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Christmas 2022

THE FIFTH KINGDOM

By Rev. Need

Celebrating the foundation of Daniel's Fifth Kingdom

Daniel 2: 34 *Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet [that were] of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold,*

broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream [is] certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Christ identified himself as that stone in Luke 2:18
Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

The Fifth Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, (Mk 1:14) was established while the image was still standing, *i.e.,*

Rome. (Luke 2:1) The new kingdom, the **Fifth and last Kingdom**, shall never pass away from its rightful owner as did the previous kingdoms; moreover, it shall expand slowly as it absorbs all the kingdoms of the earth. The previous kingdoms prepared the world for the new kingdom which belongs to the Messiah and his people.

Which shall never be destroyed. The others passed away: The (1) Babylonian kingdom would be succeeded by the (2) Medo-Persian kingdom, then by the (3) Macedonian kingdom, and then by the (4) Roman kingdom. Each kingdom possessed the lands and people of the previous kingdom. The former four kingdoms were represented by beasts, but the **Fifth Kingdom** is represented by a stone.

Daniel is told that before the end of the days of the above four kingdoms, *the God of heaven* would establish a new, supernatural kingdom, and it would be an eternal kingdom; it would be a perpetual kingdom. Nothing would have the power to overthrow it, nor would it be left to those outside of the Kingdom. Rather it would consume all the other kingdoms of the world to where there will be nothing left of them. (Matt 28:19, 20. Cf. Isa 9:12)

When the fulness of the time was come, God established the **Fifth Kingdom** by sending *forth his Son,*

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made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal. 4:4, 5). That is, in the fullness of time, God took on the form of a man, “truly God and truly man,” and that man is Christ Jesus who was born in the humblest situation imaginable. The supernatural “Christmas Story” cannot be summed up better than what is found in the **Chalcedon Formula of AD 451**.

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name [was] Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, [thou that art] highly favoured, the Lord [is] with thee: blessed [art] thou among women. 29 And when she saw [him], she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Da 7:14 27, Lu 1:33, 2 Pe 1:11)

Jesus means “God is our Salvation.”

- 1) He shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest, or the Son of the most high.
- 2) The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David



- 3) He who shall be born of you miraculously shall be the Son of God, very God of very God.
- 4) He shall also be the Son of David, very man of very man.
- 5) He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there shall be no end.
- 6) He shall be the Messianic kingdom, the King, the Messianic king foretold by David and the prophets of old.
- 7) He shall also be the eternal king, King of kings and Lord of lords; eternal King.
- 8) His rule shall be over time and over eternity, over

this world and over the world to come.

By an act of sheer grace on God's part and through the virgin birth, God became man in order to redeem his people. In all of Paganism, salvation means making man God.

Behold, I make all things new. His birth marked the beginning of a new creation, of the new heavens and the new earth. He is the second Adam from above, and ushered in a new world that grows through conversion. Conversion makes a *new man* through the new birth; he is born into the citizenship of that new creation so that the *new man* has, as it were, a life in two worlds.

This apparently small, feeble *stone* went on to establish the **Everlasting Fifth kingdom that would consume all the nations of the world through conversion**. The former four kingdoms were represented by beasts, but this **Fifth Kingdom** is represented by a man.

Daniel shows that this **Fifth Kingdom** is of Divine origin, for it was to be established in a clearly supernatural way, the Virgin Birth.

The angel's message to Mary was the fulfillment of

Daniel 2: 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Luke 1:32, 33)

Power

The stone did not suddenly arrive and immediately crush everything, as imagined by many theologians today. It grew slowly to the point where it occupied the whole earth. **There must be power**, and that power is identified in Daniel 7:13 as the *Ancient of days*. He is the One who gave the *Son of man* his power to subdue all the nations. The Messiah King's inheritance is all the nations of the world, Psalms 2:8. Power is required to subdue all the nations of the world into one kingdom. The previous four kingdoms used the **power of the sword** in their effort to unite the nations under one ruler. The **Fifth Kingdom**, *i.e., the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven* would not be established nor grow *by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts*. (Zech 4:6)

Therefore, the **Fifth Kingdom** would be the result of

the supernatural working of *the God of heaven*, the *Ancient of days*. (Dan 7:14) The four previous kingdoms were established by God using natural means (Dan 4:34, 35) as they prepared the world for the last kingdom. (Rome's roads allowed the Gospel of the Kingdom to spread world-wide in a relatively short time. The Kingdom of God overthrew Rome in the fourth century.) It is *the God of heaven* who shall cause the **Fifth Kingdom** to be established, expand and who shall subdue all enemies under *thy footstool*. (Luke 20:42, 43)

1 Corinthians 15:23 *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then [cometh] the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy [that] shall be destroyed [is] death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under [him, it is] manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

Daniel 7:13 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

Only here in 7:13 is the Old Testament title *Son of man* used for Christ. However, Christ identifies himself as *the Son of man* 81 times in the New Testament. *The Son of man* Daniel saw in 7:13 was Christ.

The God of Heaven tells us that the **Fifth Kingdom** which he established within the Roman Empire shall slowly expand until ***all things are given to the people of the most high***.

The point is made here that all the previous kingdoms that have been established by force of arms would pass away, but the **Fifth Kingdom** would not pass away; rather, it would consume the whole of the earth, nor would it be passed on to another kingdom and people. It belongs to Christ and to the *saints of the most High*.

Daniel presents an accurate account of the birth of *the Christ* and the establishment of His kingdom which will consume the nations of the world. The *stone of stumbling and rock of offence* entered into the world over 2000 years ago. (Isa 8:14, Rom 9:33, 1 Pet 2:8) And his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; he calls his people into his kingdom, empowers them and protects them according to his plan of the ages.

Matthew 16:18, Luke 1:32, Hebrews 12:28 *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: Revelation 11:15* *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

There is a very popular heretical teaching that the Messiah King will sit on a literal throne in modern Jerusalem "Israel" and rule the earth from that throne, *i.e.*, *Zionism*. That heresy has been used to raise multiplied millions to support an openly antichrist nation. There was not one stone left upon another when the Jewish-Roman war ended. In fact, Rome sowed salt under where the wall's stones had been. Jerusalem today IS NOT the Jerusalem of Christ's day.

Ephesians 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what [is] the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places], 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Paul speaks in present tense, not future. Christ is established now and all things are under his feet now.

The CHRISTMAS MESSAGE was clearly defined by Daniel 2000 years ago: the Word became Flesh and dwelt among men. Daniel foresaw the stone that would smite the image and grind the nations of the world to powder which would be gone with the wind.

The **Fifth and final Kingdom**, the *kingdom of God* is expanding by the power of *the God of heaven*, and expands over all the world by the preaching of the gospel of peace. In Luke 24, Christ promised his people that

they would be *endued with power from on high*. (Lk 24:49, Rom 1:16, 1 Cor 1:18, 24)

The Son's last act before he ascended to the right hand of the Father is recorded in Luke 24. At that time, Christ *opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures* and told them to wait until *the promise of the Father would come upon them, i.e., the Holy Spirit*. That is the enabling power from on high that would equip them to conquer the world for Him.

“Christmas” points for us.

First, from a very small, insignificant beginning in a manger and in a supernatural way, the *virgin birth*, the *Son of God* would appear.

Second, He would choose himself out a people who would expand his **Kingdom** over the whole earth.

Third, *the Father* would provide the power for *his people* to accomplish the task of subduing the kingdoms of this world to *the Son*.

Fourth, that Kingdom, the *kingdom of God*, would be an everlasting kingdom.

Fifth, the King gave instruction to his people on how his *kingdom* is to be expanded:

Luke 24:45 *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* (Cf. He 9:26)

The Spirit must open the understanding, so one can understand the scriptures. Thus, as his people seek *first the kingdom of God* and preach the everlasting gospel, the Spirit would open the eyes of understanding of the hearers, and his kingdom will expand over the whole world.

Would that His people would understand the scriptures, and understand the hope of His calling to victory over the forces of evil that we have as *his people*.

Ephesians 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 9 And what [is] the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, [his mighty power: Gr. the might of his power] 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places], 23 Which is his body, the fulness of*

him that filleth all in all.

People of God, by His mercy we have been made heirs with Christ of the **Fifth Kingdom** which is the *everlasting kingdom of God*. We have been endowed by His Spirit with power over the world, the flesh and the devil.

Micah 4:8 *And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.*

In v.8 we see little Bethlehem identified as the tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion. From this insignificant place will come the Ruler who has the dominion over everything. Notice that the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. The kingdom is the church, the body of Christ.

This tower of the flock is interesting. Edersheim, in his book, *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH* ([1883]-pg.186) makes an extremely important and significant point about the location of this tower of the flock and what took place there. He says:

“That the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, was a settled conviction. Equally so was the belief, that He was to be revealed from Migdal Eder [see marg. of Bible, “Or, Edar”], ‘the tower of the flock.’ The Migdal Eder was not the watch-tower for the ordinary flocks which pastured on the barren sheep-ground beyond Bethlehem, but lay close to the town, on the road to Jerusalem. A passage in the Mishnah leads to the conclusion, that the flocks, which pastured there, were destined for Temple-sacrifices, and, accordingly, that the shepherds, who watched over them, were not ordinary shepherds.... The same Mishnic passage also leads us to infer, that these flocks lay out all the year round, since they are spoken of as in the fields thirty days before the Passover--that is, in the month of February, when in Palestine the average rainfall is nearly greatest. Thus, Jewish tradition in some dim manner apprehended the first revelation of the Messiah from that Migdal Eder, where shepherds watched the Temple-flocks all year round. Of the deep symbolic significance of such a coincidence, it is needless to speak.

It was, then, on that ‘wintry night’ of the 25th of December (he gives a good argument for this date), that shepherds watched the flocks destined for sacrificial services, in the very place consecrated by tradition as that where the Messiah was to be first revealed. Of a sudden came the long-delayed, unthoughtof announcement. Heaven and earth seemed to mingle, as suddenly an Angel stood before their dazzled eyes, while the out-

streaming glory of the Lord seemed to enwrap them, as in a mantle of light. Surprise, awe, fear would be hushed into calm and expectancy, as from the Angel they heard, that what they saw boded not judgment, but ushered in to waiting Israel the great joy of those good tidings which he brought: that the long-promised Saviour, Messiah, Lord, was born in the City of David, and that they themselves might go and see, and recognize Him by the humbleness of the circumstances surrounding His Nativity.

It was, as if attendant angels had only waited the signal. As, when the sacrifice was laid on the altar, the Temple-music burst forth in three sections, each marked by the blast of the priests' silver trumpets, as if each Psalm were to be a Tris-Hagion; so, when the Herald-Angel had spoken, a multitude of heaven's host stood forth to hymn the good tidings he had brought. What they sang was but the reflex of what had been announced. It told in the language of praise the character, the meaning, the result, of what had taken place. Heaven took up the strain of 'glory'; earth echoed it as 'peace'; it fell on the ears and hearts of men as 'good pleasure':

Glory to God in the highest----

And upon earth peace---

Among men good pleasure----

Edersheim adds this interesting footnote to the three sections of the Temple-music. "According to tradition, the three blasts symbolically proclaimed the kingdom of God, the providence of God, and the final judgment (of God)."

Because he came, we have been made more than conquers.

THE CHALCEDON FORMULA, AD 451

THEREFORE, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the Godbearer;

one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

INSPIRED READING, UNDERSTANDING, WRITING AND FOLLOWING

I have no doubt as to the **continuance of Inspiration** in the Church, for it seems to me to be the one gift which must, of gracious necessity, abide for ever—the gift, indeed, without which the Church could not exist. But the gift is not always to be used in one direction. **There are inspired readers as certainly as there are inspired writers.** "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding," in the deep and true reading of the Word. ... The gift of inspired reading is the gift of the whole believing and suppliant Church. There is no inspired *class* in the Church, Divinely marked off for special reverence and remuneration; indeed, it seems to me that the **so-called priests are the only uninspired followers**—the mere craftsmen and pensioners—of the Church; they are "shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind." You need not, therefore, fear that I am pointing to a priestly class. The kind of inspiration I mean can be had for the asking by all humble souls. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" The proof of such inspiration will be found less in intellectual splendour than in spiritual docility and childlike obedience; **we shall be unconscious of the shining of our face**, but shall know that in our hearts there is a great softness of love, a holy yearning after our Father's perfectness; we shall be most inspired when we are most teachable; we may be sure that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is being accomplished within us when we say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" and ask him, beside whom are the two anointed

ones, not to withhold his revelation from babe-like souls. Verily, Inspiration hath not ceased. Let us pray for an inspired ministry: in other words, that all ministers may be blessed with a double portion of the Holy Spirit. This is our **protection against priestism**. This will sanctify every man, body, soul, and spirit, and make the whole Church the living temple of the Holy Ghost. When ministers are Divinely inspired their public reading of the Scriptures will be an exposition ; every accent will be as a tongue of fire, and every emphasis will give new hints of meaning. The inspired writers wait for inspired readers. How the Holy Book leaps, so to say, in recognition of the sacred touch and the loving **glance! Inspired** reading gives us a Bible which cannot be taken from us; not a mechanical Bible, which cunning hands can disjoint; not an artificial Bible which relies upon scattered proof-texts;—but a living revelation: a voice which awakens faithful echoes in the heart; a self-attesting book; its own mystery and its own lamp ; without beginning or end ; an infinite surprise : an infinite benediction. Have no fear that the Ark of the Testimony will be taken. **We lose our inspiration when we lose our Faith, and then we are the subjects of irrational panic.** Rather say, “Come up, ye horses ; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth,... for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is but a noise.” Theories and dogmas, propositions and controversies, orthodoxies and heterodoxies, come and go, but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever, “surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea.” (Emp added. Joseph Parker, Vol 1, p. X. 1885 [17 of 390])

Observe:

1. The Church not only needs inspired writers (speakers), but inspired readers (hearers). Inspiration comes from “*ask and it shall be given...*”

2. Uninspired religious leaders are no more than uninspired followers, craftsmen and pensioners. They will not bark for fear of losing their pensions. (Isa 56:10, 11 they are *dumb dogs* that cannot or will not *bark*. They are self-professed watchmen that will not sound the needed alarm.)

3. The reader, hearer, can be inspired by humbly asking the Lord.

4. Inspired ministry and inspired reading is our protecting against pietism. “So heavenly

minded that one is no earthly good.” Inspired hearing and reading will lead to work to advance His Kingdom.

5. We lose our inspiration when we lose our Faith, and then we are the subjects of irrational panic.

6. The faithful followers of Christ will be unconscious of the shining of their face.

CONTRARY PROVIDENCE

Dr. H. Rondel Rumburg

How do you cope with the events in life that smash you in the face as it were? How do you handle events contrary to your best interests? Do you believe that all things bad and good work together for your best interests if you love God (Rom. 8:28)? Or are you a believer in an Alice in Wonderland type of religion? What about catastrophic events? There is an average of 171,000 Christian’s martyred for their faith annually in the world in which we presently live.[Ray Comfort, God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Life: The Myth of the Modern Message, 28.] Did everything work for their good?

Are you a Christian? If you said, “yes,” then do you believe the will of God for your life and family is always for the best? Can you honestly say with God’s faithful servant Paul, “I have learned, in whatsoever state

I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11)? Some of us have loved ones lost to us, some have battled cancer, some have faced overwhelming events in their lives, but have we been contented with those things such as God’s will for us and therefore providential? Or have contrary providences led to the questioning of God or cursing God or anger toward God? Life has many valleys we must go through, and some cast the ominous shadow of death; also, life may have some mountain tops reflecting the brightness of manifold blessings. Paul

learned contentment and then said that he knew how to be abased and how to abound; he knew a full tummy and hunger; he knew abundance and suffering need (Phil. 4:12) but he was “content.” “But godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). Are you con-



tented with the so called “contrary providences?” When things go your way it pleases you, but what do you do when things go contrary?

There are many today that believe when you become a follower of Christ your life should take on the perspective comparable to looking through rose colored glasses. Yes, everything is supposed to come up roses. Is this a Biblical concept? Remember what Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). What we must remember is that “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24) as we take up the daily cross. As a Christian goes through the valley of death’s gloom he can truly say, “I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Ps. 23:4, 6). The child of God does not escape troubles, but he has one who goes with him and who never leaves nor forsakes—“... be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:5-6).

Do you remember the three Hebrew children Shadrack, Meshach, and Abed-nego? The spiritual atmosphere in Babylon had become intense. Nebuchadnezzar had set up an image and upon the sound of the playing of an instrument such as a cornet all were to fall down and worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar. Those refusing to fall down, and worship were to be incinerated by being cast immediately into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:3-7). Some accused the three Hebrews of not being obedient in bowing to the image (vv. 9-12). This accusation infuriated the old ruler, and, in his rage, he interrogated the three young men—“Is it true?” he asked. Since this had been an accusation, he put the three to the test. If they would worship at the next sound of the instrument they would be exonerated. However, if they did not the ruler asserted, “who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands” (Dan. 3:15)? He thus declared foolishly that he was sovereign over the God of the Bible. The three young Hebrew men said, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it

known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Dan. 3:16-18). Essentially the three young men said, Our God can do anything for He is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. He may deliver us out of imperial hands, or He may not be pleased to deliver us but either way we will not sin against Him by worshipping your gods. God’s will and honor is of more importance than anything else to us and we will be willing to accept the results. This was Job’s sentiment exactly; “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job 13:15). Paul wanted Christ magnified in his body whether by life or death (Phil. 1:20). Do you want this? Do you want God’s will done and Christ magnified?

What have we learned from these men? We have learned that death is preferable to life if it be God’s will and for His glory. Yes, it is true that the Lord God overruled in the case of the three Hebrew lads and delivered them from the fiery furnace. However, many others were not so delivered. Some escaped but “others had trial of cruel mocking and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (Heb. 11:36-37). What many consider as “contrary providence” is not really so if it be God’s will. Why? All things good and bad are working for our good. “Do you believe this?” Chaplain R. L. Dabney wrote that Romans 8:28 was “a living reality” to “Stonewall” Jackson. Jackson believed, “It robbed suffering of all its bitterness, and transmuted trials into blessings.” Do you believe as did Jackson?

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DISPENSATIONAL MADNESS

Those of you who were in the dispensational madness of the 70s and 80s will remember the “rapture fever.” That evil doctrine is still very much alive in the dispensational movement. Some years ago, someone placed me on the *Sword of the Lord Newspaper* subscription. I am sure you old-timers remember John R Rice who started the paper back in the late 50s. This latest issue has on the front page “What Will Happen at the Rapture?”

I would like to make a few comments motivated by this article.

“He’s coming to reward us”

The article develops the thought of the horrible tribulation that will take place after the rapture, and closes an emotional salvation testimony of a man who did not want to be left behind after the rapture.

“Won’t You Decide for Christ Right Now?”

Dr. Pyle has made a powerful appeal for you to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal savior. He wants to save you. He died, was buried and rose again so you can be saved. Won’t you trust him now before it is eternally too late? Simply pray something like this:...

This is called Decisional Regeneration, and many of us old timers may have been deeply involved in this doctrine of devils. I noticed in the article, that there was no call to repentance and responsibility to God and his law-word.

The article promised great and glorious things by just praying a prayer; that prayer then made God responsible to take us to heaven to enjoy all the wonderful things he has for the saved.

That is, “**He is coming to reward us**” for “**Deciding for Christ.**”

What an empty promise for those who “decide” with no understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

Editor’s Comment: O how I have grown to hate that doctrine that came so close to damning my soul forever. But in his mercy, the Lord opened my eyes and called me to serve him. (Back in the 1980s, we printed a small booklet which deals with the above damnable heresy. Let me know if you would like a copy.)

2 Peter 2:17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. Jude 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds [they are] without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

The Armenian Dispensational messages are like the clouds of promise, yet without life giving water. They offer hope where there is no hope. Peter and Jude speak strongly against those who offer false hope in a “prayer” and in a “rapture.”

A TRAGIC ROLE REVERSAL

The children are now in charge—to their great harm

By Andrée Seu Peterson

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“Anyone who has survived childhood has enough material to write for the rest of his life,” wrote American novelist Flannery O’Connor.

If you are reading this, you have survived childhood and can write volumes if you are the writing kind. Even if you had the best childhood on paper, which I had—raised in the 1950s prosperity blip; mom and dad under one roof; safety enough to play outside till the street lights came on—there was all that internal stuff going on that no one ever knew and that we hid. Like our experience of school lunches:

“Here is the main thing I know about school lunches: it only looked like a bunch of kids eating lunch. It was really about opening our insides in front of everyone. ... It was a precursor of the showers in seventh- and eighth-grade gym. ... The contents of your lunch said whether or not you and your family were Okay. ... There was a code, a right and acceptable way, it was that simple. ... Your sandwich was the centerpiece, and there were strict guidelines. It almost goes without saying that store-bought white bread was the only acceptable bread. There were no exceptions. If your mother made the white bread for your sandwich, you could only hope that no one would notice” (Bird by Bird, Anne Lamott).

How nostalgic it all seems now. In my granddaughter’s Manhattan high school, you must state your preferred names and pronouns in class. She describes the anxiety of choosing one’s attire in the morning, to strike just the right note of gender wokeness. Those eighth grade gyms Lamott mentions? Today, boys claiming to be girls have more rights to the girls’ locker room than biological girls, as the high school volleyball team of Randolph, Vt., learned.

To be ousted from your own gym is bad enough. But what destroys the core of personhood, as Abigail Shrier’s well-researched book *Irreversible Damage* describes, is the daily pressure upon children—from social media, from educators, from online trans gurus, from resulting peer contagion—to second-guess their own birth sex. No generation of children till now has had to endure that kind of pressure. Gender, at least, was set. “And you knew where you were then; girls were girls and men were men” (1970s sitcom *All in the Family*).

Here is the cruelest irony of all: These same adults who should be in charge of children for their good have

put the children in charge, to their harm. Adults have abdicated the primary role of adulthood (Proverbs 1:8), a role that even animals instinctively perform toward their young. The American Psychological Association's guidelines for care of "transgender and gender-nonconforming" (TGNC) patients puts the child in the driver's seat and the medical profession in "supporting" and "affirming" roles. We have entered the Twilight Zone, where hospitals are cutting off healthy pubescent girls' breasts for no medical reason.

No one dares question the wisdom of a child's notion to swap gender and irreversibly mutilate his body. None may suggest (as would be allowed if the child thought he were a ham sandwich) that this developing human may be experiencing a passing phase. As one late-night comic put it, if 8-year-olds knew what they wanted to be when they grew up, the country would be full of cowboys.

Mark Twain said, "When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years." It was a joke that didn't need explaining: Everybody knew that an occupational hazard of childhood is to be too big for one's britches. By contrast, an Oct. 12 Philadelphia Inquirer op-ed is penned by a fawning mother won over by her teenage daughter's position that it is a moral wrong to have babies when the climate problem is not fixed.

"Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child" (Ecclesiastes 10:16).

That is when you know judgment has come.

<https://wng.org/articles/a-tragic-role-reversal-1667358284>

Editor's Note: Judgment is here. We are under terrible woes from God as obvious children rule over us. We cannot expect any "Adult" rule without an "Adult" population willing to accept adult responsibilities. "Like people, Like priest!" Expect an all-out war against the family even with a new congress. There will not be enough godliness in congress to stop the most egregious acts that will come against the godly, faithful family. No doubt, homeschoolers will be in the crosshairs. Might I suggest Home School Legal Defense to prepare for the increasingly intensive attacks against godly families. Bettie's first husband was on the board until he died in a P-38 plane crash. We are thankful that our children are raised and gone so we will not have to

face what young families must face that which is ahead as they work to remain true to Scripture.

BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE

Janie Cheaney. World, July 30, 2022

A society that disdains offspring rejects life itself

I've got to say, in spite of the hottest, driest summer in 12 years, my garden could win a beauty contest.

Or at least, it's the best-looking garden I've ever had. Just one thing was worrying me, though: While voluptuously rolling out vines and leaves, my pole bean plants weren't producing any blossoms. It was past time, I thought. What gives?

Google could anticipate my question even before I finished typing it. The only applicable reason I could find for beans not blossoming was soil too rich. Yes, it's possible to overfeed legumes, which take nitrogen from the air and don't need it in the soil. That's why they'll produce almost anywhere—but not, it seemed, in my nice compost-enriched soil.

Furthering educations and advancing careers may be worthy goals, but goals are not the future, life is.

Picture well-fed, abundant, aspiring plants so intent on expanding themselves that they'd lost sight of future produce, and perhaps even of the future itself. There's a parable here.

Part of the fallout after the reversal of Roe v. Wade were the furious memes and quotes vomited up by social media. All were distressing, but this one was a particular downer:

"If every time men had sex, they risked death, physical disability, social shunning, a life altering interruption of their education or career, and the sudden lifelong responsibility for another being, I think they'd expect a choice in the matter."

The quote is from Jean Yoon, a Canadian writer and actress. It echoes a prominent theme in the pro-abortion literature, expressed elsewhere as, "If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament." It's a surface argument with some obvious drawbacks: that as many women as men are opposed to abortion, for instance; that men generally find unpregnant women more attractive; and that men can beat the rap for child support if there is no child.

Below that sexist jab is a more substantial argument, an indispensable support of the pro-abortion argument.

Seen from one perspective, it's not false: Any pregnancy carries a certain amount of risk, and any child interrupts a life trajectory. Presenting a natural process in such threatening terms resonates with women who feel immediately threatened by it.

Happily for everyone alive, there's another perspective. It's something like this:

Every intimate encounter between a man and a woman presents the possibility of a future life to take hold and flourish. Before you are even aware of it, tiny fingers could be forming, which might soon mutely grasp your own finger. Before long, small hands could be reaching out for a hug, helping you roll cookie dough or hang ornaments on a Christmas tree, gripping a steering wheel for the first time, firmly shaking the hands of well-wishers at college graduation. Someday, a strong hand could be holding your frail one as your eyes close on this life.

To most humans throughout history, those embryonic possibilities represented the future. But I wonder if, as a society, we even believe in the future anymore. I mean the future for its own sake, not merely as an empty canvas on which to paint our plans. Furthering educations and advancing careers may be worthy goals, but goals are not the future, life is. You've heard the saying, "Life is what happens when you're making other plans"?

That's it. Life happens—except when it doesn't. Together we make the future—unless we refuse to. For an overly distracted society, rooted in soil too rich, disdaining the womb may be the ultimate refusal.

About those beans, though, I needn't have worried. Coy white blossoms that took their sweet time showing up now accent the thick vines. Lord willing, little Kentucky wonders and blue lakes will push the petals aside. Within days they'll show up, hot and tender-crisp, on our table. So much for the parable.

But maybe not. Maybe we'll come to our senses and believe in the future again, especially if the present becomes unbearable. Or if not, the Lord who has been our dwelling place through all generations has not changed residence, and He believes.

A SELF-CENTERED LIFE

While quickly glancing through the news from various sources, I saw an article about offering men free vasectomies. I did a quick web search and was surprised

at how many articles there are about men getting the procedure. We are living in a very self-centered society where only a few want and will accept responsibility, particularly responsibility toward a wife and of rearing children. It seems the Muslims do not have any such a diversion. The conclusions are obvious as the non-Muslim population breeds itself out of existence.



APPLE OF GOD'S EYE

The coming glories of the Church of Jesus Christ!

By Rev. Need

*For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: **for he that toucheth***

you toucheth the apple of his eye. Zechariah 2:8

Over the last several years, even "Israel's" leadership has admitted that the Ashkenazi's who now inhabit Palestine have no connection with a blood line to Abraham. Thus, an "Israeli" is one (no matter his "religious persuasion") living in the literal nation of Israel, and a "Jew" is one who follows the Jewish religion, which, by the way, is very antichrist. "A Jewish mother" is simply a mother who is "identified as a" follower of the Jewish religion. Therefore Obviously, anyone can become an "Israelite" by moving to that Palestinian nation, and/or can become a "Jew" simply by converting to Judaism, *i.e.*, denying that Christ fulfilled all the Old Testament rites and ceremonies that spoke of His work for His people. Officially, Judaism is simply a religion, claiming no physical ties to Abraham, Isaac nor Jacob. A Jew is one who follows the religious practices prescribed by that religion. A Christian Jew! How absurd.

Though the modern national Israel makes it clear that it is not connected in any way to the Bible, the average Christian refuses to believe the truth. The idea that modern "Israel" and the modern "Jew" are connected with the Old Testament Israel and Jew, along with the current unsettled events in the Middle East, is raking in vast sums of money for the promoters of that false theology. Their highly profitable fiction entraps those who do not know the word of God, or who will not submit to its teaching. (See "Essays on Judaism, Past and Present." <https://www.biblicalexaminer.org/JudaismOpen.html>) The modern Jewish religion is no more than a continuation of the Phariseeism that put our Lord to death.)

2:8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: **for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.**

A common misconception is that **modern Israel is the apple of God's eye.** The term is used in Zechariah 2:8, where we find **Zechariah's third vision.** It is short and simple, yet it covers a tremendous amount of ground. The **first vision** had warned those who were following the Lord for what was in it for themselves—their hearts were not in their service. The next, the **second vision** was given to the Godly workmen, and covered the promised defeat and destruction of the pagan world powers which were standing against the Kingdom of God.

In considering Zechariah, we must remember that **Hebrews 12:22** tells us that the Gospel Church is the New Mount Zion. Moreover, Paul makes it clear in Galatians that the Gospel Church is the New Israel of God. In addition, according to Paul's letter to the Gentile Church in Corinth, (1 Cor 10:1) the Old Testament is the record of God's dealing with the Gospel Church from the time of the **redemption promise given to Eve** to the present. Salvation for the Saints of old was based upon faith in the **promised Redeemer as given to Eve.** In other words, the Old Testament is the history of God's dealing with His people whom He redeemed out of their bondage to sin.

Zechariah

Two Witnesses, Haggai & Zechariah: Two months after Haggai had begun to prophesy, Zechariah was also sent by the Lord to help him in the labour, and to confirm the same doctrine. **First**, he put them in remembrance of that reason God had so severely punished their fathers: and yet comforts them if they will truly repent, and not abuse this great benefit of God in their deliverance which was a figure of that true deliverance, that all the faithful should have from death and sin, by Christ. But because they remained still in their wickedness, and lack of desire to set forth God's glory, and were not yet made better by their long banishment, he rebukes them most sharply: yet for the comfort of the repentant, he ever mixes the promise of grace, that they might by this means be prepared to receive Christ, in whom all should be sanctified to the Lord. (Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, MacDonald Publishing Company, McLean VA. Don't pass up an opportunity to get anything by Hengstenberg.)

THE VISION IN CHAPTER 2 REVEALS THE UNLIMITED, WORLD-WIDE EXPANSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

In this vision, Zechariah saw a man with a measuring line in his hand, which is very similar to Ezekiel's vision of chapter 40. So, Zechariah asks the interpreting angel who is with him what is going on. He responds that Jerusalem is being measured.

Zechariah's interpreter goes to enquire of the angel who is doing the measuring to find out what He is doing. As the interpreter goes toward the one measuring to find out the meaning of the measuring, another angel comes out to meet the interpreter.

He tells Zechariah's angel to go back and tell Zechariah (Zech 2:4, *this young man*. Zechariah was a young man at this time), "*Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.*" The measuring angel is the angel of the LORD. (*For I, saith the LORD*, v. 5—that is, The Lord Jesus Christ, Exodus 3:14 with John 8:58), and He sends the interpreting angel back to Zechariah with the explanation of what He is doing.

Zechariah 2:1-5. The Meaning of the Message

1) V. 2, the city is being measured. This vision of Jerusalem being measured presupposes that the city is already in existence; but the physical Jerusalem was not standing at the time of Zechariah. The vision is being given to Zechariah as encouragement for those doing the work of rebuilding the physical city.

But the message does not stop with simply rebuilding the city under Ezra and Nehemiah. It looks forward to a future city which will far exceed its present boundaries. Remember, the angel is speaking to Zechariah in the midst of the ruined city of Jerusalem. Zechariah will be speaking to those people living in the midst of that ruined city. What Zechariah is being told is not what appears to the physical eyes. (John 7:24.)

Long before Zechariah, our father Abraham *looked for [that] city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* (He 11:10) That is the city being measured in Zechariah 2.

Thus, Zechariah is being told that Jerusalem will prosper, and will be enlarged beyond anything they can even hope or dream about as they stand in the midst of their present rubble. In fact, the city's enlargement will

not include walls for protection from her enemies; rather, the Lord Himself will be her protection; the Lord will be unto her a wall of fire round about.

V. 4 *And said to him, Run, speak to this {b} young man, saying, {c} Jerusalem shall be inhabited [as] towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle in it:* (b) Meaning himself, Zechariah. (c) Signifying the spiritual Jerusalem and Church under Christ, which would be extended by the Gospel through all the world, and would need no material walls, nor trust in any worldly strength, but would be safely preserved and dwell in peace among all their enemies. (Geneva)

Furthermore, not only will the LORD be a wall of fire round about the city, but He will be the glory in the midst of the city. (Ezekiel 38:11)

Here is the idea in vision: **(1) Jerusalem** in future shall resemble an open country covered with unwalled cities and villages; it will no longer be a city closely encircled with walls; hence it will be extraordinarily enlarged, on account of the multitude of men and cattle with which it will be blessed. (cf. Isa 49:19, 20; Ez 38:11). Moreover, **(2) Jerusalem** will then have no protecting wall surrounding it, because it will enjoy a superior protection. Jehovah will be to it a wall of fire round about; that is to say, a defense of fire which will consume everyone who ventures to attack it. (Cf. Isa 4:5, Deut 4:24) Jehovah will also be the glory in the midst of Jerusalem, that is to say, will fill the city with His glory. (Cf. Isa 60:19). (Keil)

It is clearly evident that Zechariah is speaking of the Gospel Church and its glories under its King. Again, this prophecy is being given to a handful of people who were faced with heaps upon heaps of rubble from the old city; they are faced with a seemingly impossible task of raising up a thing of beauty out of the ashes of war and fire. In the midst of the ruins, Zechariah tells of the future greater glory which awaits the City of the Living God, the capital of the nation of the covenant people.

V. 5 *For I, saith the LORD, will be to her a wall of {d} fire on every side, and will {e} be the glory in the midst of her:* (d) To defend my Church, to strike fear in the enemies, and to destroy them if they approach near. (e) In me they will have their full felicity and glory. (Geneva)

No doubt those who heard and read Zechariah totally expected his prophecy to be literally fulfilled at a future date under the Messiah King of that City. V. 5, however,

clearly shows us that Zechariah cannot be referring to a literal, physical fulfillment as we would think of a city or nation in the natural realm. That city is *the city of the great King*:

Psalms 48:2 *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. Matthew 5:35* *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

The *city of the great King* is the Gospel Church. The Gospel Church is *the apple of his eye*. Throughout Scripture, we are promised that those who touch His city are seeking the fiery wrath of the *great King* of that city, for His *glory is in the midst of her*. His fiery vengeance is promised against those who *toucheth* it.

There is an abundance of New Testament passages which speak of Christ (1) being the protector of the church, and (2) Christ indwelling in the midst of the church, e.g.,

So that we may boldly say, The Lord [is] my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Heb 13:6) And who [is] he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? (1 Pe 3:13) 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor 6:19)

Zechariah 2:6-9.

This section contains God's call to those still in Babylon. Because of Israel's sin, she had been scattered everywhere. God used the heathen nations to judge His people's sin, and they destroyed everything, scattering His people to the four winds. Now the Lord is going to judge Babylon, and He calls on His people to get out of her before she falls.

Though Ezra and Nehemiah returned to Palestine with many Jews, far more remained in Babylon than returned to Palestine. They were settled into the system; they had good jobs and security, so they remained in Babylon where Phariseism developed and the Talmud was written. Others may have remained in Babylon for fear of returning to Jerusalem. Regardless, those who remained were more interested in self than they were in serving the Lord in the hard work *in the city of the great King*. Sadly, most of God's people today feel the same about the hard work required to build the New Mount Zion.

Zechariah, though, is looking far past the ones who remained in Babylon, and speaks to the time of the new City of God, the New Jerusalem.

Observe:

I. V. 6, the same power that scattered them has the power to restore them. The Spirit called to God's people to return. Zechariah is built upon Jeremiah's prophecies, and v. 6 repeats Jeremiah's prophecies, 31:7, 8.

7 For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.⁸ Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

The call in **Zechariah 2:6** sounds like a national call to the Jews (physical seed of Abraham) to come back to "Israel." However, it is the call to the New Nation of God to flee to the life-giving protection of *the city of the great King*. ***Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*** (Isa 55:1)

V. 6 is the gospel call to come to Christ; it is the command to take the gospel world-wide; it is God's call to his *sheep who have gone astray* (Isa 53:6, Lk 15:4); it is God's call to His people to return from the places to where they have been scattered.

The apple of his eye

Isaiah 11:10-12 also speaks of this call as the gathering to Christ. (John 3:14, 12:32) Hebrews chapter 4 clearly states that the promised land is Christ. **Hence, the "apple of His eye" is His church that is built upon the only foundation that can be laid.** (1 Cor 3:11) Galatians clearly states that the Gospel Church is the New Israel of God.

Those who say, particularly professed Christians that the small piece of earth in the Middle East that assumed the Biblical name "Israel" is the "promised land," *viz.*, "the apple of his eye," have done great violence to the Word of God. Peter tells us that they have *wrested* the word of God. (**2 Pet 3:14**, *wrest* means to torture. Peter warns that evil or ignorant men will torture or twist the Word of God to make HIM say something He did not say. Moreover, Abraham's promise is that his heir

would be heir to the world, not just Canaan, Rom 4:13.)

II. V. 7 Zion and daughter of Babylon.

Just as the LORD spoke in 2:4, 5, He now speaks in v. 7 far past Zechariah's time, not to the Babylon of his day, but to the Babylon yet to come. Zechariah's people were rebuilding a city with strong walls, but the prophecy looks far past their present effort of building the city. It looks forward to the time of the Messiah's coming, and the day of the Church existing in the Babylon system in which it will find itself.

2:7 continues the thought of 2:4, 5.

Vv. 4, 5 spoke of the glorious dwelling of the Lord in the midst of His people. One of the results of the LORD'S dwelling in their midst was going to be and will be His fiery judgment upon the world, the daughter of Babylon.

V. 5 in the midst of her. The LORD Christ dwells in the believer, Colossians 1:27, 1 Corinthians 3.

Observe:

First, Zechariah's temple was looking forward to the Gospel Church built upon its cornerstone, Christ. (Eph 2:20, 1 Pe 2:6) **Second**, Christ is the protector of His church. (Rev 1:16) **Third**, Christ indwells His church. (Col 1:27)

Fourth, Christ commands His church, telling His people to separate from the world system, Babylon, and be holy even as He is holy. (2 Cor 6:14-18) The child of God is to separate himself from the world, Babylon if you please, not in the sense of a Monastic life, but in the sense of forsaking the sinful, worldly practices.

While in VA Beach visiting my sister several years ago, we went to the beach. It is amazing how many people found there an excuse to remove their clothing in public. I have no doubt that many of those "naked" people there were good Christians at home. The Word of God clearly commands us to not take on the dress and ways of the world around us.

Romans 8:29 (*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*) speaks of strength of the total character, including but not just the outside appearances. It refers to inner Christ-like strength that results in outward Christ-like appearances and actions. It was in eternity past that God chose a people to be conformed to the image of His Son, and He put clothes on them. Romans 12:2 may

speak of having the indwelling Spirit of Christ, but the outside actions and appearances are easily influenced by the world's fashions and patterns.

Fifth, Zechariah looks forward to the glorious triumph of the church in God's predetermined fullness of time. (1 Cor 15:24-28)

Zechariah 1:7 could be a warning to those still dwelling in Babylon to flee from the city, which is the same warning our Lord gave to His covenant people to flee Jerusalem before its final judgment. (Mat 24:15-22) Babylon was destroyed, and is today a pile of dust. Old Jerusalem was totally destroyed. The present city was built upon the rubble of the old city. ("City where Jesus walked" is a marketing ploy to fleece the gullible.)

III. V. 8, the warning goes to and beyond the time of the Messiah. Within this thought is the judgment upon the nations which have opposed the kingdom of God (Hengstenberg).

V. 8 *For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the {i} glory hath he sent me to the nations which wasted you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the {k} apple of his eye.*

(i) Seeing that God had begun to show his grace among you by delivering you, he continues the same still toward you, and therefore sends me his angel and his Christ to defend you from your enemies, so that they will not hurt you, neither along the way nor at home. (k) You are so dear to God, that he can no more allow your enemies to hurt you, than a man can endure to be thrust in the eye; # Ps 17:8. [Ps 17:8 *Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,* 9 *From the wicked that oppress me, [from] my deadly enemies, [who] compass me about.* V. 9, for their cruelty cannot be satisfied but with my death. {oppress: Heb. waste} {my...: Heb. my enemies against the soul} (Geneva)

...for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. We will find this idea of God's vengeance against those who stand against His covenant people throughout all history, starting with Abraham in Genesis 12:3. Not only does the context of Genesis 12: require that it be understood as Christ and those in Him, but the entire book of Galatians teaches the same thing. (See my commentary on Galatians.) The promise followed through in the New Testament to the church, 2 Thessalonians 1:6 *Seeing [it is] a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;*

What He shall do for His church will be an evident proof of God's tender care of it and affection to it: *He that touches you touches the apple of His eye.* This is a high

expression of God's love to His church. By His resentment of the injuries done to her it appears how dear she is to Him, how He interests Himself in all her interests, and takes what is done against her, not only as done against Himself, but as done against the very apple of His eye, the tenderest part, which nature has made very fine, has put a double guard upon, and taught us to be in a special manner careful of, and which the least touch is a great offence to. This encourages the people of God to pray with David (Ps 17:8), *Keep me as the apple of thy eye;* and engages them to do as Solomon directs (Pr 7:2), to keep His law as the apple of their eye. (Zechariah 2:8. Matthew Henry.)

trouble you... *you* must be defined as the covenant people — that is, the blood bought Christians who suffer for Christ. The wicked who partake in troubling the covenant people face the recompense of a righteous God. Not only do the wicked face this recompense, but so do those of the covenant people who do not separate themselves from the wicked. (1 Corinthians 3:17, Hebrews 10:25-31.)

The promise of God's righteous vengeance is against all those who stand against His kingdom. When the covenant people partake of the wicked's deeds, they also will face God's righteous vengeance, recompense, consuming fire, judgment and fiery indignation. Those of the covenant people who are yoked together with the unbelievers will face the physical destruction which the unbelievers face, yet their souls will be saved. (1 Corinthians 5.)

IV. V. 9 looks forward to the New Testament promise of judgment against the enemies of the church. (2 Thes 1:6)

V.9 *For, behold, I will shake my hand {l} upon them, and {m} they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath {n} sent me.* (l)

Upon the heathen your enemies. (m) They will be your servants, as you have been theirs. (n) This must necessarily be understood of Christ, who being God equal with his Father, was sent, as he was Mediator to dwell in his Church and to govern them. (Geneva)

I will.... This writer personally finds tremendous comfort in these "**I wills**" of the Old Testament. There are five in this chapter, five in chapter 3, five in chapter 8, eight in chapter 10 and seven in chapter 12. The liberal use of "**I will**" is typical of these prophets; in fact, they are found throughout the Old Testament.

I will... God promises to do a certain thing. Most of

the “*I wills*” are based upon a condition of obedience, e.g., Abram, Genesis 12:1-3. God said, “Abram, go to where *I will* show you, leaving everyone behind. If you will go, *I will* (do these things for you).”

But some of the *I wills* have no conditions upon them, such as the one here in Zechariah 2:9, “*I will shake mine hand upon them---*.” Within this *I will* is God’s promise to judge the wicked, as well as His promise “*and they shall be a spoil to my servants...*” (Pro 13:22. See Christ’s Sermon on the Mount.) God promises to exalt His oppressed servants above those who oppress them. His faithful servants will become the masters as the Kingdom of God develops. (Mat 25)

It is God’s Spirit of Grace that subdues the nations unto Christ through the preaching and teaching of God’s law-word. (Note Isaiah 63:17, Zech 4:6)

V. 9, *I will shake...* This shaking is referred to in Hebrews 12:26-28, where we have two shakings:

First is referred to in Haggai 2:6, and is talking of the coming of Christ.

Second, Hebrews 12:27, 28, is the shaking which continues among the nations since His coming—the destruction of those things which can be destroyed. See Matthew 7:24-29 where our Lord told of the destruction of those things built apart from obedience to the principles of His word. Hebrews 12:28, 29, follows the thought, telling us that what is left after his shaking will be in the hands of His faithful servants. V. 29, our God is a consuming fire, and He will consume everything that is not built according to His building instructions. (Ez 11:21)

This threatened (promised) fire, judgment or shaking against the world system (symbolized by *the daughter of Babylon*), should cause those dwelling in Babylon to flee to the daughter of Zion, because the Lord *is in the midst of her*.

This passage in Zechariah saw a fulfillment as the Lord shook Babylon to the very foundation. Babylon fell into a pile of rubble, yet the physical Jerusalem rose to prominence once again. It had to be rebuilt in order to meet and reject the King. That Jerusalem of old fell into a pile of rubble, but the City Abraham sought where Christ is King stands firm, and will grow to cover the whole earth.

The Maccabees led the old nation to great victories, yet this prophecy cannot stop there. The Maccabean

war was but a dim shadow of the glory of the new Mt. Zion which would be obtained under the Messiah-King. (See Hebrews 12:22)

Zechariah 2:10 (8:8) is a reference to Leviticus 26:12, which is easily traceable into the New Testament as a reference to the church. (2 Cor 6:16, Eph 2:19-22)

The apple of his eye is clearly identified as the Gospel Church, the blood bought Bride of Christ. God will judge those who attempt to take the wonderful promises of God which are given to His chosen people, the church (John 15:16), and attempt to give them to a clearly open, pagan and thoroughly anti-Christ nation of modern Israel. God will surely judge those who exalt and finance that apostate nation in Palestine.

The public figures who teach errors have big names and many followers, but let the Word of God be true, and every man a liar.

The call has been issued to “*all the world.*”—flee to the life-giving protection of *the city of the great King*.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
(Isa 55:1)

Though sin abounds, grace much more abounds. Therefore, we can sing and rejoice: “*Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him:*” who redeemed us by his grace.

GEN. DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

On his 75th birthday, Gen. Douglas MacArthur said, “Youth is not entirely a time of life---it is a state of mind. It is not wholly a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips or supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions. I promise to keep on living as though I expected to live forever.”

AUTHORITY & THE POWER TO KILL

By Rev. Need

Deuteronomy 32:39 *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.*

The more ungodly the state is, the more it wars against anyone outside of itself that tries to help preserve life outside of the state’s authority. How many times have

we heard of the local government stopping efforts to maybe “feed the hungry” in a public place, or other like events? Though the state cannot create life, it can “pre-serve” life. In order to survive, the ungodly state must attack any life-giving function of Christian Organizations.

Man has not been able to create life. He dreams of it, because it is his way of playing God; but what he can do is the other half of the equation—power to kill. And so, he plays God by killing. The more humanistic a state, the more murderous it becomes. From the French Revolution on, the state has become an agency of mass destruction and murder.

In their war against God, the ungodly must war against the laws of God. Thus, they turn Romans 13 upside down:

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

The State not only justifies evil, but many times finance and encourages it. On the other hand, in the State’s war against God and godliness, they criminalize and prosecute good works at every opportunity.

WAR WARNING

By Gerald Calente

Christmas is almost here and it could be the last one on Earth as the evil demons and satanic leaders escalate World War III into nuclear destruction. [Christians know better, but he is right in what else he says.]

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the build up and flow of weapons is only prolonging the war without changing the outcome. Yes, if NATO and the West stopped sending billions of dollars to Ukraine, the war would have ended. This border dispute between Russia and Ukraine has been going on for hundreds of years. And despite the political and media propaganda from the West, what is going on in Russia and Ukraine is no threat to the United States or NATO.

And while the media keeps reporting on Russia’s destructive military actions in Ukraine, they ignore Ukraine’s military destruction and killing of people in the Donbas separatist region.

Moreover, the Western media NEVER provided daily coverage of America’s murderous Afghan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, etc. wars that have killed millions and destroyed entire nations. Adding insult to hypocrisy, while America says it is fighting for freedom and democracy, the nation is plagued with its own problems... including the rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness that have been stolen from We The People by the government.

War: When all else fails they take you to war... and all else is failing. Inflation is at 40-year highs, savings rates are at 17-year lows and recession fears keep rising.

The Pope has told everyone to tighten their spending this Christmas and instead donate to the people of Ukraine. But the Pope did not promote peace and that is what the people of Ukraine need more than money.

And now, the United States is sending some \$40 billion of more weapons of death to keep bloodying the Ukraine killing fields. Since the war started on 24 February, the U.S. has sent an estimated \$105 billion to Ukraine... while 63 percent of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck.

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON WAR

ANY WAR IS AGAINST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.



Any war has never been, is not, nor will be against Russia nor against China; since WWI, we have kept both nations alive with state-of-the-art

war machinery, finances and food, e.g., Afghanistan and Ukraine. China is openly “stealing” and using our military technology against us, even as they openly admit they are influencing our elections for their own benefit. In addition, Washington is allowing China to purchase massive amount of farm land even around our military bases. We are sending billions of Federal Reserve Notes (called by some FERNs or money) to the Ukraine to finance a war we have no business in, while Americans are suffering under an ever-increasing tax load and unemployment. Spend that money to

bring wealth producing industry back to our country. Every war enables the central government to increase its power over its people dramatically. One of the wars we are facing at the present is in defense of the “Petro Dollar.” How many temporary tax increases to finance a war have been reduced after the war they were to finance? We can only imagine the freedom enjoyed by the American people before WWI.

VARIOUS

• Unintended Consequence of COVID-19 Vaccines—Permanent Installation of mRNA Genetic Code

At this time, it is fair to say reverse transcription of mRNA into the human genome is still theoretical. But it should be clear that more studies by independent laboratories should be funded immediately.

Dr. Peter A. McCullough, John Leake. Nov 30 2022
https://www.theepochtimes.com/mkt_app/health/unintended-consequence-of-covid-19-vaccines-permanent-installation-of-mrna-genetic-code_4895932.html?utm_source=morningbriefnoe&src_src=morningbriefnoe&utm_campaign=mb-2022-12-01&src_cmp=mb-2022-12-01&utm_medium=email&est=tDacITU0s35InWTiZgII%2BFV mCEp3tfcu2rCMAykBn%2FzlmNdmQml8q9zy7tGie206rb%2BOerYlKu mzeKjhWFI7

(The mRNA will be passed down to one’s children.)

• Renowned Cardiologist: mRNA Vaccines May be “Changing the Human Genome”

In a November 24 interview with Tanya Gaw of Action4Canada, Dr. Peter McCullough, an eminent cardiologist and the former vice chief of internal medicine at the Baylor University Medical Center, claimed that mRNA vaccines for Covid-19 may last permanently in the body, be transferred to the unvaccinated in certain cases, and may even be changing the human genome....

https://thenewamerican.com/renowned-cardiologist-mrna-vaccines-may-be-changing-the-human-genome/?mc_cid=f1a651cab2

NATION’S BLOOD SUPPLY NOW CONTAMINATED

Unvaccinated Blood Is Now in Very High Demand

https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2022/12/17/unvaccinated-blood-now-very-high-demand.aspx?ui=62275c4f6eb5e1c6872faec264ac18ae89396dd486d6b98af038d9fef2e3c00d&sd=20110406&cid_source=dnl&cid_medium=email&cid_content=art1HL&cid=20221217&cid=DM1308145&bid=1671623581

• Balenciaga

Video: Satanic Witch Screams ‘BALENCIAGA’ Before Being Burned in American Horror Story [2017]

<https://newspunch.com/video-satanic-witch-screams-balenciaga-before-being-burned-in-american-horror-story/>

You know how Balenciaga had warning tape in one of their ads spelling their name BAALENCIAGA? A friend just pointed out that if you separate those words in Latin to Baal enci aga then it translates to Baal is the king. Baal is a demon. Pure evil.

<https://twitter.com/robbystarbucks/status/159811447112101478>

WHAT WE WANT TO IGNORE

• Jim Cavienzel: “Elites Drink Adrenochrome”

‘Passion of the Christ’ Star Claims Hollywood Execs Are Trafficking Children For Adrenochrome.

<https://newspunch.com/passion-of-the-christ-star-claims-hollywood-execs-are-trafficking-children-for-adrenochrome/>

See interview with Mel Gibson, <https://earhustle411.com/mel-gibson-says-hollywood-den-parasites-feasts-blood-children/>

Question: What is happening to all the unaccompanied children who crossed the Southern border, and were sent “who knows where” into the Country?

The fool has said *There is no God*, so his god is Satan. From ages past, child sacrifice and drinking blood has been a hope of gaining vital energy, which must be energy from below. (2 Kings 3:27) So why should we doubt that the **Elites** from all walks of life who seek evil power from below? They have based their lives on the make-believe world where *there is not God* who will hold them accountable.

• One woke agenda now consuming vast expanses of American land

‘In the name of fighting global warming,’ campaign results in serious ‘deforestation’

Skeptical residents like Rodney Moon, owner of a used-car and salvage lot, say the \$3 million is corporate hush money to pay off residents so they don’t fight the project. ... “once altered,” Virginia’s prime agricultural soils and forest lands “cannot be restored” to prime productivity.

“On paper it’s solvable – that’s why we have study after study after study saying we can do that,” she said. “But when you come down to where developers are actually going, the real world doesn’t behave the way the analysis does on paper.”

https://www.wnd.com/2022/12/one-woke-agenda-now-consuming-vast-expanses-american-land/?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=wnd-breaking&utm_campaign=breaking&utm_content=breaking&ats_es=76c88699640bf17c199c18ba90162de3

Note that EVs, PUs in particular, work beautiful on paper, in the real work world, they are useless.

• Fear Works in politics and in false science.

The climate change activists have created a public fear over nothing; that fear translates into sparing no expense to address their proposed emergency. Elementary school children are expressing their #1 fear, "Climate Change." The Communist education system has done its job well. China admitted their work in getting radical left-wing politicians elected; the electronic voting system is a dream is a dream come true for New World Order in order to control the elections all over the world.

Can one doubt that our enemies, China, Russia, Soros, Gates, &c. are behind this effort to strip America of its productive farmland, inexpensive energy and industrial capabilities? As pastor at Linden Baptist Church, one of our men took me on a tour of Nucor Steel in Crowfordsville Indiana. That plant used a huge electric ark furnace to melt scrap iron and rolled it out. Only fools can imagine that a "solar farm" can produce enough power for that electric furnace, particularly if it might run 24/7.

It's easier to fool people than to convince them they have been fooled.

The Covidians have been fooled so many times with mass induced State behavioral psychology fear programs that they have been convinced that there is no possible way they haven't been fooled many times over. Because "Trust the Science" is always changing as a direct function of each and every exposed PSYOP-19 lie with a quickening of this "speed of science." (Copied)

• **Drought, God's judgment**

Severe water shortages loom as American government fails to invest in water infrastructure

The United States' water shortage situation is critical. More states could experience more severe water shortages in the future if droughts persist and if the government fails to invest in water infrastructure.

Severe water shortages loom as American government fails to invest in water infrastructure

<https://www.newstarget.com/2022-12-12-water-shortages-loom-government-fails-invest-infrastructure.html>

• **Green Energy**

After multiplied acres have been taken out of produc-

tion in order to plant glass, they will very soon be utterly useless. Those who leased out their farms to plant the glass monstrosities, will soon see their foolish dreams fall by wayside, and their land useless.

• **Hot fusion breakthrough only "allowed" because of cold fusion (LENR) revolution under way**

By Mike Adams

Earlier this week, the Dept. of Energy announced a breakthrough in "hot" nuclear fusion: A net gain of energy from the fusion experiment at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.

But hot fusion technology has been in existence for many years (see the Lockheed Martin patent in today's article). It was kept under wraps because hot fusion energy would provide extremely low-cost electricity for the masses while gutting the fossil fuels industry whose existence is necessary for US dollar hegemony.

Hot fusion, in other words, had to be suppressed in order to maintain oil dominance -- and petrodollar dominance -- in the global economy. But now cold fusion is about to take the world by storm, so globalists are "allowing" hot fusion to emerge because they can control it (and limit it).

<https://www.brighteon.com/19322dd0-bbe6-4b08-b3a4-a24a6a8e6336>

Listen to the audio. "Hot fusion" has existed for many years, but has been kept from the public. (At the request of those who profit from the gullible??) Cold fusion will "take the world by storm," and provide extremely low cost truly green electricity.

• **FTX chief fraudster, Sam Bankman-Fried, who defrauded over a million Americans, has been arrested.** But one can't help but ask the question, why just before his scheduled House hearing? Is it a coincidence or is there more to the story?

<https://www.brighteon.com/a4adadb9-1102-40dd-8936-bf223f304b11>

Crypto collapse leaves mostly Democrats holding suspect donations

The collapse of a crypto fund run by Sam Bankman-Fried, who now is under arrest for what happened with his FTX company, is creating complications for many Democrats in Washington, and a few Republicans.

That's because, a report in the Daily Mail explains, one quarter of the members of Congress took political



donations from him.

https://www.wnd.com/2022/12/crypto-collapse-leaves-mostly-democrats-holding-suspect-donations/?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=wnd-newsletter&utm_campaign=dailyam&utm_content=newsletter&ats_es=76c88699640bf17c199c18ba90162de3

Sam knows too much about too many people and organizations to be allowed to testify before congress. He will meet the same fate as did Jeffery Epstein who hung himself while under 24/7 observation. The wicked know that no one will be held responsible, so they boldly do their evil deeds. There has been no accounting for the many dead bodies around the Clintons.

Have you noticed the prevalence of the “Mental Illness?” There is BIG money in therapy for a disease that does not exist. There are several instances of “Mental Illness” in Scripture, Mark 5, Luke 2. (Mk 5:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.) Untold millions of dollars are being thrown at “Mental Illness,” but it is money wasted. The right mind can only be accomplished through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ

Oh Yes! We took our house off the market until spring. Only the Lord knows what the future hold for us.

In addition, remember Bettie. She had some major dental work which will take some time to heal. Also, old age is catching up with both of us in both physical and mental strength. Pray for us!

MASCULINE MEN AND FEMININE WOMEN

By Coach Dave Daubenmire. NewsWithViews.com

I love my wife.

That may sound corny, but I really do love her. Although my bias is obvious I would not hesitate to place her in the top 10% of all over-sixty women in America.

I’m talking about her beauty...her physical attractiveness...not simply the fact that I have grown to love her more with each passing year. Michele is a real head-turner. Without the benefit of plastic surgery, Botox, or heavy make-up, she is just a petite, sweet, attractive little package of love.

I tell her that regularly. It matters to her that her husband of 37 years appreciates all she does to keep herself looking attractive. I never pressured her into staying thin...or keeping her hair attractive...or looking sharp

when we go out together. She just does it. I often tell her I would love her no matter how she looked...but her beauty sure makes it a lot easier.

She knows I am kidding. But she also knows that there is truth in humor.

Michele and I have two daughters. They are both thirty-ish and they take after their mom. It is a work of nature, really, because I raised both of them to be Tom-boys. Heck, what else is a football coach supposed to do with two young daughters? We raised them to be strong women and much of their strength was developed through the ups and downs of athletics.

Both of them were accomplished athletes. The elder, Abby, played four years of softball at Hillsdale College, while her baby sister Maggie was a four year starter in centerfield for Marietta College. But in the rough and tumble life of athletics we always encouraged them to be ladies.

“Being a jock doesn’t mean you have to act like a man,” I often cautioned them. “Discipline, hard work, and success have no gender. Down and dirty on the field doesn’t mean rude and manly off of it.”

Today, they are both happy, successful stay-at-home moms, with strong, manly husbands. I love the women in my life. I especially love them because they are...well...women.

I was counting my blessings the other night and thanking Jesus for the wonderful women He has given me. (Michele and I also have three granddaughters.) As odd as this may sound I am most proud of how feminine the women who surround me are. Their femininity makes their strength less noticeable. I credit their Mom with teaching them to be ladies.

I was struck yesterday by the word “feminism” as I was reading a story about how much Trump “hates women.” What does that word even mean, I wondered out loud? What does being a feminist have to do with being feminine? Why is it that the one thing that so many feminists lack is femininity?



Posted next to the Pharmacy window at the VA

Calling most feminists feminine is an oxymoron... sort of like putting a boat in "dry dock." Why is it so hard for my mind to equate femininity with feminism?

So I went to the dictionary to see if I could make sense of the nonsensical. A quick online search revealed this.

Feminism—the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.

I'm for that. Michele is for that. So are Abby, Maggie, and most people I know. So I looked up femiNIST and found it that refers to someone "who supports equal rights and opportunities for women." That sounds like me.

Where is the disconnect I asked myself? Why do I, and all of the women in my life, support equal rights and opportunities for women, yet not feel comfortable with the label "feminist?"

So, stubborn as I am, I went deeper into the English language and researched the word feminine—"having qualities or appearances TRADITIONALLY associated with women especially delicacy, prettiness, soft, delicate, gentle, graceful."

Bingo. The war on women that is currently being waged in America is not so much a war against females as it is a war against tradition. Feminists don't want to be women; they want to be women with the qualities of men.

But men are supposed to be masculine. What does the dictionary have to say about someone who is masculine?

Masculine—having qualities or appearances TRADITIONALLY associated with men; especially strength and aggressiveness. Virile, macho, rugged, brawny, robust, manly, vigorous.

Where does one sign up to be a masculinist? When is the march for masculine rights?

Once again we have been snookered by the word-smiths.

There has been a real role-reversal in the American society. Men are acting like women and women are acting like men. No wonder Americans are so confused.

Men and women are CREATED equal but it would be foolish to believe that their talents and skills are equal. Equality is true at birth and is supposed to be true in the eyes of the law. But it is mere foolishness and folly

to think that there is no difference between men and women.

Why do we teach such malarkey to our children?

Five years ago I overheard a conversation our Abby had with one of her college friends shortly after giving birth to their first child.

"I can't even explain the feeling," I heard her say. "Giving birth to my daughter was the greatest thing I have ever done in my entire life."

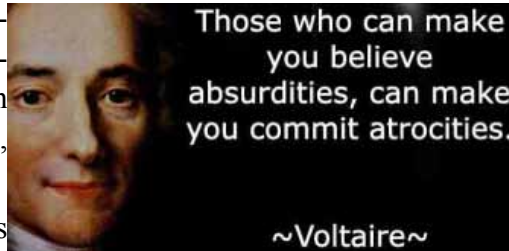
We waste so much of our time trying to be something we are not. Life would be so much easier if we simply played the roles that nature spelled out for us.

Men to be Masculine and women to be feminine was God's idea. "Male and female created He them..."

Why do you think they call them role models?

Men and women are CREATED equal but it would

be foolish to believe that their talents and skills are equal. Equality is true at birth and is supposed to be true in the eyes of the law. But it is mere foolishness and folly to think that there is no difference between men and women.



LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND

Philippians 3:12-15

By Rev. Need

Philippians 3:11 *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

I have passed very few New Years without using this passage, which I use a little apart from its immediate context. The context is Paul leaving behind all of his "zealous good" works, replacing them with complete dependence on Christ's righteousness. He has put them behind him, so that he might obtain the mind of Christ. The passage is a particularly good salvation verse for

dealing with and breaking the hold of past sins. It also applies to leaving the past sins, failures and the choices of our own making behind, so we can press on to be like Christ, v. 14.

This passage applies to the day-by-day **new beginning in Christ**. Moreover, it reminds us that at the end of and beginning of a year, time has quickly passed “like a vapor,” and we cannot go back and change anything. It is a good reminder to review the past year. Our concern now is what we can do in the New Year – there are many good New Year’s resolutions in vv. 12-15.

I find this passage one of the most useful, helpful and encouraging in all scripture. I must often flee to this passage in order to keep on keeping on. Actually, if it were not for the encouragement offered here, I would have quit the ministry many years ago. Thus, it is probably one of my “life verses,” considering how many times I must put super foolish errors, sins and failures behind. Moreover, this passage helps keep the mind under control, to keep it from dwelling on past failures and to silence the conscience that wants to dwell on past sins that are now under the blood.

No doubt this passage holds one of the keys to the Christian life, which is the power of God to enable the Elect to leave his past failures and sins behind, no matter how bad they may be. Many times, it is easier for others to forgive and forget our sins and foolishness even against them, than it is for us to forgive and forget them ourselves. Others forget our foolishness quicker than we do. Those things live in our memory forever, many times burned in like it happened yesterday.

This passage includes more than the sins which embarrassed us. Who doesn’t want to forget those things, for they are painful memories? It also includes forgetting the past pleasures of sin; the fulfilling the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. V. 13 includes putting those sinful, pleasurable moments behind us. It is one of the glorious things about Christianity: The forgiveness of God, and the power of God so we can go on with His plan for our lives. (1 Cor 6:11)

God gave us **Philippians 3:13** for our instruction and encouragement. We all need it regularly, and should have it memorized from using it so much. (See also 1 John 1, Proverbs 28:13, 14.)

Philippians 3:12-14 also contains the the promise of **a good conscience toward God**.

Hebrews 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the **conscience**; v. 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your **conscience** from dead works to serve the living God? **Hebrews 10:22** Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil **conscience**, and our bodies washed with pure water. And **Hebrews 13:18** Pray for us: for we trust we have a good **conscience**, in all things willing to live honestly.

Philippians 3:12-14 give us hope that no matter how big a mess we make of things, we can start over again in the eyes of our God of Mercy; if this gives us power to start over again with the Lord, how much more should it give this same hope one toward another. Once a situation which stands between us and “them,” can have a new start.

Paul was an excellent example. He was a murderer before his salvation, yet the power of the Spirit of God as found in this verse gave him the supernatural ability to place the foolishness and sin behind him, and to press on for the sake of the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

Here are a couple points from Philippians 3:

I. The Christian will remain imperfect as long as he is on this earth. Not until we see Christ, will we be like Him. We know ourselves well enough to know that our heart and life are not in conformity to Christ Jesus. Others may think we are holy, but we and the Lord know the truth.

II. The call of every Child of God is a call to the holiness of God as established in Christ Jesus.

In 3:12, Paul tells us that he has not attained the perfection of Christ Jesus to which all of God’s people are called. V. 14, tells us that he is still pressing on toward the required perfection. V. 15, points out that in any area where we are short of our calling in Christ - calling to perfection - *even this* will the Spirit of God show unto us **if we want to see it**. There are very few people, even among the Elect, who really want to see the truth about doctrine and/or themselves, either from God or from other believers.

Every time we read Scripture, we should read it with the understanding that we are sinners, and that we are not where we should be in Christ. Then as we seriously

study and with humble prayer that if in anything we are contrary to the mind of Christ as revealed in God's word, He will show us. He will give the grace to make the change.

Ephesians 1:1-6 clearly tells us that our calling in Christ Jesus is *that we should be holy and without blame before him in love*. **1 Peter 1:15, 16**, we are told that our calling is to be *holy even as our Father in heaven is holy*.

Obviously, we daily fall short of our calling. Paul, here at the end of his life, having written almost all if not all of his letters, and after starting a great many churches, he himself says that he has not obtained this perfection. (As we read his letters, it sure appears that he has.)

In **Romans 7:18-24**, we are told that the flesh, or fallen nature resists our every effort to love God, love his law and to do his word. **7:25** tells us that the strong desire to obey the law of God which comes from the new birth, coupled with the failure to fulfill this desire, can result in a person desiring to give up in their efforts to be like Christ, or even in doubting his salvation. (Remember, if there is no strong desire to obtain to the goal set before us, the likeness of Christ, then we are NOT one of His.)

The Romans 7 picture is of a person rowing upstream. He starts to remember how hard he worked in the past, maybe with no success, and it isn't long before he is drifting downstream daydreaming. It doesn't take much slackness on the oars at all to lose what was gained.

As we look back over this past year, let us ask ourselves: **1)** Are we more of what the Lord would have us to be? **2)** Do we look more like a Christian? **2)** Do we talk more like a Christian? **3)** Do we sound more like a Christian? **4)** Is our relationship with others more Christlike than this time last year? **)** Did we make a mess of our lives, and or a mess of our Christian testimony?

Remember Paul's warning in **2 Corinthians 10:12** *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and compar-*

ing themselves among themselves, are not wise. {are...: or, understand it not } We must compare ourselves with the word of God, not with ourselves nor with others.

Random thoughts

First: *A Psalm of David. LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? 4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.* Ps 15:1. Ecclesiastes 5:1-6 gives more detail.

Did we keep our vows to the Lord last year. You say, "But that was only to a man that I gave my word." Our action toward man is our action toward God. Sadly, where

money is involved, few keep their word.

Second: Malachi

3:8-12 did we give to the Lord what was His last

year? **Third: Romans 13:8** who did we end up in debt to in 2022? **Fourth: 2 Timothy 2:24, 25** how about our patience and meekness? **Fifth: 1 John 3:14-18, 4:11** what did our actions and words say to our brothers and sisters in Christ? Did they show love, the same kind of love that Christ had for us? **Sixth: 2 Timothy 2:4** did we get so tangled up in the affairs of this world that we were unable to serve the Lord as we should have? **Seventh: 2 Timothy 2:15** here in the same chapter, what happened to our study of the word of God last year? Did we start out with high hopes and expectations and fall by the wayside?

Furthermore, we have **Luke 18:1** *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;* Did this last year find us more faithful or less faithful in this personal walk with the Lord? How can professed Christians feel that they do not need time alone with the Lord to survive? Self-confidence and pride will rule if given any chance at all.

Eighth: 1 Timothy 6:5. What was your goal last year? Was it to get gain or was it to grow in godliness? **Ninth: Ephesians 6:1-9** covers the doctrine of authority from every angle.

The world says that because the employer is not paying me as much as I think that I am worth, then I do not owe him as hard a work as if I was getting paid more. If one agrees to work for a person for .25 cents an hour, that employer is owed as hard a work as though one agreed to work for \$25 an hour. We are not working to please that employer; rather, we are working to please the Lord at all times.

Then the employer! Does he treat the employee right? Is he honest and above board with them?

How did the children treat their parents last year?

Did the fathers treat the children right?

Tenth: 1 Peter 1:7. Each of us had our faith *tried* in 2022. How did the trial turn out? The trial could have even been in the area of prosperity. If the Lord prospered us, was he honored as the one who caused us to prosper? Or maybe the trial was a trial of want. How did the trial turn out? In medical needs?

How about our testimony before the world? Did we hold up last year, or fall back?

Let us remember **1 Peter 1:9**. Others watch how we handle the trials that come our way, and will be influenced accordingly. Were they influenced for Christ in 2022 by our consistency to our profession of Christ? How many opportunities did we miss by inconsistency?

Eleventh: Hebrews 12:15. At the end of 2022, are we taking bitterness with us into 2023? God forbid that we should do such an evil thing. Bitterness will destroy us from the inside out. "But you do not know what wrong they did me." If bitterness is not dealt with, the day will come when we will not be able to deal with it, **v. 17**. Regardless of the excuse we might use to hold onto bitterness, it will destroy us and our family.

Twelfth: Colossians 3:13 tells us that we cannot take forgiveness nor hard feelings toward another into the new year without causing great problems within ourselves and with our God.

How about the inter-family relationships? How did the husbands or wives treat one another last year? What went on behind closed doors? How about the tempers, the fights, the words? How many hurt feelings are still left hanging around that need to be made right?

How many wives say that they want to reach their husbands yet they do not live according to 1 Peter 3:1-6? How many husbands say that they love their wives yet do not compliment them, tell and show love toward

them, and dwell with them as instructed in 1 Peter 3:7. Have we ignored or do we ignore 3:8, 9 and wonder why our prayers are not answered when we pray for lost loved ones?

Thirteenth: Were we more faithful to the public assembly than we were in 2022? (Heb 10:25)

Fourteenth: How about anger? *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:* (Eph 4:31)

Is our spirit more under the control of the Holy Spirit than it was in 2022? In Exodus 20:10, anger cost Moses the promised land.

Fifteenth: Compromise? *Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.* (1 Cor 15:34) The result of our compromises could be the rejection by others of *the knowledge of God*.

There are many more things we could mention, but the Holy Spirit will bring to mind the areas that were not right in 2022. Our hope is found in passages such as Philippians 3:12-15: **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

However, **Matthew 18:15ff.**, tells us that we must make our failures and sins right with others before we can find peace with God and with our own mind.

Philippians 3:15, *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

We must be willing, and even ask the Lord to show us what we need to make right from this past year. And then claim the grace that is needed to make those things right. Otherwise, we will not be able to leave it behind and under the blood of Christ. The very worst thing we could do is take this into the new year with us. Here is a chance as well as a motive to start over again and again and again.

Proverbs 28:13, 14 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.*

Obviously, we all want to prosper this next year. The Lord tells us how to prosper.

Personal note: In one of the Bibles I wore out several years ago, I marked verses and dates beside verses for

prayer requests, promise verses and beside verses that pointed out my sins. I consider a Bible worn out when the binding gives up, and the pages start falling out. (The leather binding on the Thompson Chain Reference Bible is not the best.) In that Bible, I have 12 dates written beside Proverbs 28:13, 14 alone. Some of the dates even have the sin marked with them. I may still refer to that Bible is particular times of need.

What kind of mess did we make in 2022? Tremendous hope is found in v. 13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

The words *this* and *one thing* is added in the KJV. The verse reads thusly, 13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: (to grasp completely) but one thing, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, (Many of try to do not one thing, but many things, and fail in all of them!)*

Paul “still aimed at making farther progress, because he had not yet attained the end of his calling.” (Calvin) Nor have we reached the end of our calling, and we must press on. We press on by leaving the past behind us, and keeping our eyes on the *Author and Finisher of our faith*.

So, let us confess our failures, claim Philippians 3:12-14, leave the past behind us, not get side-tracked and *press on toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God for us in Christ Jesus*.

The above has been on the negative side of forget-

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ting, but we must end on the positive side. We must not, we must not forget, we **must remember** the everlasting goodness and mercies the Lord has showered on us over the past year. **Who can number his unmerited mercies, goodness and blessings of the past year?** The end of the year, read passages such as Psalms chapter 107, 181, 136, and thank the Lord He has remembered his people those who have been made worthy by the atonement of his Son, Christ Jesus our Lord and King.

Let me close with this blessing from 3 John 1:2 *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

Have a blessed and prosperous New Year as you serve the Lord in your church, in your family and in your occupation.

If you find the Examiner a blessing to you, let us now and pass the Examiner on.

