Israel – and those who accepted the message that he brought would be recognized as members in the Israel of God, the ecclesia of God.

The believing remnant that were descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - Israel, accepted the message that Jesus brought with authority, speaking the words God had given him to proclaim. Many people in Israel had been prepared by the preaching of John the Baptist and so accepted the message that Jesus brought. The result was that this believing remnant became a part of Jesus ("ecclesia - called out assembly"), the congregation of God, God's household (a term used for Israel). That is why Jesus promised the 12 apostles rulership over the 12 tribes of Israel. We are talking about physical Israel as it will exist after the coming of Jesus the Messiah to sit on the throne of David at Jerusalem.

Now the amazing news. The mystery Paul reveals is that Gentiles have been grafted in to the Israel of God by a new and living way and that way is through belief in the lord Jesus the Messiah whom God sent to bring them into fellowship with himself and to be a part of the Israel of God.

In Paul's allegory in Romans 11:17-24, the olive tree represents the people of God. The cultivated

olive (kallielaios) is Israel, from which some of the branches were broken off (Jews who rejected Jesus as their Messiah, and so lost their place as God's people), while shoots of a wild-olive (agrielaios) tree were grafted in their place (the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God). So we see the stock remains the same; it is only in the branches that changes occur. So Israel, the people of God, is a continuous entity (OT use of the olive is a symbol for Israel), but its membership is subject both to the exclusion of native Israelites and the inclusion of the alien stock of Gentile believers. It is interesting that in ancient horticulture the grafting in of wild olive branches to a cultivated olive tree was a device used to rejuvenate an otherwise unproductive cultivated olive tree.

We see in Jesus the embodiment of the remnant of the Israel of God and when we come to be in him we are automatically included as members of his body. As a result, we are seen of God as a part of the Israel of God. In Israel [Jesus] there is salvation - deliverance in every sense of the word. We, as members of the body of the Messiah, are Messianic believers and as such recognize Jesus as the coming King of Israel who will take his place on the throne of David in Jerusalem upon his triumphant return. We will co-rule with him as spiritual Israelites ruling over the physical nation of Israel with the 12 apostles ruling over the 12 tribes of physical Israel, and eventually that will include rule over all the world, as the nations come up to Jerusalem to keep the feast [Tabernacles - ingathering, Zech:14].

If we are not now and will not be a part of the Israel of God, why the future Temple? why is Jesus seated on the throne of David as the

King of Israel? why are the 12 apostles to rule over the 12 tribes of Israel; are they different than ourselves as believers? Perhaps if the early "ecclesia - church - assembly" had not given up recognizing Jesus' death during the Passover season this knowledge would not have been lost.

It's time to recognize that we are, as believers, individually part of the Israel of God ("the stock remains the same"), and as a result Jesus is indeed our Messiah, God's anointed King of Israel, to whom we belong. He is the head of the "ecclesia", the congregation of God, the household of God [all terms that relate to Israel].

Listen to how Peter talks about those who make up the Israel of God:

1 Peter 2:4: So as you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but chosen and priceless in God's sight, you yourselves, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood and to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus the Messiah.

For it says in 1 Peter 2:6-8: "Look, I lay in Zion a stone, a

chosen and priceless cornerstone, and whoever believes in him will never be put to shame." So you who believe see his value, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a stumbling-stone and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

Verses 9-10: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation [the Israel of God], a people of his own, so that you may

“...we are,  
as believers,  
individually part of  
the Israel of God”

proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. You once were not a people [not a part of the Israel of God], but now you are God's people [Israel has always been known as the people of God, even now to this day]. You were shown no mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Indeed we have been shown mercy to be included in the Israel of God because of the sacrifice of the lord Messiah of Israel, Jesus. Those of physical Israel who rejected Jesus, God's sent one who brought the message about the coming Kingdom of God and the revelation of the New Covenant as THAT prophet, that was ratified by his shed blood on the tree, are as a result, no longer considered to be a part of the Israel of God; even though they can claim natural descent from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Gentiles, on the other hand who accept the message of the Messiah of Israel, and believe in him as the one whom God has sent, are now considered, in God's sight, as members of the Israel of God, and have the opportunity to do now what physical Israel did not do as they should have done: proclaim the message of the living God to all the world, and show forth to the world what blessings evolve from living according to God's revelation and to anticipate the coming Kingdom of God under the rulership of His son and our savior Jesus the lord, Messiah. 🍀

#### SOMETHING TO SMILE AT

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

The mother replied, "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment then said, "So, why is the groom wearing black?"

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!"

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again! As she ran she once again began to pray, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late...But please don't shove me either!"

# The Kingdom and Righteousness of God

by Mark Clarke

The promises made to Abraham included land, material blessings, and protection. Those who are Christ's now have the hope of partaking of those promises, and of ruling the world with Jesus Christ. That rule will be a perfect and righteous rule, and in order to enjoy all those things one would need to be given life in the Age To Come. Yet Jesus said that unless our righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Pharisees, we would in no wise enter the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5:20). This harkens back to verses like Psalm 15:2, that the one who would dwell in God's holy tabernacle is the one who works righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart.

God is a righteous judge and His judgment is perfect. His standards often sound harsh or strict, but that's because He has a much higher standard than any that we go by in our lives. Yet His righteous judgment is balanced by His tender mercy and compassion. II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God's judgment will come to pass, but He has been waiting to allow more people to come to repentance and accept the grace and mercy He made available through His Son's sacrifice.

At one time I was taught that in the administration of the Law, one's salvation was based on works, while in the current administration it is based on grace. However, Paul said that no flesh shall be justified by the works of the Law (Romans 3:20). The Law was given to Israel as an illustration of what living by God's standards should look like for them,

in their situation. It also served to keep them separate from the surrounding pagan nations. But the problem was that no one could live up to those standards. God knew this and in His grace and mercy made provision for them by giving them a system of sacrifices and offerings, which temporarily covered their sins and also pointed to the ultimate sacrifice which was to come. But even more than covering their sins, God's desire was for their hearts to be righteous so they wouldn't sin in the first place. This is spoken of in the Old Testament.

I Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Psalm 40:6-8 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Psalm 51:16-17 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Proverbs 21:3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Isaiah 1:11,16-20 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and

the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Hosea 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Micah 6:6-8 Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Jesus also spoke of the importance of what was in one's heart, even more than obeying the letter of the Law. On two recorded occasions (Matthew 9:13 and 12:7) he quoted Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." He redefined the Law, raising it to a higher, spiritual level. This is both good news and bad news for us. The

good news is that we're not bound by the minute details of the Law. For example he taught that it was more important to heal or to do something helpful on the Sabbath, than it was to obey the letter.

Part of the problem with trying to keep the letter of the Law was that often unique situations require unique handling. If a man has a sheep that falls into a ditch on the Sabbath, he would certainly pull it out, even though that would be work. Is it work to get something to eat on the Sabbath? Jesus and his disciples picked grain and were criticized for it. But he reminded them that the priests work on the Sabbath yet are not blamed. The point of the Sabbath was to keep God first, and to remember how He led them out of captivity in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). Can you not do that and still take care of your livestock or prepare a meal? He said that the greatest commandment was to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and

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strength. If you truly love God with all your heart, you will naturally want to do what pleases Him.

Jesus demonstrated God's grace and mercy by his inspired reply to those accusing the woman caught in adultery. While it was true that the Law said she should be stoned, he said to them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). He ate with publicans and sinners and befriended the outcasts of society,

demonstrating God's compassion which was lost to the legalists who only obeyed the letter of the Law. He said the second great commandment was to love your neighbor as yourself. If you are truly loving your neighbor you will not want to sin against him. The true heart behind the Law was to love God and love your neighbor. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40).

However there was also bad news in Jesus' higher standards. The Law said we should not kill. But Jesus took it even further and said that if we are merely angry with a brother, we are just as guilty as if we had committed murder. Most of us have not murdered anyone, but who can say they were never angry? Who can say they have never thought evil of another person? By the Law of Moses we were guiltless as long as we didn't act on our desire to harm someone. But by Jesus' standard, the very desire was as bad as doing it. Likewise, the Law said not to commit adultery. But Jesus said that anyone who looks at a woman with lust is guilty of adultery. We may refrain from doing the act, but who can say they have never desired it in their heart?

The Law said "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The original purpose behind this was to limit the response to evil, so they wouldn't go overboard with retaliation. Yet Jesus said we are not to retaliate at all when someone does evil to us, but to turn the other cheek. However, even if we do not retaliate, who can say that they would not want to? And the desire is as bad as the act itself. Similarly, if I were to take literally Jesus' command to pluck out my eye if it caused me to sin (which is an example of using an extreme case to

make the point), would it solve the root problem? The point of the command is to be willing to do whatever it takes to avoid sin. But if I did not have my eyes to look at another with lust, would that get rid of the lust in my heart?

As if that weren't enough, Jesus spoke of not only loving our friends but even loving our enemies. Even unbelievers love those who love them. But loving someone who hates you is a whole new concept for most. And yet even if I were to go through the motions and do some good work out of obligation and not out of love, I am no better than the hypocrites that Jesus spoke of (Matthew 6:1-4). Genuine Godly love like this must be in the heart and not just put on superficially. "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35).

James taught the same thing in his epistle. He said, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8). Some have erroneously taught that James was encouraging the keeping of the Law of Moses. But he refers to the "royal law" (and also the "law of liberty" in 1:25 and 2:12), not the Law of Moses. The context of these passages shows that he is referring to the same concept that Jesus spoke of, that the whole Law hangs on the two great commandments, to love God and to love your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). The Apostle Paul also wrote that love is the fulfilling of the Law (Romans 13:8, 10; Galatians 5:14). This heart of love is what God is more interested in than our keeping the minute letter of the Law, since people could observe legalistic rules and not walk in love.

Because of my dispensationalist background, I used to believe that when Jesus taught anything that had to do with actions or behaviors, it must be "addressed to a different administration," because we are saved by grace and not by works. Thus the Gospels were "not addressed to us" and consequently there was little emphasis on the Gospels compared to the Epistles. As a result Jesus was separated from his words, which the Scriptures tell us are the key to eternal life (John 3:34; 6:63; 12:47,48; 14:23; 15:7; I Timothy 6:3,4). But as one can see, he wasn't teaching salvation by works, he was teaching that God was interested in works which were motivated by a heart of love. In my old background, it was taught that the Law Administration continued until the end of the Gospel period. But Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16). The Age to Come which Jesus preached will be one in which the ways of God, and the love of God, will prevail, rather than the outdated Law of Moses. And we are called to aspire to that standard in anticipation of that coming age.

However, even if we love God, we are not perfect, and we still sin. When Jesus took the Law further (don't be angry, don't look at a

woman with lust, cut off whatever members cause you to sin, etc.) was he laying out a higher level of rules for us to follow? Do we just exchange one set of laws for another which is even harder to keep? This cannot be the case. Jesus sums up his standards by saying, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). How can that be possible? How can God expect us to be perfect? And if we have to be perfect to enter the Kingdom of God, who can be saved? The disciples asked this very question in Matthew 19:25, and the Lord's answer was, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

God promised that one day all the world will be governed by these principles. The Messiah would come and rule in righteousness, and observe all of God's ways, and the saints who rule with him will likewise judge righteously, according to God's standard which includes grace, mercy, and love, as well as perfect holiness. In the meantime, however, the heart of man is selfish and wicked. The only way to achieve the true righteousness of the heart that Jesus spoke of in his teachings is to get a new heart, which is only possible with the power of God. This is the purpose of the new birth and the holy spirit. 🍀

## The way it is

An elderly woman died last month. Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers.

In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, so I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."

In the famous Olivet Discourse spoken by our Lord Jesus to His disciples (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), He used the term "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). He spoke of Jerusalem being "trodden down" by the Gentiles until those "times" were "fulfilled"—that is, completed and brought to a close. This suggests, of course, that the city of Jerusalem would be under Gentile control throughout the period which He called "the times of the Gentiles." The implication is that after the end of those "times," Jerusalem would no longer be under Gentile control.

In Luke 21:23, Jesus described the distress that was to come upon the Jewish people as a result of the "wrath" that God was going to pour out on them (cf. 1 Thess. 2:14-16). His wrath would bring armies against them, killing many with the sword and leading others away captive into all nations. The climax of this assault on the people of Israel would be the end of Jewish Jerusalem and, later, the beginning of Gentile Jerusalem. These are the facts and events that Jesus prophesied and clearly described—apart from any interpretation as to WHEN they were to occur.

Can we recognize, from all of this, the distinct period in world history during which the "times of the Gentiles" would be in progress? Do we find any further information in Scripture that can tell us how to determine the beginning and ending dates of those "times"? These are important questions, but interpreters differ in the way they answer them. For example, some claim that "Gentiles times" are still future to us, and that those times have not yet even begun. Others say that those times began in A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies and the Jews who

survived were exiled into all the nations of the world—this latter event called by historians the Dispersion or Diaspora. It is certain that for almost 2000 years the Jewish people were scattered all over the world—"into all nations," as Jesus said.

Moses had foretold such a scattering of the people of Israel, long before the time of Christ. Deuteronomy 28:64,65 warns that "the LORD shall scatter thee [Israel] among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind." Moses had described this scattering and this suffering as a period of "long continuance" (28:59; cf. Leviticus 26, where Israel's foretold exile covers a very long period of time). It was not going to last merely a few short years! Chapter 28 concludes with a promise that some of these exiles would be carried into Egypt by ships and sold into slavery—a prophecy that was literally fulfilled when the Romans shipped many Jews to Egypt as slaves after destroying Jerusalem in the year 70.

The Olivet Discourse foretold that God's Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed, leaving not one of its stones resting upon another (Matt. 24:1,2; Mark 13:1,2; Luke 21:5,6). Luke's account goes on to warn that "when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that its desolation is at hand" (v.20). The word translated "desolation" means, literally, "being deserted, or, made a desert." When the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, killed many of

# What Are "The Times of the Gentiles"?

by  
William M. Wachtel

its inhabitants and carried the rest away into slavery and exile, the city was literally deserted and made uninhabitable. Micah had prophesied that "Zion for your sake [shall] be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps" (3:12). The Jewish historian Josephus records that this prophecy was literally fulfilled by the Romans, when they "caused a plough to be drawn over all the courts of the temple to signify that it should never be rebuilt, and the place only serve for agricultural purposes" (Clarke's Commentary, IV, 717).

Jesus, thus, agreed with Moses in the judgments to be poured out on the Jewish people. He also agreed with Daniel, who was told that the Jerusalem that was going to be rebuilt after his lifetime would then later be "destroyed," along with the temple (Dan. 9:26). The Hebrew word here translated "destroyed" is the same one used to denote the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, in Genesis 13:10; 19:13, 29. Jesus, Moses, and Daniel provide a "threefold cord," one that "is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12). There is no question but that Jerusalem and the Temple were totally destroyed by the Romans in the year 70. The question some ask is whether this was the destruction foretold in Daniel 9:26 and by Jesus in His Olivet Discourse.

Those who deny that it had anything to do with A.D. 70 offer instead the interpretation that Jesus and Daniel were talking about end-times Jerusalem and a temple they believe will exist in Jerusalem before Jesus returns. This interpretation needs to be judged in the light of Scripture and of historical facts. Most Bible students believe that chapters 12 and 14 of

Zechariah deal with Jerusalem at the end of this age, so his prophecy may be examined to find out whether he describes a destruction yet future for Jerusalem and for any temple to be found there. In those chapters Zechariah foretells an assault by all nations against Jerusalem (12:3,9; 14:1,2). In the course of this assault, half of Jerusalem's inhabitants are taken away into exile. But "the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." At that point, the LORD goes forth "to fight against those nations" and His feet stand on the Mount of Olives. Presumably, His opposition to the nations stops them in their tracks! At any rate, the fact that the "rest of the people" are not cut off "from the city" proves that the city continues to exist--it is not destroyed! This means that the prophecies of Daniel and Jesus regarding the destruction of Jerusalem have nothing at all to do with end-times Jerusalem! Rather, they have everything to do with A.D. 70! Further, nothing is even said in Zechariah about the existence of any temple in Jerusalem before the Lord returns. Instead, the prophet tells us that the Branch, Messiah, will build the temple of the LORD (Zech. 6:12,13). From the text it is clear that this will occur after Christ's coming.

All of this points to the extreme importance of the year 70 and its climactic events for the Jewish people. Israel lost their city, their temple, their priesthood, their sacrifices, and whatever vestiges of national independence they enjoyed under the Romans. They lost their homeland and were forced into worldwide exile for almost 2000 years. Near the end of those years the Nazis destroyed six million of them in the Holocaust!

Are we now in a position to answer the question, What are the times of the Gentiles? I think we are. They are the times that have been going on ever since A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed in fulfillment of prophecy and the Jews began their age-long suffering and exile as the result of their rejection of Messiah, His love, and His sacrifice. Jesus warned them: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that kill the prophets, and stone them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gather her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37-39).

In A.D. 70, when it was "desolated" by the Romans, Jerusalem began to experience its age-long "treading down" or control by the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles continue until this very day, since the holiest place there – the Temple Mount – is still in Gentile hands and the Jews dare not take control of it. Gentile "times" will not end until Jesus comes to rule as King of Israel in Jerusalem. (Matt. 25:31; Isa. 2:1-4). We as Christian believers can long for the day when "the times of the Gentiles" are past and gone! 🍷

A young man visited a small church in southern California. The Bible he carried on that occasion happened to be the New International Version (NIV). Being unaware of the “King James Only” controversy, he was puzzled when someone told him the church was planning a “Bible Burning Service.” The purpose would be to burn Bibles (like his NIV) and every other version—except the King James Version (KJV)!

Admittedly this is an extreme example; not everyone who is “King James Only” would carry it this far. But this teaching does breed radical and misleading claims: that every version except the King James Version is a perversion; that newer translations are inspired by Satan; that they are part of a gigantic conspiracy, promoted by the New Age Movement! I received a letter expressing the view that those who use versions other than the KJV are in danger of having their names taken out of the Book of Life!

I am not putting anyone down for using the KJV. I use it myself and have for years. But needless and harmful divisions occur when people insist that only the KJV should be used.

When I began preaching, the various churches where I ministered used the KJV. I memorized hundreds of biblical verses from the KJV. When I began writing, I used the KJV as a basic text. Because I did not want any to suppose I was misquoting, I was careful to include the “thees” and “thous.” But in time I have come to realize that using wording that is now obsolete really serves no effective purpose.

For centuries the Latin language was used in the Catholic Mass. Parishioners may have learned the

meaning of a few phrases like Hoc Est Corpus Meum, but much was not understandable. Still, some considered it beautiful and regretted the move to English in many of their churches. In somewhat the same way, people who oppose translations that use present day English, suppose the old English wording of 400 years ago is somehow better, even though it is sometimes confusing and less clear! It seems the principle of using words that can be easily understood would apply here (1 Cor. 14:19).

People who believe that only the KJV should be used, fail to recognize that men like Peter, Paul, and Jesus himself did not always use the same version! The following references from the KJV (a few of many examples) confirm this point: When Isaiah 53:7 is quoted in Acts, it says: “...as a sheep before HER shearers is dumb” (Acts 8:32). But when we turn to Isaiah 53:7 it says, “...like a lamb dumb before HIS shearer.” One says her, the other says his. When the writer of Hebrews refers to Genesis 47:31, he says that as Jacob died, he “worshiped, leaning upon the TOP OF HIS STAFF” (Heb. 11:21). But when we turn to Genesis 47:31, it says he “bowed himself upon the BED’S HEAD.” When Paul quoted Isaiah 28:16, he wrote: “Whosoever believeth on him shall not BE ASHAMED” (Rom.10:11). But when we turn to Isaiah 28:16, it says: “He that believeth shall not MAKE HASTE.”

There are possible explanations regarding these differences, but our purpose here is to simply point out that the New Testament writers did not always use the same version. This is beyond dispute. In these examples, they quoted from the Septuagint, whereas the Masoretic text was

# KING JAMES ONLY?

By Ralph Woodrow

used for the King James translation of the Old Testament.

Tracts have been circulated that claim modern translations have “left out the blood atonement, the virgin birth, and the deity of Christ!” If this were true, we would oppose these also. But claims like this are misleading. If a particular verse is in question, one can easily compare the KJV in Bibles that feature four or more translations in side-by-side columns.

A common criticism is that some versions have left out things that are in the KJV. But what if another version has something not found in the KJV? For example, the KJV does not use the word “God” in the book of Esther. But the Septuagint does! “For so Mordecai had charged her to fear GOD, and to keep his commandments, as she did when with him” (Esther 2:20). On this basis one could argue: The KJV left GOD out of the book of Esther!

A popular book that claims all translations are wrong except the KJV, cites some places in which the KJV says “Jesus” and the NIV says “he.” It gives the impression that the KJV honors Jesus, and the NIV tends to minimize him. It is simply a case of sentence structure. When it is all studied out, the word “Jesus” appears 983 times in the KJV, but 1,275 times in the NIV! In the KJV, the following three New Testament verses are presented as quotations from the Old Testament, yet we do not find them anywhere in the Old Testament of the KJV! “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt. 2:23). “The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy” (James 4:5). “The laborer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim. 5:18).

We don’t believe the men who quoted these verses—Matthew, James, and Paul—made them up! So, either what they quoted was not

in the Old Testament manuscripts available at the time the KJV was translated; or, they could have quoted from another version, or simply paraphrased biblical principles without using the exact wording. Even within the KJV very few quotations from the Old Testament are verbatim.

When we see letterheads or bumper stickers that say, “We use the Bible that GOD uses—the Authorized King James Version of A.D. 1611,” the question comes to mind: What Bible did God use before 1611? The fact is, there were translations by Wyclif and Tyndale, and other English versions including the Cloverdale Bible, the Great Bible, the Bishop’s Bible, and the Geneva Bible—all before the KJV. Like it or not, the KJV was a “revised version.” The Pilgrims rejected it in favor of the older Geneva Bible!

We should keep in mind that even if the KJV was an absolutely perfect English translation in A.D. 1611, it would not be perfect now. The reason is obvious: In 400 years many words vary or change in meaning. Here are some examples: In the KJV, we read about a person coming into a church service wearing “GAY clothing” (James 2:3). The Greek word translated “gay” is *lampros* which (like “lamp”) simply meant bright—in this case bright clothing—nothing more. But if we took the word “gay” as it is commonly used today, it could have a homosexual meaning.

In the KJV wording, Paul told the Corinthian Christians, “Stand fast in the faith, QUIT you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). Almost identical wording is found in 1 Sam. 4:9: “Be strong, and QUIT yourselves like men.” The word “quit,” as used here, is

obsolete. Today we would say: “Conduct yourselves like men” or “be brave like men.”

Some are so locked in to the KJV, they claim even the italics were inspired! The King James translators themselves did not believe this. Unlike today’s practice of using italics for emphasis, they used italics to show when a word was added to provide a proper sense in English. Unless this difference in the use of italics, then and now, is kept in mind, an italicized word could convey a different meaning. An example is found in 1 Kings 13:27: “And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.” If we put the emphasis on “him,” it would sound like the sons saddled their father!

I once read about a church that conducted a public Bible reading in the town square of their community. Using loud speakers, various individuals, one after another, continued reading the King James Version until they had gone from Genesis to Revelation. I wonder if some readers may have been embarrassed when they read certain words—words that may have been proper 400 years ago, but which now have a crude or vulgar meaning (2 Kings 18:27; 1 Sam. 25:22).

For some of us who grew up with the King James Version, the old English wording—the “thees” and “thous,” the “jots” and “tittles”—may not sound that strange. But for others—and a younger generation especially—wording like this does sound strange. How understandable are the following words in the KJV? Could the average person use them in a sentence? I list some obsolete words and (in brackets) the way they are better expressed in newer translations:

“Sweep it with the BESOM

[broom]" (Isa. 14:23).

"The noise of the BRUIT [report] is come" (Jer. 10:22).

"They dwell...in the CHAMPAIGN [plain]" (Deut. 11:30).

"The people CHODE [argued] with Moses" (Num. 20:3).

"The oxen...that EAR [plow] the ground" (Isa. 30:24).

"The city...taken...houses RIFLED [plundered]" (Zech. 14:2).

"The Lord of SABAOTH [armies]" (Rom. 9:29).

"They shall be broken to SHIVERS [pieces]" (Rev. 2:27).

"As TOUCHING [concerning] the Gentiles" (Acts 21:25).

"I TROW [think] not" (Lk. 17:9).

"We WOT [know] not what is become of him" (Acts 7:40).

"Whither have ye made a ROAD [raid] today?" (1 Sam. 27:10).

Is any purpose served by perpetuating old KJV spelling that is now obsolete? Is this in some way "more spiritual" than using normal, present-day spelling?

Probably most of us would hardly know about King James had it not been for his involvement in what came to be known as the King James Version. Nevertheless, the KJV that was issued during his reign (despite his personal life, one way or the other) has had a grand history. Multitudes have come to Christ through preaching from a King James Bible. But to insist that this is the only version that God uses, is hardly credible. One writer has said, "I recommend the KJV for any reader who is 350 years old or older. All others would do better with a more recent version."

The good news is that any translation, even with variations in wording or different ways of expressing things, can be used of God to bring people to him who is the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. 🍀

# It's Not Hidden

by Pastor Steve Taylor

You can hide a seed in soil but it won't stay hidden for long. The same is true with that which we hide in our hearts.

*"Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You"*  
(Psalm 119:11 NKJV)

Jesus' parable of the sower is all about the condition of our hearts, as represented by various kinds of soil: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart." (Matthew 13:19)

It is a given that something will grow from our hearts; the only question is whether it will be the word of God or our sinful nature. Jesus said, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." (Mark 7:20-23)

Left to itself, our heart is like an overgrown weed patch. The most natural thing is for our hearts to grow that which is displeasing to God. But, like a flower or vegetable

garden, God's word can be planted and cultivated and bear fruit pleasing to him.

The question that begs to be asked is, "How is your garden growing?" Is your heart carefully weeded, the seed of the word of God cultivated and watered? Or is it overrun with sinful weeds?

Using another analogy, our hearts are like computers - "garbage in, garbage out." A God-pleasing "program" cannot run if the commands entered are corrupted. The results are completely consistent with the input.

We are ultimately the sum total of the input into our lives. The greatest delusion of all is to believe that we can sow the things of the world into our hearts and cultivate a spiritual crop. Sooner or later our hearts betray or confirm that which is sown into them.

God's word - ultimately, "the word of the kingdom" (Matthew 13:19) - needs to be liberally sown on a daily basis.

It sounds cliché but it's ultimately true: get in to the word in order for it to get in to you. 🍀

# Counterfeit Hope

by Chuck Jones

**Y**ou may have heard a story like this: A man found a bag full of \$100 bills. As he looked through the bag he realized what he was holding. It amounted to several hundred thousand dollars. His mind started to put together plans for what this could mean for his financial situation; what could he buy, pay off, and invest. This find would change his life, this bag of money gave him hope. He was riding a high that made him dream big, until he realized it was counterfeit. All he imagined was swept away in a moment, when the reality set in.

As the story points out, trusting in something that is counterfeit is a serious matter. This is especially true when it comes to our hope beyond this life. Counterfeit Hope draws our attention away from Yahweh and the path He has set before us. It makes us put our expectations on the wrong things by trusting in something that won't produce or perform. Sure these things look good at the beginning, as the story above illustrates, but even after all the dreams, plans, and expectations that hope lays in ruins at the end. Hopes are dashed when expectation comes to nothing.

Fake hopes are always based on man's knowledge, ability, or imagination. Man is limited in each of these. Man has a limited knowledge, because there is always something more to learn. Ability in man is limited, by time and age,

because what we can accomplish today, we may not be able to tomorrow. Our abilities are fleeting, our imagination is limited because the Scripture tells us we can't, by ourselves, conceive of what Yahweh has planned for those that love him (1 Corinthians 2:9). With this information under our belts, let's consider Israel in Hosea's day and then consider ourselves as well.

At this time Israel felt secure. They had fought for, and won back territory from foreign powers. The economy was doing well and prosperity was the order of the day. They were focused on material, physical, and worldly means for their expectations of the future. They did not however, remember Yahweh, the unseen reality of life. Hebrews 10:31 reminds us, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God". We are also reminded that judgment will begin with the church ( 1 Peter 4:17).

## How Hope is Counterfeited

Looking for a starting point in Hosea Chapter 11 we read: "Ephraim has encircled me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit" (Hosea 11:12). They had built up a wall of lies around Yahweh. Lies about who He is and what He stands for. They made the statutes and laws of Yahweh fit the people, not the other way around. They took Yahweh's moral element out of life. They changed Him from

the living God to two golden calves, saying "these are the gods that brought you out of Egypt."

There is a similarity found in the political lies we have today when one party or person takes credit for whatever good there may be (but no fault for the bad). Among the lies encircling Yahweh, we find one in Hosea 12:8: "surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; in my labors they shall find in me no iniquity that is sin." Does being wealthy put one above the law, Yahweh's or man's? The rich often think that they can buy or bribe their way out of trouble. "Who," they may think, "would point out my sins?"

We need to remember that Yahweh is not like we are. He isn't impressed with how much, or little, money you control but how much you have that He controls! As it says: "riches do not profit in the Day of wrath" (Proverbs 11:4).

## Feed On The Wind

*"Ephraim feeds on the wind, and pursues the east wind. He daily increases lies and desolation"* (Hosea 12:7). What's the chances of getting life sustaining nourishment from the wind? We know we can breath it, but it isn't something to feed off of. This is a metaphor for trusting in man's ability, relying on oneself. This we are told reaps the whirlwind (Hosea 8:9).

People are honestly trying their

best, but when failure results lies are needed to justify the failure. These, as Hosea says, “need to be increased”. Someone or something else is found to put the blame on. Hosea goes on in verse one to condemn the covenants made with Syria and Egypt. Israel was putting in the effort to make peace with these nations, yet they failed to make peace with the One that matters.

### Struggle For Hope

Hosea reminds Israel of Jacob’s struggle with Yahweh and the results. *“He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes he struggled with the angel and prevailed. He wept and sought favor from him. He found Him in Bethel. And there He spoke to us, this is Lord Yahweh of hosts. Yahweh is His memorable name”* (Hosea 12:3-5).

Hosea reminded the people that their namesake struggled with Yahweh and prevailed. There were voices telling Jacob not to go back to Esau in his father’s house, but in the end Jacob was confident that this is what he would do. When we trust our own inclinations, it’s not only bad advice, but it builds a counterfeit Hope.

Jesus talked about the struggle. It’s recorded in Luke 16:16, *“the Law and the Prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached and everyone is pressing into it.”* The word “pressing” indicates a struggle using force upon ourselves by way of repentance. Think of this struggle as if you were held under water. How would you fight to get air? This struggle for the kingdom of God, in the same way, is a struggle for life and death. If we have hope

in our money, education, family history, church membership, or church office rather than Jesus Christ we will be cut off from life!

### Re-charging Our Hope

The world is relentless in its pursuit to gain control of your life. This is a good reason to be recharged by Scripture every day. It isn’t that Yahweh’s power diminishes, but our memories are faulty so, we need to be reminded. As Hosea encourages: *“so you by the help of your God returned. Observe mercy and justice and wait on Yahweh your God continually”*.

If you’ve been seduced into trusting anything other than Yahweh’s promises, return to Him. He will help you overcome it. He will give us the help and wisdom necessary to repent and make the necessary changes. When the whirlwind comes, we don’t need to frantically run around like people without answers. The whirlwind brings desperate times, but they do not make God desperate. The church I pastor faced a difficulty when we were faced with \$1000 deficit to our monthly income. People were worried about the general fund, I encouraged people to seek people for God’s kingdom, speak the Gospel. That is a better activity than worrying about money. We never experienced any financial pinch.

The world works against our hope in Jesus, trying to undermine it. Lies are supported, by people who should know better. They say Jesus never existed, because there isn’t any real evidence. I’m here to say, don’t trust your life or build your hope on what can be seen, trust in what can’t be seen.

### Hope Over Troubles

I’ll close the study with Romans Chapter 5, “Therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through whom also we have access by faith into the grace in which we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (verses 1-2). Through an unseen Christ we have been acquitted of all charges against us. There are troubles in this life, but we have the grace to stay and can be joyful in the hope God gives! “Not only that”, Paul goes on to say, “but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance” (verse 3). This begins to highlight the struggle we face. Are we going to trust Yahweh when times are hard to persevere? Tribulations refer to the pressures we face in life. That pressure won’t crush us; it’s a training process that makes us stand up to the test.

“And perseverance character and character hope” (verse 4). This perseverance builds character. It’s a lot like an athlete, it makes us ready for the game, so to speak. This part of the struggle is what helps us to mature in Christ. This gives us experience in the knowledge of God’s ways. It gives us real hope.

As Paul goes on to say: “now hope doesn’t disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that was given to us” (verse 5). We won’t be disappointed by what we expect God to do, because we’ve gone through the training process. In fact we will be well assured that money, politics, our ability, family name, or knowledge will all disappoint us. We won’t be disappointed by the hope we have in Yahweh’s ability, mercy, or faithfulness. 🙏

# The Round Table Discussion

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*This is a discussion on worship with Steve Taylor, Brian Keating, and John Roller. If you have any topic you'd like our panel to discuss, send a note to the editor.*

## ***What is a short definition of worship that you use?***

**Steve Taylor:** In the most basic sense, worship is attributing worth - "worth-ship". Worship necessitates the most comprehensive knowledge of our Father possible - we cannot worship Him Whom we do not know.

**Brian Keating:** From my understanding, the words in scripture that are translated as "worship" basically mean to "honor" someone, or to "show respect" to someone. Note that scripture contains accounts of people "worshiping" men and angels - in addition to worshiping Yahweh. This is especially true when the men in question were kings or other VIPs - that is, the men were "worshipped" (or "honored") because they held positions of authority. Apparently there is nothing wrong with that - i.e., it is apparently OK to "show respect" to a king. Note, however, that we must ensure that we only worship Yahweh as Almighty God - i.e., we must not worship any other beings as if they were God.

**John Roller:** To me, the word "worship" means to put something in FIRST PLACE in my life (thus, it is almost exactly the same in meaning as the word "prioritize"). That is why I bring my tithe checks to church on Sundays. 1) The check represents the FIRST 10% of my

week's income. 2) Sunday is the FIRST day of the week.

## ***How is worship beneficial to us?***

**Steve Taylor:** True worship is the only antidote to self-worship. We will most assuredly worship at the throne of self if we do not consider and worship our Creator. "Spirit and truth" worship compels us to actively explore the nature of our Father and develop creative avenues for expression of awe and gratitude. We were made for worship and most fully realize our potential through active, heartfelt, and creative worship.

**Brian Keating:** In my view, the biggest benefit that we obtain from worship is that it reminds us that God exists, and that He loves us. People who neglect regular worship of God tend to fall further and further away from Him - simply because they do not have regular "reminders" of Him.

**John Roller:** Prioritizing God (in my life) allows everything else in my life (job, family, personal interests, etc.) to "gravitate" to their proper places. Not prioritizing God would guarantee that everything else would find a WRONG place.

## ***Does our worship of Yahweh change Him?***

**Steve Taylor:** Can the changeless change? It is through worship that we are changed by the changeless

One. He "inhabits praise" so He is moved to draw near to those who seek to draw near to Him. If worship initiates any change, it is that of drawing the One near whose very nature is changeless.

**Brian Keating:** Does our worship change Him? I don't think that worship can "change" God, per se - but it evidently can motivate God to do things that He wouldn't have done otherwise. There are many, many passages in the Bible that indicate that God sometimes responds to heartfelt prayer - so that He "changes his plans", so to speak. Here is one of my favorites of those passages - Isaiah 38:1-6 "In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover." Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, and said, "Please, O LORD, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: "Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city. "

So, although God himself does not change, He may decide to change his "plans", based on our prayers! 🍀

Several people have asked me why I use the name Yahweh when I preach, teach, or write. People in my congregation are discussing it. That, I think, is good because people are talking about Scripture and what it teaches. This article should explain why I've chosen to use it as I have.

### The Model Prayer

A line from the prayer Jesus gave as a model comes to mind: "Hallowed be your name". I'm sure you've recited this prayer many times. Have you ever wondered about that word "hallowed"? This is one of those terms we don't use very often, and therefore don't give much thought to. Here is where my explanation begins.

The Greek word, "hagiazō" from which the word hallowed is translated means to consecrate, sanctify, or purify. This word is applied to believers in the new testament, especially the idea of purify. We are called to be "hagios" (holy) because that is the way Yahweh is (1 Peter 1:15). As we think of these terms in relationship to Yahweh's name, consecrate is to be set apart (the same as sanctify). There is no other god whose name is Yahweh! This name is set aside for Him alone. His name should be held in high regard.

Jesus began his model prayer with the phrase, "Our Father in heaven" This title is not His name, but rather defines our relationship to Him. Indeed for us Yahweh has taken on the role of father through Jesus.

### The Name in Scripture

The name "Yahweh" is used many time in scripture. Often it is obscured by the people who made

the translations. Anyone who doesn't know a foreign language is at the mercy of the translator to tell you what is meant. The Hebrew letters yhwh (also know as the tetragrammaton) is a third person singular imperfect of the verb "to be", meaning, therefore, "He is". This explanation agrees with the meaning of the name given in Exodus 3:14, where God is represented as speaking, and hence as using the first person — "I am" (Wikipedia). These four Hebrew letters have been translated LORD in most every translation of Scripture. With this veil lifted, we can have a better understanding of the Old Testament. Here are eight references that declare, without translator's interference, who the One True God is (from the World English Bible).

**Exodus 3:15** God said moreover to Moses, "You shall tell the children of Israel this, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations.

**Exodus 6: 2-3**, God spoke to Moses, and said to him, "I am Yahweh; and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Yahweh I was not known to them."  
**Isaiah 42:8**, I am Yahweh, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to engraved images.

**Isaiah 47:4**, Our Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

**Isaiah 51:15**, For I am Yahweh your God, who stirs up the sea, so that the waves of it roar: Yahweh of Hosts is his name.

**Jeremiah 10:16**, The portion of Jacob is not like these; for he is the former of all things; and Israel is

# Hallowed Be Your Name

by Chuck Jones

the tribe of his inheritance: Yahweh of Hosts is his name.

**Psalm 83:18**, That they may know that you alone, whose name is Yahweh, Are the Most High over all the earth.

These verses seem to be very clear on what God's name is. He revealed this name to us and I think that He wouldn't have done so if He didn't want us to use it. Consider what Moses said, "The secret things belong to Yahweh our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

### Why I Use His Name

A couple of years ago, I was working on a series of sermons from the prophecy of Hosea. Among other sins, Israel was confronted with its idolatry. Not only had they joined with the worship of the nations surrounding them, they had adopted two golden calves as "the god who bought you out of the land of Egypt." At the time simply using "god" didn't help cut through the confusion. So I started using "Jehovah" until I came to consider "Yahweh" as a more direct translation of the Hebrew text.

This isn't the traditional understanding of God's name.

Church traditions teach us that "Lord God" is His name. Yet when I began to use "Yahweh" in sermons and personal prayers they both took on a new level of seriousness.

For many the name "Yahweh" is unfamiliar and foreign. Something that should be avoided. I didn't realize that by using God's revealed name I'd be thrust into a major controversy. All I know is that Yahweh has told us what His name is, and the only restriction is that we shouldn't take it in vain (Exodus 20:7). I think that there may be something not right about having an aversion to His name as well.

### Titles Can Confuse

We use titles all the time for individuals. However titles can be unclear. When we use the title "president," it could refer to any number of people who hold that title. The same is true of pastor, king, lord, father, god, wife or husband. Any word that refers to a category of people fall into the title category. When we use titles, more clarification is often needed.

God is not a proper name, but a title (as is lord). Go to a AA meeting and you'll find out "god" is many things to many people. In

those meetings, when some says their god help them, you will need to ask "Who (or what) is your god?"

I saw a documentary once about a doctor in Japan who was working harder than any other doctor. He gave credit to "God". To this many Christians would say amen. The problem was that this doctor gave credit to Shinto gods.

Speaking of titles, I could refer to some one as woman, lady, female, or wife. Now if I say "wife" that narrows the choices down to one. Yet I don't use that title when I'm speaking to her. I did an experiment, I held my wife in a close embrace, caressed her cheek and said, "Pete's daughter, I love you" To which she responded, "That's nice but he has four daughters, which one do you mean?" Then I said, "The one whose name is Carol".

You've no doubt heard or said, "Oh, God" or "Oh, Lord" in reaction to something terrible or frightening. I'm of the opinion that when people say such things they aren't taking to Yahweh. Give this some thought.

### Is It Important?

I have no desire to start a cult. Yahweh is our father. The New Testament makes this very clear; use that title when you pray. Perhaps you could be more specific by saying "My Father, Yahweh". It is really up to you and Yahweh. Talk to Him and see what He says.

Using His personal name doesn't bring Him down to our level, like "one of the guys". What it does is, in my opinion, raise us up as one seated with Christ in heavenly places. He wants us to get to know Him. That is where life is. Don't be held back by tradition, get personal with the One True God. Taste and see if Yahweh isn't gracious. ☺

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill and she said, "Johnny, what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

When we think of what it means to be a disciple, perhaps concepts of living a disciplined life or the famous twelve come to mind. Our Greek word for disciple in the New Testament actually means what our English word “student” communicates. A student is one who hears the words of their teacher and learns so that they can do likewise. When you sit in your math class, you are supposed to be hearing and watching the teacher so that eventually on the exam, you will be able to complete the same problem that the teacher taught days before. It is this same picture that can help us understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

There are three places which stand out to me as teaching us what it means to be a disciple:

John 8:31-32 – So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

More than just a one time belief in Jesus or his teaching, those who continue in his word are those who are truly his disciples. Perhaps the individual who shows up for class only on the first day could be considered a student (although that is debatable); they certainly are not a very good one.

John 13:34-35 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

More than just hearing and continuing in the words of Jesus, Jesus also tells those who would be his disciples that our love for each other, after his own example, makes

us known as his disciples. We see from this that following the actions of Jesus is as important as following his teachings.

John 15:1-7 - ”I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

As disciples of Christ, we must make our home in him, through his words and the spirit. If we are not connected to him in that way, we will not bear fruit and will be cast off and burned. It is those who stay connected to the true vine and abide in his words that will cause the fruit to grow in our life. It is the bearing of this fruit that brings glory to God and also proves that we are disciples of Jesus.

To sum this up, if we ask ourselves the basic questions WDJS (what did Jesus say?) and WDJD (what did Jesus do?) we are asking the questions of disciples – for it is the words he spoke and the things he did that we must learn, know and do that is if we are truly his disciples.

So in light of this, I ask: How often are you spending time

# Are You A Disciple?

by Victor Gluckin

reading the words and observing the life of our Master and Teacher, Jesus the Christ? Are you reading the Bible daily? Are you meditating on his truth? Many of us would boast of being part of the church for 20 years or more. In light of that however, if in reading for just 15 minutes a day you can finish the Bible in one year, are we ready to boast of how many times we have read the entire Bible in those years? How about even the entire New Testament? My point in this is simple. If we call ourselves the disciples of Jesus, we must show up and listen and observe the words and ways of our teacher. The way that we do that is by reading the New Testament specifically (obviously the entire Bible is important, but that can perhaps be a topic for another article). We must read our Bibles! It is the very source for the words, commands, directions, encouragement, confrontation, challenge, and comfort that we all need.

I pray that we can fight against the temptations of busy-ness, selfishness and laziness and be committed to reading each day. I know I do not want to be a mediocre disciple! I want to be a disciple who is intently focused on the teacher, watching his every move, listening to his every word – I want to be just like him! If you share this heart, let us be people who daily read the words of our Lord and Teacher, Jesus, the King of the coming Kingdom.

What are your thoughts on being a disciple? What stops us from reading the Bible each day? Why is reading the Bible each day important? ☺

# Alive with Works

By Kara Taylor

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It was eight o'clock at night and I started up my car to drive home from my grandmother's house. I looked beside me in the passenger's seat and saw her laundry basket filled of dirty clothes. It was filled with socks, nightgowns and robes. I normally do not like to look at laundry. In fact, it's typical that I will dread doing the laundry just like most other people. However, for some reason, I became emotional while looking at this basket of laundry. This basket reminded me of how much I enjoyed doing this work for my grandmother. I am actually excited to do her laundry whenever I get the chance. As strange as it sounds, I look forward to gathering up her clothes, making them nice and clean, and returning them to her with a clean fresh scent.

This experience really helped me understand the concept of works and how it is important in our relationship with God. We should not do things because we feel like we have to in order to earn our salvation. It is written, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do*" (Ephesians 2:8-10). We are not saved with works, but we have been made to work for Him. As believers, we are working for Him out of love. We

do not need to live in fear as we wonder if we have earned God's love and have done enough to be saved. Works are a way that we can show our love to God and strengthen our relationship with Him.

As a child, I was not able to see my grandmother as frequently as I am able to now. I am blessed to see her because I live close to her and schedule the time to make a visit. My grandmother is touched when I am able to help her and do her chores. However, this does not make her love me any more than she did before. I believe my grandmother loved me before I began to help her. The important thing to gather is that it has strengthened my relationship with her.

I know that I do not have to do a single thing to earn her love. Although, I cannot help but do these things for her because I know that it shows her that I care and keeps our relationship alive. James 2:26 tells us, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." If we want our faith to grow and our relationship with God to be healthy, we need to keep it going and bring it to life. I truly feel that this is what God yearns from us. He wants us to understand His indescribable love. How will you keep your faith from fading? ☺

# Faithfulness

by Jim Mattison

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great crowd of witnesses, let us throw off very thing that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”*

– Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

What this verse is saying is that the deep faith of outstanding people of God can encourage us to live better Christian lives. When we see how they meet the great problems of life, and the great blessings of life, it will strengthen our hearts and lift us up. Their courage and faith can build courage and greater faith in us.

The writer introduces this thought by the word “therefore”. This connects this thought to the thought of the faithfulness to God of the people mentioned in chapter 11. There are 15 of them, plus the prophets and many more. Considering their faith in God in their trials can strengthen us to tackle our trials with faith that God will help us in ours.

Actually it is their “attitude” toward God. This is what pleased God. They saw, and understood, the greatness of their Creator and His love and desire for their good. They believed His promises. They saw how He took care of His own. His kindness, mercy, and grace drew them to Him. They made a decision to yield themselves to Him and thus receive His help in the circumstances of their lives. It is God's goodness to us that attracts us

to Him, and makes us want to follow Him.

We aren't told much about Abel, just that because of his faith in God he offered an acceptable sacrifice. “The just shall live by faith.” Abel was living by faith. “Through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.” Our faith, too, can speak to others. We are not told much more about Enoch. “He walked with God” (Gen. 5:24). He lived a life of unbroken fellowship with God. (Since “these all died in faith” (11:13) Enoch's translation that evidently means he did not realize he was dying, that he died in peace.) We, too, can walk with God.

The faith of Abraham and Sarah is mentioned, and enlarged in Romans 4. He obeyed God. He believed God. In every circumstance he believed God. God told him he and Sarah would have a son. They grew old, too old to have children. They still believed what God told him. A miracle occurred. God means what He says. We, too, can believe everything God says. The Bible is true. It means what it says.

Noah believed it when God told him a flood was coming, and he obeyed God and built a boat. Moses passed up the pleasures of Egypt “considering the reproach of Christ greater riches”. We, too, can choose not to put the pleasures of this life first, but put first the Kingdom of God and righteousness.

Rahab helped the Israeli spies

because she believed their God was the true God to follow. Because of her faith she was forgiven, and became a good woman and married into God's people. Consider the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets. Through faith they “conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, women received back their dead by resurrection, others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might receive a better resurrection....”

The point is, these faithful people endured all things for God because they trusted in Him, in His goodness, and in His promises. Because we have their wonderful example, we can have courage to act the same way, to live a life of being faithful to God, having complete faith in Him in every area. He will take care of us, love us, forgive us through Christ, comfort us, provide for us, and He will complete our eternal salvation when Christ returns.

Are we fearful, afraid, weak, unsure? Look at these faithful people in Hebrews 11 and take heart. We can do it like they did, to follow the Lord even to death. And we can be happy doing it, because we know this is the right thing to do. Our faith can be as deep and rich as their faith. ☺

# Floor Wax and Hot Metal

by Bob Cambell

It seems like only yesterday that I came home covered with dust and dirt from cultivating corn all day in the hot sun. Cultivating is an outdated part of farming with all the new chemicals and farming methods. For those that do not know what cultivating is, it took many hours of staring at a crop row making sure you did not get too close to the plants so as to cut off the roots. Yet you had to have the shovels set so they were close enough that you would get all the weeds, but then I digress. As I was saying, when I got home I was very tired and the last thing I wanted to see was my car looking like a zebra.

You see my girlfriend and my sister had decided they would help me out by washing and waxing my car for me. It was a good idea; except I had no car wax and they assumed that floor wax would work just as well. I am sure some of you know what floor wax will do to the finish of a car that has been sitting in the hot sun for hours. Rest assured it is not pretty.

Now I have been angry many times in my life, but never to the point that I felt like biting a nail in half, and I believe I could have accomplished it. My poor old 46 Chevy never recovered and remained looking like a zebra until I put her to rest out in the back forty a couple years later.

Psalm 103: 8-9 tells us that *“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;”* I was a young teenager with no compassion, and was not very gracious at that point in time. I am sure I could have handled the situation better; I know this because Mom was quick to tell me so! I did apologize, but it took a little longer to forgive.

*“The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools”.* Ecclesiastes 7:8-9

I am sure, for all of us, there are times we wished we had responded better that we did. Yet we are mortal humans and that is why God forgives us and keeps giving us chances to do better.

*“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”* Romans 3:22-24

Let us keep the faith, and not be too quick to anger, as we do not want to look like fools. Count to ten, it helps. 🍀

One afternoon while I was visiting my library, I notice a group of preschoolers gathered for story time. The book they were reading was There Was An O Lady Who Swallowed A Fly. After the librarian finished the first page, she asked the children, “Do you think she’ll die?”

“Nope” a little girl in the back said, “I saw this last night of *Fear Factor*”. 🍀

## Letters From Readers

Dear Chuck,

Just want to say “hello”. I enjoy every issue of your magazine.

May God bless you as you share the “truths” of the gospel of the kingdom.

In His service,  
Bety Coulter

Hello Mr. Jones

I’m still enjoying Wisdom & Power. I’m giving you another couple who would enjoy the Wisdom & Power. They are members of our faith Church of God Abrahamic Faith. Both are in poor health and unable to come to church. He has a bad heart, she has a lot of problems and ow she has cancer of the lungs and taking the treatment I hope she will be a winner.

May the Lord come soon  
Lucille Scroggins

# Stable Feet

Submitted by Sue Ryan and Jim Mattison

*"Yahweh God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me walk upon my high places." – Habakkuk 3:19*

Habakkuk was in fear when he saw the Chaldeans coming to invade the land. He said, *"My whole inner self trembled and my lips quivered at the sound."* There was nothing that he could do to prevent the situation as he waited quietly for the day of trouble and distress to come against his people. Yet in the midst of all this turmoil and the uncertainty about the future, Habakkuk put his trust in Yahweh and continued to praise Him.

He made a bold declaration that Yahweh's strength would help him and his people get through the hard and uncertain times that they were facing. He said, *"I will rejoice in Yahweh. I will joy in the God of my salvation. If the fig tree does not blossom and bring fruit; if the product of the olive fails; if the fields yield no food; if there are no flocks; and if there are no cattle in the stalls, I will still rejoice."*

He made a decision ahead of time to praise Yahweh regardless of what the future held for him and his people. He was determined not to let the circumstances separate him from his God. As he depended upon Yahweh for strength and help, he held three secrets in his heart that caused him to be able to continue in praise to God in spite of impending danger.

- 1) Yahweh would be his strength.
- 2) Yahweh would make his feet to be stable.
- 3) Yahweh had a personal plan for him and would help him walk in it.

Habakkuk knew that the eternal supernatural God that he served was bigger than any natural circumstance that he would have to face. Even though Habakkuk's own natural resources were failing, he knew that Yahweh would sustain him and he placed his confidence in the God who was his source and strength.

Like Habakkuk, you can also have this same assurance. Regardless of the trouble or distress that you may be facing, you must stop relying on your own strength and lean upon Yahweh. As you begin to depend upon Yahweh, He will make your feet like the feet of the deer, strong and sure. As you develop your faith by hearing His word, He will give you the ability to climb your mountain of adversity without fear. You must acknowledge Yahweh as your source of strength and praise Him regardless of how bad your circumstances look. As you do, He will then lead you to the places that He has prepared for you and enable you to conquer each cliff, one step at a time.

Be assured that the same God who made Habakkuk's feet stable and allowed him to walk in high places is also there for you. 🐾

## Some More Humor

A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?" He answered, "Call for backup."

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, "They couldn't get a baby-sitter."

A Sunday School teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to honor thy father and thy mother she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill and she said, "Johnny, what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

Two boys were walking home from Sunday School after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?" The other boy replied, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your Dad. 🐾"