

U**P**LOOK

NOV-DEC 2005

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

WHO IS
HE? **AND** WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?

EDITOR
JAMES
MARTIN
*He goes
before*

WILLIAM
YUILLE
*Wrestling
and clinging*

JABE
NICHOLSON
*What's
missing in
our gospel
work?*

The
Angel
of the
Lord





"Behold, I am going to send an Angel before you to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared... For My Angel will go before you and bring you in [to the land]."

Exodus 23:20-23

He Goes Before

In the shadows of our lives stands the Commander-in-chief.

Israel had seen the Lord defeat the gods and armies of Egypt. She had crossed the Red Sea on dry land. Now she stood at the foot of Sinai, but the journey was not over. God had greater plans for His people than wilderness! There was the Promised Land to enter. But Canaan was not vacant; there would be new wars to wage, new enemies to defeat. So, as He prepared His people to enter, the Lord revealed that they would not be alone, left to rely on their own strength. "My Angel will go before you" was His promise. Israel would need fear no enemy; the Angel of the Lord would go before them, and thus the result was guaranteed: "to bring you in to the land." Only unbelief could rob Israel of peace and hope, for this Angel could not fail.

Fast-forward thirty-eight years. Israel is camped on the east bank of Jordan, awaiting the morning when she is to enter the Land. The Angel appears to Joshua to remind him of the promise to Moses—that He would be going before, demanding Israel's obedience and guaranteeing her victory (Josh. 5:13f). And the Angel *did* go before Israel, and the walls of Jericho fell.

Such reminders were graciously repeated in the years to come: to hesitant Barak when told to fight Sisera (Jdg. 4:14); to David before meeting the Philistines in the vale of Rephaim. In each case, believing that the Lord had gone before would be all that was needed to allow God's people to rest in the knowledge of guaranteed victory. "Ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rear guard" (Isa. 52:12).

What of today? Sisera is gone and we have no Philistines to fight. But the children of God still face battles; trials that seem insurmountable—until we remember that our Lord Jesus has gone before. When we face grief that no one seems to understand, He has gone before, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). When we meet trials that seem unbearable, He has gone before: "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). When we confront opposition that seems relentless, He has gone before: "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. 12:3). When we face tasks that seem overwhelming, He has gone before, "for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

And what of tomorrow? Should we meet death before He returns, we can do so with certain hope, for He has gone before: "that through death He might...deliver those who through fear of death were...subject to slavery" (Heb. 2:14f). And looking a little further, whether we live or die, each Christian longs for the day of rapture and resurrection, a day guaranteed to us because He has gone before: "Christ the firstfruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). When we lift our eyes further yet, there on the horizon we can see the end of the road—heaven, our home. We will take that step, like every step before, only because He has gone before: "I go to prepare a place for you. And...will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:2f). Then let us walk the road home with peace and joy and hope, knowing that He has gone before to guard us along the way, and to bring us at last into the place which He has prepared.

U P L O O K

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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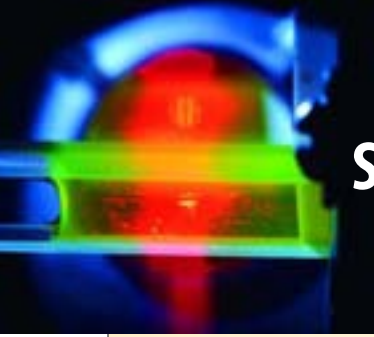
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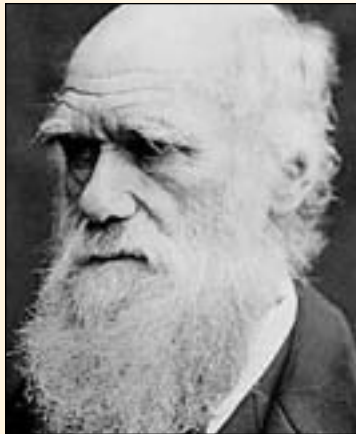
Darwin, You Have Failed Us!

After decades of preaching Darwinian evolution, one of its missionaries admits failure.

Every so often there appears in print an article that reveals the inner turmoil of the evolutionary believer who has faithfully devoted his life to following the precepts of Darwinism and to passing on the faith to future generations, only to see no fruit from his labors. Such is the case expressed in a short viewpoint article in the British journal *The Lancet* by Australian R.V. Short.¹ In this psalm of lament entitled “Darwin, have I failed you?” professor Short confesses his sadness at not being able to convert any of the 150 medical students enrolled in his class on human evolution from their misguided religious beliefs to his own religion of Darwinism.


Despite having the advantages of unopposed authority as the instructor, editorial control over the course content, the power of the grade book, and the expressed intent to “correct the misconceptions” of his students, there were no changes in the beliefs of his students when measured by comparing answers to an anonymous questionnaire given before and then after the class was completed.

Almost tearfully professor Short observes, “To my utter dismay, there were no statistically significant changes in any of the answers to any of the questions.” Sensing that he had fallen short in gaining converts for the Darwinian faith, he says, “I was shattered.” But taking solace from the knowledge that he had “sown a few seeds of the truth” during the class, professor Short invokes the Darwinian confession of faith, solemnly intoning, “I believe in the truth of evolution and still regard it as the most exciting fundamental concept that underpins the whole of biological thinking.”



While Short feels he failed Darwin, the truth is that Darwin has failed us. In the 145 years since the publication of Darwin’s book *On the Origin of Species*, the precepts of biological evolution have been adopted, in large part, by those who have no other faith, no other way to understand how the world came to be, why it is the way it is, and where it is going. In a sense, biological evolution is the faith of religious orphans. Aside from failing to provide clear and convincing evidence of the truth of the spontaneous formation of life and of molecules to man evolution, Darwinism has failed to provide any foundation for human morality and justice.² Hitler, Stalin and other tyrants used Darwinism to justify untold human suffering and the pursuit of ultimate power.

Darwinism has failed to provide purpose and value to individuals, hence the “right” to kill unborn children by abortion and perhaps soon the “right” to practice euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. It has also failed as a basis for just government, economics, politics and human freedom, and it has failed to provide peace both individually in the human heart and in society as is clearly seen in the continuously growing prison inmate population and ongoing conflicts in every part of the globe.

We have not failed Darwin; he has failed us. 

MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

1 Short, R.V. “Darwin, have I failed you?” *The Lancet* 343:528-529, 1994.

2 Johnson, P.E. *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*. InterVarsity Press, 1997.

The Identity of the Angel of the Lord

Who is he? And what does it mean to me?

The case is made for the Angel being no one other than the Second Person of the Trinity.

Even a quick study of angels in the Bible is enough to reveal some intriguing contrasts between the revelation concerning angels in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. For example, very seldom do we find the word “angels” in the Old Testament; almost all references to “angels” (plural) are in the New Testament. When we read of angels in the Old Testament, we usually read of them in the singular. Furthermore, a closer examination of these Old Testament references reveals something else: most of these verses don’t speak of an angel of the Lord. Rather, they speak of *the* Angel of the Lord. He is sometimes referred to as “*the Angel of God,*” or “*His Angel,*” or “*My Angel.*” But in each case, these titles single out

one Angel that has a unique relationship with the Lord. The Old Testament revelation concerning angels is largely a revelation of one specific Angel.

Over twenty times it is recorded that this Angel dealt with men in ways that were both powerful and profound. And this prompts us to ask: who is this special Angel? Who is the Angel of the Lord?

The Angel is a manifestation of the Lord

It would be difficult for this to be more clear. Virtually every passage that deals with this Angel identifies Him as God, often several times. The evidences of His Deity fall into a number of categories.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD DOES THINGS THAT ONLY GOD CAN DO. In Genesis 22:11f, He repeals a direct command of the Lord. (Were He not God, then doing so would be blatant

rebellion.) In Genesis 48:16, we read that this Angel redeemed Jacob from all evil. In Isaiah 63:9, we’re told that this Angel is Israel’s Saviour, yet the previous verses state that God is her Saviour. Furthermore, He demands that He be revered, stating that His presence sanctifies the very earth beneath Him (Ex. 3:5; Josh. 5:15).

THOSE WHO MET HIM KNEW THAT HE WAS GOD. Consider His first appearance in the Scriptures. In Genesis 16:7 it is the Angel of the Lord who appears to Hagar in the wilderness. But in verse 13, Hagar says to Him, “*Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?*” When Moses met Him in Exodus 3 we’re told, “*And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God*” (v. 6b). After Manoah and his wife met the Angel of the Lord, Manoah said, “*We shall surely die, because we have seen God*” (Jdg. 13:22).

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IS ALL THAT GOD IS. He is called “*the Angel of His presence*” (Isa. 63:9): when the Angel is present, God is present. The Lord instructs Israel to obey this Angel to the letter. “*Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for My name is in Him*” (Ex. 23:21). God’s name represents His character and fame (comp. Ex. 33:19 with Ex. 34:6).

THE BIBLE CLEARLY STATES THAT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IS GOD. Genesis 16:7-12 tells us that it was the Angel of the Lord who spoke to Hagar. Yet verse 13 says “*she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her.*” In Genesis 31:11-13 we learn that the Angel of God spoke to Jacob in a dream and said clearly, “*I am the God of Bethel.*” In Exodus 3:2 we’re told that the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, verse 4 says that it was the Lord, and in verse 6 the Angel says,



Illustration: New Tribes Mission, Inc.

THE IDENTITY OF THE ANGEL *continued*

"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

The Angel is a manifestation of God the Son

We can go one step further in identifying the Angel of the Lord and say that, in particular, He is a pre-incarnate appearance of God the Son. Again there are several proofs of this:

IT IS ALWAYS THE SON'S ROLE TO MANIFEST THE GODHEAD TO MEN. The Father does not manifest Himself directly but, instead, reveals Himself through the Son. *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"* (Jn. 1:18). *"God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son"* (Heb. 1:1f). *"His dear Son...who is the image of the invisible God"* (Col. 1:13-15). The word angel simply means *"messenger."* Christ is the ultimate Messenger; He is the Word.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ADOPTS THE SAME SUBMISSIVE ROLE AS THE SON. The Bible reveals two seemingly contradictory lines of truth concerning the Angel of the Lord. The first is that, as we have already seen, He is the Lord. But the second is that He is a servant of the Lord. The Lord tells us that this Angel was sent by Him (Ex. 23:20). When David sinned by numbering the people, the Lord sent the Angel to exact judgment on Jerusalem (1 Chr. 21:15) and then commanded Him to relent (2 Sam. 24:16). Even so our Lord Jesus, although being co-equal with the Father, voluntarily adopted the role of the Servant of the Lord. *"Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth"* (Isa. 42:1; Mt. 12:18; Jn. 4:34).

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ONLY APPEARS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. How odd that this Angel, who is the subject of the bulk of the OT passages concerning angels, should suddenly disappear and never manifest Himself in the New Testament! But the truth is that He did manifest Himself, just not as the Angel of the Lord. *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"* (Jn. 1:14). The appearances of the Angel

of the Lord ceased once the Word became flesh.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IS IDENTIFIED WITH GOD THE SON. When Manoah asked Him His name, the Angel responded, *"Why askest thou thus after My name, seeing it is wonderful?"* (Jdg. 13:18). And yet Isaiah 9:6 says, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...and His name shall be called Wonderful..."* Exodus 23:20-23 identifies the Angel of the Lord as the One who would provide for His people and bring them into the land. But 1 Corinthians 10:4 states that *"they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."*

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD PERFORMS THE SAME WORK AS GOD THE SON. AS we examine the various Old Testament appearances of the Angel of the Lord, we notice that in each one He performs a work that the Lord Jesus performs on behalf of His people today. The Angel of the Lord loved and cared for the needy (Gen. 16; Gen. 21), protected His people from their enemies (Ex. 14:15-20; Dan. 3; Dan. 6), encouraged them when they despaired (1 Ki. 19:1-8). He was the commander of the hosts of the Lord (Josh. 5:13-15). Each appearance, although significant at the time in its own right, turns out to be a picture of the ongoing work of the Lord Jesus, not on behalf of a few individuals, but on behalf of each one of His precious saints.

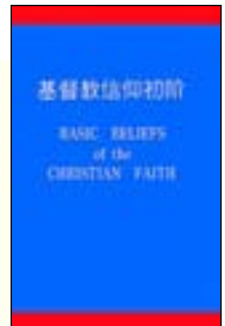
God has many sons, but there is only One who is the Son of God. God has many morning stars (Job 38:7), but there is only One who is the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16). And God has an innumerable company of angels (Heb. 12:22), but there is only One who was the Angel of the Lord. In the pages of the Old Testament, we learn that this Angel walked the earth, glorifying God and serving the people of God. In these appearances we see our Lord Jesus, His obedience to His Father, and His love and care for His own.



God has an innumerable company of angels, but there is only One who is the Angel of the Lord.

Basic Beliefs of the Christian Faith

Everyday Publications introduces Chinese-English Evangelism Book



The Chinese need the gospel. One billion, three hundred million Chinese people have yet to be evangelized. One simple way we can meet the challenge before us is to distribute good gospel literature. A recent addition to the available titles at Everyday Publications presents an effective means of achieving this, and is a good resource to keep on hand for Chinese people you may meet in your travels or those you already know. It has the English text on one side of the page and the Chinese on the other, and may also assist in language study. This written form of the Chinese language is understood by those who speak Cantonese or Mandarin.

As the title indicates, basics of the Christian Faith are taught in clear, simple terms. Some chapters are: Faith and How to Get It; How Can I Know I Am Saved?; My Two Natures; How to Pray; How to Serve the Master.

This little book has already been placed in many needy hands. In Markham, Ontario, a Baptist pastor took 10 copies for his Cantonese-speaking members. A Taiwanese Christian and his wife purchased 30 copies for members of their Mississauga church. A Chinese Christian businessman ordered copies for his Cantonese-speaking employees. While attending a fishing camp in northern Ontario, a language professor from the United States was thrilled to receive 10 copies for his Mandarin-speaking students. Each book costs \$4.80 (CAD), and the price is reduced to \$2.50 (CAD) if ordered in lots of 20 or more. However, they are sent without charge to commended workers serving in developing countries.

Call: 905-834-5552 (M-F, 8:30AM-4:30PM EST) Fax: 905-834-8045 Email: books@everyday.on.ca



SOUTHWEST YOUTH RETREAT

The 2005 Southwest Brethren Youth Retreat will be held Dec 17-19 (Sat-Mon), at the Pineywoods Baptist Encampment, Pineywoods, TX. There will be separate sessions held for high school students, college students, and those in careers.

The speakers for this year's retreat include Anil Samuel, Ashley Kurian and Ray Gonzalez. We trust the Lord for a rich blessing for the weekend. The theme will be from the verse Eph. 2:10, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things He planned for us long ago." Please encourage the youth and young couples in your assembly to attend and to register as soon as possible.

Registration forms and information can be found at:
www.brethrenconference.org

TOLEDO YOUTH RETREAT

A Winter Youth Retreat is planned for Dec 27-31 at the Clarion Hotel, Toledo, OH. Young people age 16 and over are invited. The cost for the weekend is \$230.

Visit www.winteryouthretreat.org or contact ken@winteryouthretreat.org

RISE UP CONFERENCE BUS

A bus has been arranged for those in the Augusta, GA area for the Rise Up conference, Parsippany, NJ, Dec 27-30. The bus will leave at 10PM, Monday Dec 26 from Augusta, arriving early in the afternoon Dec 27 and will return non-stop leaving on Dec 30 at 11AM. Parking, accommodations in Augusta or a pick up enroute can be arranged. The cost is \$80 per person return.

Email Jon Reimer with questions: johnathanreimer@hotmail.com
706-831-8421 (c) or 706-863-8129 (h)

LEESBURG MEN'S CONFERENCE

Brooksville Bible Chapel is planning a Men's Conference to be held at Camp Horizon in Leesburg, FL on Feb 17-18. Evan Davis (OH) will be the speaker with Titus as his text.

Contact: Ed Anderson 352-382-4638
andersedw@cs.com

EMMAUS AT IROQUOINA

Men—join us at Camp Iroquoina on Mar 11 for the annual men's retreat. Emmaus will be presenting one of their popular topics, "How to make your life count for God." Set aside this time to enjoy the camp's beautiful setting in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania together with the study of God's Word. Bring a friend! Friday and Saturday night accommodations available. Contact Mark Thomas:

570-967-2577

email: campiroquoina@epix.net

FRONT LINES *continued*

Newly constructed
Faith Bible Chapel
in Midway, GA



RAMSEUR BIBLE STUDY

Brethren in the Ramseur/Randleman area of NC are planning a school year of classes through May 2006. These classes are to be held at Ramseur Gospel Chapel one Saturday a month. **Contact:** Mike Moody at 336-824-5525 mcjmoody@yahoo.com

TORONTO BIBLE CLASS

The Toronto Bible Class Series are being held Monday evenings, 7:45 PM at Rexdale Gospel Hall, 72 Bergamot Ave, Rexdale, ON. Jack Baker (ON) is the speaker. **Future subjects:** "Enjoying God by Faith" (Jan 23) "Enjoying God by Hope" (Feb 6) "Enjoying God by Love" (Feb 20) **Contact:** 905-477-1522 or 416-282-6016

HOLIDAY, FL BIBLE CONFERENCE

The saints at Holiday Gospel Assembly announce their annual Bible Conference on Friday, Feb 17 from 7:30 PM-9 PM and on Saturday from 10 AM-3:30 PM. Dinner will be served Saturday at noon. Speakers expected: Ben Sutton (MB) and Keith Keyser (PA). The theme will be: "The Priestly Work of the Lord Jesus Christ." **Contact:** Lee Capiello at 727-845-4572 email: ecapiello@tampabay.rr.com

YORK BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

The York Bible Study Program, which is completing its 18th year, meets on the second Saturday of each month until May in York, PA. There are four teaching sessions and lunch is provided. **For information:** Spread the Word at 717-767-2900

OZARK FAMILY CAMP

Ozark Family Camp hosts three sepa-

rate weeks of family camp each year from late July to mid-August at Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp in MO. The camps are a great source of fellowship and spiritual encouragement. There is no set fee for the camp, but rather it is provided on a donation basis. For brochure/registration form, contact Dan Moffitt at 918-744-6484 email: danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net

INDIANA BELIEVERS

Currently meeting in homes, we are looking for like-minded believers to join with us for prayer, Bible study and breaking of bread. Our desire is to see a work begin in Dearborn or Ripley County, IN. **Contact:** Chris Hayes, PO Box 186, Moores Hill, IN 47032 812-744-9038

COMMENDATIONS



Jesse and Joy Johnson

The saints at Believers Bible Chapel in Charlotte, NC are glad to commend Jesse and Joy

Johnson to the work of the Lord in Burundi, Africa. Pray for them and their young son, Zachariah, as they prepare to leave in January of 2006.

Thomas Bell

The Christians at Calvary Bible Chapel in Clinton Township, MI, are happy to commend their brother Thomas Frederick Bell to the grace of God and the work of the Lord in discipleship and evangelism. Thomas expects to serve the Lord with The Ezekiel Project and in other ways as the Lord may lead.

STEP OF FAITH

Faith Bible Chapel is located near Midway, GA, thirty miles south of Savannah, GA. The assembly began as a result of most of the saints attending the Savannah meeting moving near the Midway area.

Savannah Gospel Chapel began in the first decade of the twentieth century and continued until the sale of the building in 2002. This meeting was a blessing to many for a very long time. Funds from the sale were applied toward the construction cost of Faith Chapel.

The first meeting in the new chapel was held on May 8 with dedication of the building on Sep 4. Previously, the group met in a home and then in a trailer in Marsh View Bible Camp. We are thankful for the children who have come to Christ as a result of the camp work since it began fifteen years ago.

Faith Bible Chapel is situated in a beautiful setting just inside the gate of the camp. We look forward to God's continued blessing in the camp work as well as on the new assembly.

Faith Bible Chapel
1648-A Seabrook Island Drive
Midway, GA 31320

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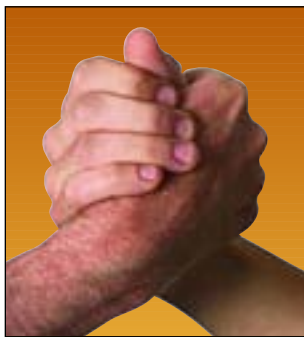
Please note the change of location for our assembly meetings. We have moved from Haverhill Valley Bible Fellowship, 593 Amesbury Rd. (home) to our new address, Georgetown Valley Bible Fellowship, 98 West Main St. (home) Georgetown, MA 01833 Phone: 978-352-4122

Breaking of Bread: 9:15AM
Ministry: 11AM, Prayer: Tues 7PM
Contact: Josef Juneck at 978-658-8835

Wrestling and Clinging

The difference that makes all the difference.

From the womb Jacob was born a wrestler. But he met his match—much more than his match—at the fords of Jabbok.



Towards the end of his life Jacob spoke about his experience of the Angel of the Lord: “*The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil*” (Gen. 48:15-16). Of special significance in his spiritual journey were his encounters with the Angel of the Lord at Bethel and Peniel.

Prior to Bethel, Jacob lived for more than seventy years in his father’s home in Canaan, a natural man who did not have a personal relationship with God. But he met the Lord at Bethel and determined that He would be his God. Between Bethel and Peniel, he spent twenty years in the employment of his uncle in

Padan Aram, where he might be described as a carnal man who continued to be driven by his own desires and act independently of God.

But he met the Lord at Peniel and held onto Him. After Peniel, in his final fifty or so years in Canaan and in Egypt, he emerged as a spiritual man who increasingly had the mind of God and was submissive to His will.

JACOB AT BETHEL (House of God): Gen. 28:10-22

He saw a vision: Gen. 28:12

He had a dream and saw a ladder which extended all the way from where he was to where God was, and the angels of God ascended and descended that ladder. God was not remote and distant, but desired to have a relationship with Jacob. Moreover, the messengers of God were active on his behalf and divine help and blessing were offered to him.

The Lord Jesus gave new meaning to this when He told Nathanael that he would “*see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man*” (Jn. 1:51). In other words, the Lord Jesus is the One who

links us with heaven, and with God, and the One through whom the blessings of God are communicated to us. He reaches up to God because He is eternal God and could say, “*I came forth from the Father*”; and He reaches down to us because He became flesh and could say, “*I...have come into the world*” (Jn. 16:28).

He heard a voice: Genesis 28:13-15

“*I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac*” (Gen. 28:13). He was not yet the God of Jacob and, at this point in his experience, Jacob would have acknowledged this. But the God of his fathers was reaching out to him, declaring His interest in him and His desire to bless him. The covenant relating to the land and the seed which God had entered into with Abraham (Gen. 13:15-16, etc.) and which He had renewed with Isaac (26:3-4) was to be fulfilled through Jacob (28:13-14). What a challenge and an encouragement this must have been! He was lonely as he left his father’s house, but God said, “*I am with you.*” He was afraid of the unknown and of Esau, but God said, “*I...will keep you wherever you go.*” Perhaps he wondered if he would ever return to Canaan, but God said, “*I...will bring you back to this land.*” He seemed to be alone and the future was uncertain, but God said, “*I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you of*” (Gen. 28:15).

He made a vow: Genesis 28:16-22

The immediate result of this experience was that Jacob recognized that God was there. Consciousness of the divine presence produced fear, as well it might because it is an awesome thing to have dealings with God, given our sinfulness and the absolute holiness of His person. It also

WRESTLING AND CLINGING *continued*

caused him to name the place *“the house of God”* and to vow, *“If God will be with me, and keep me... and give me...so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God”* (Gen. 28:20-22). The *“If...then...”* language might suggest that Jacob, true to his nature, was attempting to strike a deal. I prefer to see it not as an attempt to negotiate with God but as a declaration of his commitment to God, the proof of which is seen in his promise to give a tenth to God.

God had identified Himself as the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac (Gen. 28:13), but Jacob now affirms that He is to be his God. So it proved, because it pleased God thereafter to describe Himself as *“the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”* (Ex. 3:6, etc.).

JACOB AT PENIEL (The Face of God): Gen. 32:24-32

What God wants: Genesis 32:24

Jacob had another encounter with the Angel of the Lord, beside the brook Jabbok where *“a Man wrestled with him.”* It was not in the first instance a case of Jacob seeking something from God; it was God who took the initiative and sought something from Jacob. It illustrates what had been going on throughout his life. God had wrestled with him with a view to his submitting, but always Jacob had resisted in his own strength. God had promised that the birthright would be his, but Jacob sought to secure it for himself by bargaining with his brother and deceiving his father.

Afterwards, in Padan Aram, God dealt with Jacob in patience, wisdom and love, seeking to impress on him the folly of his selfishness and self-sufficiency, but Jacob continued to do things in his own strength. For example, immediately before the incident at Peniel, God assured Jacob of His presence and Jacob prayed for deliverance from Esau (Gen. 32:1-12). But then he resorted to his own devices, preparing a contingency plan. All the way, God was wrestling and Jacob was resisting.

So it may be in our experience. *“The Holy Spirit who dwells in us yearns earnestly.”* God wrestles with us, striving for our affections and our submission so that we should be free from other

attachments, from pride, and from self-reliance.


How God works: Genesis 32:25-27

It is as though God knew that there was to be no voluntary submission on Jacob’s part, so He touched his thigh with the result that he could only hold on in helplessness. He clung, recognizing his need and the blessing that there is in God. He confessed that he was *“Jacob,”* a supplanter, a deceiver, crooked, devious, and selfish.

This is the way it has to be in our dealings with God if we are to experience His blessing. We must confess what we are, acknowledging our sin and our need. We must cling to the One who can meet our need and trust only in Him. *“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore, submit to God...draw near to God and He will draw near to you...humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up”* (Jas. 4:6-10).

When God wins: Genesis 32:28-29

He received a new name—no longer *“Jacob”* but *“Israel,”* *“a prince with God”*; he received new power with God and with men; and God blessed him. It is ironic that all along Jacob had resisted God, assuming that he had to look after his own interests and do things in his own strength. God’s desire for our lives is consistent with our best interests. He wants us to submit to Him in dependence and obedience. It is for our good because He wants to bless us.

At Bethel, the sun set (Gen. 28:11). What followed was one dark night in Jacob’s experience. But at Peniel *“the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip”* (Gen. 32:31). He never recovered from Peniel but carried with him the marks of that experience, a constant reminder of his weakness and of his need to rely on God. He was a changed man, not that he was free from sin, from trouble or from God’s discipline. God had begun a good work in him and continued to do it. As a result, that Jacob experienced bereavement and sorrow as trial succeeded trial. Yet the work of God in his soul became increasingly evident in his patience and faith, wisdom and godliness. 

God had begun a good work in him and continued to do it, with the result that... the work of God in his soul became increasingly evident.

Out, Through, and In

The Lord leads His people all the way.

The fire of God is still aflame. He can manifest Himself to us to enlist us in His service, and at other times to our enemies, barring their way and protecting His own.

Even a cursory reading of the Bible will reveal how God has preserved and led Israel, His chosen people, throughout their long history. During much of that time, however, it might not have seemed so obvious. The four centuries that preceded Exodus 3, for example, were years of severe persecution. To Hebrews living in those days, God was a fading memory. They may have questioned if He really did speak to Abraham and Sarah in their tent one day (Gen. 18). They likely wondered if Jacob really had seen God face to face at the brook Jabbok (Gen. 32:30). They must have felt that God had deserted them, for heaven was now silent, and had been for 400 years.

But something very significant happened in Egypt: Israel became a nation. They went into

Egypt as a family; they left Egypt numbering well over one million (Ex. 12:37). This was God's plan. The Lord had told Jacob, *"Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there"* (Gen. 46:3b). Now, after generations of nation-building, it was time for the next

step in God's plan: God was going to give His chosen people a land of their own.

The significance of this new phase in God's plan is evident from the way that God revealed it to His people. The Lord broke the centuries of silence and spoke to man. Over the next forty years, God's presence, expressed as *"the Angel of the Lord,"* was heard and seen as He

- called Moses to lead His people
- protected and separated His people from the enemy
- promised to lead them to victory

The Burning Bush (Exodus 3:2-6)

Moses likely thought he had reached his twilight years. He had left Egypt in bitterness forty years before, and now, at age eighty, he must have accepted the fact that there was nothing that he could do to save his despairing fellow Israelites. As he tended to his father-in-law's sheep in the wilderness, he may have concluded that God had forgotten them all. But God was working on Moses during those years. Moses was being prepared for the greater task of shepherding his heavenly Father's sheep in that same wilderness. Now the time had come for God to call him to this task. And the Lord called Moses in a unique way.

Most readers will be familiar with the *words* that God spoke to Moses, but we sometimes don't consider the *way* that He spoke to him. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses as a *"flame of fire"* (Ex. 3:2) from within a bush. The passage points out that the bush, though on fire, was not consumed by the fire. We are also told that God told Moses to uncover his feet because of the holiness of God's presence, and we read that Moses was compelled to cover his face because of the glory of the Lord. We find a simple lesson about God's glory and God's holiness in these facts.

When we consider the holiness of God, our reaction is to hide our own faults and shortcomings. In Moses' case, however, he was told to uncover his feet. In the presence of God's holiness, the sins of mankind are laid bare. What a comfort it is for Christians whose *"iniquities"*



OUT, THROUGH, AND IN *continued*

uities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:7)! The Lord Jesus, knowing our sins and failures, was willing to "cover" them with His own righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) even if He had to die to make it so.

Moses covered his face. Sadly, the only glory we often think of is our own. But in the presence of the Lord, Moses covered his face, a tribute to the fact that no one can stand with Him and share His glory. It's not about us; it's only about Him. Accordingly, God does want us to reflect glory—His glory. For we are told that, "*we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory*" (2 Cor. 3:18). Moses' face shone after he had spent time in the presence of the Lord (Ex. 34:29). We should "shine" too. We will, when we spend time with Him.

Lastly, why is it that the passage twice stresses that the bush, though burning with fire, was not consumed? Could this be a message to Moses that God, though He is a consuming fire (Dt. 4:24), can be on the earth and not consume it. If the fire of God's presence did not consume the bush, then it would not consume Moses either! But God did more than presence Himself in a bush in the Sinai desert. He became a man. No one took their shoes off in Jesus' presence, except for the time He washed His disciples' feet. What a contrast! The God who is a consuming fire set aside that glory and became a man, and He Himself felt the "fire" as He offered Himself as a sacrifice for us.

The Pillar Cloud (Exodus 13:21, 22; 14:19)

Moses was not the only one to see the Angel of the Lord. We read that as the children of Israel left Egypt, "*the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light*" (Ex. 13:21). What an encouragement it must have been to the children of Israel to see God's presence leading and protecting them. It was a sign to their enemies as well. How foreboding it must have been to see the Hebrew camp with that great fiery cloud above it.


One would think that this would be a period of

great appreciation and obedience to God, but it was just the opposite. The Hebrews murmured and disobeyed God after their deliverance from Egypt. Have you ever heard someone say, "If only I could see Jesus, then I would believe"? Don't be so sure. The wilderness journey proved that the visible presence of God was not enough to lead the people to faith in Him. Even when the Lord moved the fiery pillar between the camp of Israel and the pursuing Egyptians, the Israelites still feared the enemy and murmured against the Lord.

Nonetheless, after forty years, the children of Israel were finally ready for the next phase in their experience with God. They moved into the land of Canaan, and they did so without the Pillar Cloud. Thankfully, however, the Angel of the Lord was still there to lead them.

The Invisible Presence (Exodus 23:20-23)

The Lord promised Moses, "*Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way.*" The Angel of the Lord, though now invisible, was leading them as they set out to conquer their enemies in the land of Canaan. Reading the book of Joshua makes it clear that victory had more to do with obedience to God than physical might. David understood this when he said to the Philistine, "*The battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands*" (1 Sam. 17:47).

The lesson for us today is clear: we can wander in our Christian lives, ignoring the visible proof of God's leading, or we can set out in faith, knowing that, although we do not see Him, the One who called us and delivered us is still there to lead us to victory in our Christian lives. 



We can set out in faith, knowing that, although we do not see Him, the One who called us and delivered us is still there to lead us to victory.

The Angel of the Lord in Judges 13

Who is this Person who rides in the flames to glory?

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and of Samuel, and of the prophets (Heb 11:32)

Our present times are not unlike the days of the Judges. In our society it is considered to be a mark of maturity, an indication of tolerance and liberation, when citizens are characterized by the principle embodied in the words, “*did that which was right in his own eyes*” (Jdg. 21:25). Christians ought not to be surprised when we see this spirit in the world around us; the unbeliever succeeds remarkably well in doing what he is programmed to do.

On the other hand, when we perceive this spirit in the church or, more humbling, in our own hearts, we wonder if a Nazirite—one set apart to God—is not called for. Such a call came to a godly couple that were childless in the days of the Judges.

An Unpretentious Arrival

It was in such times that a heavenly Visitor appeared to the wife of Manoah to deliver a message, the import of which was the beginning of a change in the course of history for the people of God in Israel. God was going to have a Nazirite in Israel through whom He would begin to deliver His people, a nation then subject to their Philistine overlords. Full deliverance would come when God’s King appeared.

The Angel’s arrival, like our Lord’s arrival in Bethlehem, came without display or ostentation. Manoah’s wife was alone when the Angel appeared, as was Mary at the appearing of the angel Gabriel in the town of Nazareth.

This woman and her husband were evidently a godly couple, instinctively seeking the help and guidance of the Lord when faced with a challenging situation. Manoah (Hebrew for “rest” or “quiet”) seems the more reticent of the two, yet he took charge when informed of this Visitor. His wife, on the other hand, was guided

by simple logic and decisive action. She quickly reported her encounter with the Visitor, and later confidently assured her husband of the Lord’s kind intentions towards them. They complement each other.

Manoah’s wife, like Sarah, Hannah, and Elizabeth, was barren, an unhappy condition for a godly Jewish woman. It was to her rather than to her husband, unlike Sarah or Elizabeth, that the Lord appeared and delivered the message that she would have a son. She could share in the song penned later by Isaiah: “*Sing, O barren woman, You who never bore a child; Burst into song, shout for joy, You who were never in labor.*”

God chooses the lowly and despised things of this world to bring about glory for Himself. Wm. MacDonald observes, “The barren womb is often a starting place in the purposes of God. He calls life out of death and uses the things that are not to confound the things that are.”

A Revelation and Its Limitation

At first glance, the Angel seemed to Manoah’s wife to be a “*man of God*,” not unknown even in those dark days. In other times the man of God was well known, an outstanding leader, such as Moses (Dt. 33:1) or Elijah (1 Ki. 17:18). Sometimes he was an unnamed servant of God (1 Sam. 2:27; 9:6). They were all quite human.

But this “*man of God*” was different; he was extraordinary! “*His countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible,*” she said to her husband. How else was this woman to describe this Visitor from heaven—no doubt the pre-incarnate Christ! He looked like a man, yet He was infinitely more than man! Not only so, but He spoke with authority, a rare quality in this time of anarchy. This was evident in His directions to Manoah’s wife and also in His



THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IN JUDGES 13 *continued*

instructions to Manoah regarding any burnt offering he might make. In the days of the New Testament, long after that encounter “in the holy mount” with the Lord, Peter recalled that he and the others were “eyewitnesses of His majesty.” Then the Lord’s “face did shine like the sun.” Awesome!

One of Manoah’s questions to the Angel stems from a rather simple motive: “What is Thy name, that when Thy sayings come to pass we may do Thee honor?” Evidently he didn’t realize that he was probing an area that will in its essence remain out of bounds for man. “Why askest thou thus after My name, seeing it is secret?” It is Wonderful! It is beyond understanding! The only other occurrence of “wonderful” is in Isaiah 9, where it clearly speaks prophetically of the Lord Jesus. It is true that many designations for the Lord are recorded in Scripture, all of which add to our comprehension of His Person. Yet we need to ponder Christ’s words: “no man knoweth the Son, but the Father” (Mt. 11:27). Joseph Conder could sing,

*But the high mysteries of His Name
the creature’s grasp transcend;
the Father only (glorious claim!)
the Son can comprehend.*

An Amazing Departure!


Then there was that amazing departure while Manoah and his wife watched in worship. We read that “when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar” (v. 20). The altar, the burnt offering, the consuming flame, and, above all, the Angel’s spectacular ascension to glory—surely we do not misread this scene when we see in it the likeness of our Lord’s “departure which He should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Lk. 9:31). We, too, bow in light of the cross where the flames of God’s righteous judgment blazed in all their fury.

Two remarkable supernatural events converge here in the lives of two very ordinary people. The first is the presence of God face to face with poor, fallen humanity. Manoah was right: by all accounts the consequences of this occurrence ought to have proven fatal for him and his wife.

The sinners in Isaiah’s day could well cry out, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?” (Isa. 33:14). True it is: “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 13:29). God was there; the fire was there; Manoah and his wife were there in all their vulnerability. They need not have feared for they could not have been more secure: the fire that consumed their offerings carried the Angel of the Lord heavenward to the presence of God for them.

The second event was the pleasure God found solely in the burnt offering and the grain offering. We’re not told here about His pleasure in these offerings, but in Leviticus 1 we read, no less than three times, concerning the burnt offering: it is “an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord” (vv. 9, 13, 17). In Judges 13:20 we read, “the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.” The Angel of the Lord, in all His holy perfection, in all His infinite worth, made Himself one with Manoah’s burnt offering, and in so doing identified the offering with His own Person, in all its inestimable value, bearing all heavenward! Manoah’s wife was right: Jehovah had accepted their burnt offering. None other than the Angel of the Lord Himself in heaven was now the focus of God’s pleasure and the pledge of their security.

Out of, and by means of, these two momentous realities came the realization of the sovereign purpose of God for Israel at that time. As we reflect on the grace of our Lord’s appearing on this planet, the glory of His departure heavenward, and the growing darkness around us, may we know that exercise of heart that will bring about a spirit of Naziriteship. It is not without precedent: God later reminded Israel that He had “raised up...of your young men for Nazirites” (Amos 2:11).

We need not fear, as did Manoah; our Burnt Offering was sacrificed for us and has gone heavenward through the flames of Calvary, now to appear in the presence of God for us. All the Father’s pleasure is found in that blessed One in glory! We too prostrate ourselves in worship, in light of the Saviour’s glorious departure. Reverence and awe seem fitting, even as we approach the throne of grace with confidence. 



Our burnt offering was sacrificed for us and has gone heavenward through the flames of Calvary, now to appear in the presence of God for us.



ELDER HELPS *To feed, to take heed, and to lead*

Dare to be a Pastor!

Sheep don't make it to the uplands on their own.

Some readers may raise their eyebrows to see such a challenge being issued in *Uplook*. Rest assured we will soon explain what is meant by the title—but first, we have a scenario for you to consider.

The believers at Downhill face a dilemma. Harold started the assembly in his home 40 years ago and has faithfully served the congregation ever since. However, he is now 83 and too unwell to continue. Over the years, two other qualified men came into the assembly and served with Harold as shepherds. However, one of them, Frank, has just learned that his firm is relocating, and he will have to move away. That means that the other, Bill, will be left as the sole elder for the 60 people now in fellowship.

Questions: Would it be wrong for Bill to serve as Downhill's only pastor, since no one else seems qualified to serve with him? Can you suggest a way in which this situation might have been prevented?


Back to justifying our title: If we strip the word "pastor" of its common ecclesiastical connotation, and use only the meaning of the word as it appears in Scripture, then it will soon become clear that our title can be left as is. Most subscribers to *Uplook* will be aware that the words "overseer," "elder," and "pastor" refer to the same person, and that in Scripture they are used in the plural rather than the singular. A careful reading of Acts 20:17-28 will confirm this, for the elders of verse 17 were informed that the Holy Spirit had constituted them overseers (v. 28) and that they were to shepherd ("pastor") the church of God.

It is unfortunate that the synonym for shepherd, pastor, is frequently misapplied to a single person who controls, or is in charge of, church ministry and activities. Thus "pastor" has become an office rather than a work; an honor rather than a humble service. In accordance with God's Word, we would dare those qualified to take on a true pastoral role, not looking

for honor among men on this earth but being content to wait for the Chief Shepherd's return. He will richly reward those who have served under His direction (see 1 Pet. 5:4).

It was as the Good Shepherd, the ultimate Pastor, that our Lord served on earth. He gave His life for the sheep. In this all may follow His example, for we are told that we should lay down our lives for the brethren (1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Jn. 3:16). This may not mean suffering literal martyrdom, but it will certainly require us to give up personal interests, time, and resources for the good of others. If you think that is a tall order, look again at Calvary.

This column is for elders, but not exclusively so. In the above paragraph we referred to what the Holy Spirit says through the Apostle John, that "we" (meaning all in fellowship, not just those taking oversight) "ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." This challenge applies to young believers as well as old, to female as well as male. Even though women and young men are excluded by Scripture from church leadership (1 Tim. 2:11-12; 3:6), there are ways in which all members of the body ought to show care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25).

One does not get a shepherd's heart overnight; it is something that develops slowly. Early signs of pastoral concern may be observed in a young man who does not merely teach his Sunday School class, but voluntarily makes time to visit with his students; or in one who spontaneously drops in to see an elderly saint who is too ill to attend the meetings of the church. When an elder sees such spiritual growth he should, when appropriate, take the younger man with him on house calls and otherwise seek to encourage him. Can you think of additional ways in which the "Downhill Dilemma" might have been prevented? 

The Appearances of

Reference	Appearance	Setting
Genesis 16:7-14	Hagar – part 1	Hagar in the wilderness
Genesis 21:8-21	Hagar – part 2	Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness
Genesis 22:1-19	Abraham – part 1	Abraham offering Isaac
Genesis 24:7, 40	Abraham – part 2	sent before Abraham's servant
Genesis 28:10-22; Jn 1:51	Jacob – part 1	Jacob's dream at Bethel
Genesis 31:1-16	Jacob – part 2	Jacob with Laban's sheep
Genesis 32:22-32; Hos 12:13f	Jacob – part 3	wrestles with Jacob at Peniel
Exodus 3	Moses – part 1	Moses and the burning bush
Exodus 14:15-20	Moses – part 2	between Israel and Egypt at the Red Sea
Exodus 23:20-23; 32:34	Moses – part 3	goes before Israel entering the land
Numbers 22:21-35	Balaam	Balaam and His donkey
Joshua 5:13-15	Joshua	Joshua at the entrance into Canaan
Judges 2:1-5	Judges – part 1	Israel at Bochim
Judges 5:23	Judges – part 2	curses Meroz
Judges 6:11-24	Judges – part 3	Gideon at Ophrah
Judges 13	Judges – part 4	Manoah and his wife announcing Samson's birth
1 Chronicles 21; 2 Samuel 24	King David	David at Jerusalem
2 Kings 19:35-37; Isaiah 37:36	King Hezekiah	kills 185,000 Assyrian soldiers
1 Kings 19:1-8	Elijah – part 1	feeds and encourages Elijah
2 Kings 1:3, 15	Elijah – part 2	directs and reassures Elijah
Daniel 3:13-30	Daniel – part 1	protects Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in the furnace
Daniel 6:16-24	Daniel – part 2	protects Daniel in the lions' den
Zechariah 1:7-17	Zechariah – part 1	among the myrtle trees
Zechariah 3	Zechariah – part 2	Joshua and Satan standing before Him

the Angel of the Lord

Summary	Christ's Ongoing Work
the birth of a son promised in the desert	sees us
the death of a son imminent in the desert	hears us and opens our eyes
a substitute found	provides a substitute to save us from death
a bride found	author and finisher of our good works
meets Jacob as he's leaving the land	the Mediator between God and men
meets Jacob as he's away from the land	takes care of us even when others wrong us
meets Jacob as he's returning to the land	strives with us to change us
the fire in the bush – bringing His people out	calls, commissions, commands
the fire in the pillar – leading His people through	protects His people; judges their enemies
the fire on Sinai – bringing His people in	forerunner; prepares the way for His people
with the sword as an Adversary	discourages disobedience
with the sword as an Advocate	commander
chastening His people for being linked to unbelievers	rebukes and chastens us for disobedience
chastening His people for not being linked to each other	curses those who watch instead of work
the weak strong judge	gives peace
the strong weak judge	sweet aroma to God
attacking Jerusalem for His honor	punishes sin
defending Jerusalem for His honor	answers prayer; defeats our enemies
fire falls when the king of Israel is worshipping Baal	encourages us in despair
fire falls when the king of Israel is inquiring of Baal-zebul	directs us
protected in the furnace	deliverer
protected in the lions' den	protects us from the mouth of the lion
intervening for Jerusalem	always ready and waiting to bring blessing
intervening for Joshua	cleanses us for service

The Gospel Shines in Turkey

Reaching the largest unreached nation in the world (Rom 15:20)

FROM THE 1ST TO THE 21ST CENTURY

A Brief Overview of Gospel Work in Turkey

The gospel first reached Asia Minor (Anatolia—modern Turkey) in the time of Paul the apostle. Believers were first called Christians in Antioch (the city of Antakya in southwest Turkey). John the apostle lived in Ephesus (Efes) with Mary, the mother of Jesus and Timothy. Revelation 2-3 are written to churches in the Aegean region of Turkey. Turkey has more biblical sites than Israel, and many ancient Roman & Greek sites as well.

Displacing and mixing with the earlier inhabitants, the Turks gradually took over Anatolia starting around 1000 AD. In 1453, with the capture of Istanbul (Constantinople), the region came fully under Ottoman Turkish control. Orthodox and others with a Christian heritage continued to live among the Turks. Due to serious political upheaval about 100 years ago, most of those from Christian background who remained were expelled or killed. Until that time there were some efforts to bring the gospel to the peoples of the region which are not related in detail here.



The Blue Mosque, Istanbul



The Roman Theater at Ephesus

George Müller passed through Turkey in 1881. But in 1961 at age 19, Roger Malstead and Dale Rhoton (Wheaton students, sent from assemblies in the US and working with OM) began the modern era of outreach in Turkey. At that time there were only two known believers from a Muslim background in Turkey.

In 1965, Steve Richards and his family joined the work as Roger and Dale were being expelled. In the late 70's Tom Aiken and David Goodman sought to start a new work in Adana. In 1979, David was martyred at his front door in the middle of his quiet time.

The New Testament in modern Turkish was completed in 1987 and the Old Testament in 2002. There is still a respect for the Bible and a hunger for God's Word among many of the people of Turkey.

There are a number of missionaries with assembly roots from the US, Germany, the UK, and Singapore in Istanbul, Izmir, Diyarbakir, Mugla and Izmit. Most of these workers are involved in either starting new fellowships or teaching in church fellowships. Some are also involved in theological and leadership training, evangelism and writing ministries.

FROM NOAH TO ATATURK

Some History of Turkey (Anatolia)

- Noah's ark landed on the mountains of Ararat
- 7,500 BC World's earliest known community (10,000 people) lived at Çatal Höyük near Konya (Iconium in the NT)
- 1900-1300 BC Hittites flourished
- 1900 BC Abraham sojourned in Harran
- 710 BC Trojan war (Troy; Truva)
- 710 BC King Midas ruled
- 700 BC Homer wrote (author of the Odyssey)
- 547 BC Cyrus king of Persia invaded
- 348 BC Aristotle taught at Assos (Troas in the NT)
- 334 BC Alexander the Great passed through
- 279 BC Celts (Gauls) establish the kingdom of Galatia (Ankara)
- 47-57 AD Paul & Barnabas sent from Antioch (Antakya) and preached in Anatolia
- 300 AD St. Nicholas lived (Santa Claus)
- 324 AD Nicean Council (Iznik)
- 570-622 AD Mohammed lived in Mecca & Medina (Not in Anatolia)
- 800s-1000s AD Turks adopted Islam
- 1000s-1200s AD Crusader armies crossed Anatolia
- 1071 AD The Seljuk Turks arrived
- 1288 AD The Ottoman Turks settled
- 1453 AD The Byzantines 1100 year rule ended when the Turks conquered Constantinople (Istanbul).
- 1800-1915 AD German, UK & US missionaries focus mostly on the 30% of the population who are of Christian background
- 1915 Over 1 million Armenians are killed or deported
- 1923 The Republic of Turkey started under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)
- 1961 Beginning of modern efforts to bring the good news to the people of Turkey. Only 2 Christians from a Muslim background known in Turkey.
- 1987 New Testament in modern Turkish is completed
- 1988 After nation-wide arrests of secret Protestant churches the decision is made to seek legal status
- 2001 First Protestant "foundation" is opened in Istanbul
- 2002 Old Testament is completed in modern Turkish
- 2005 About 3,500 national believers in some 75 fellowships and some 50 national leaders. Almost 1,000 foreign workers from the US, Korea, UK, German Speaking nations, S. America, S. Africa, Canada, E. & S.E. Asia, Scandinavia, Holland, Australia, Balkans, Russia and Central Asia.

When the Angel Came to Jerusalem

It was not the first time. It would not be the last.

A dramatic portrayal of our Lord Jesus in His august role as executioner of the justice of God, but justice tempered with mercy.

Three thousand years ago, the inhabitants of God's holy city, Jerusalem, came so close to being destroyed that only an order from the Lord to His Angel to withdraw His hand prevented their complete destruction. These events are documented for us in 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21.

David was provoked by Satan to number Israel (1 Chr. 21:1). Although the Lord may have allowed this sin to occur (2 Sam. 24:1), David was wrong to yield to temptation, and God's wrath was kindled against Israel. As we see in this account of the Angel of the Lord at the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite (called Araunah in 2 Samuel), the Lord is glorified in the end, despite the terror that preceded.

seer: either three years famine, or three months at the hands of David's foes, or three days falling before the sword of the Lord, which is pestilence, in the hand of the Angel of the Lord. David chose to fall into the hand of the Lord, considering His great mercy (2 Sam. 24:14).

Were it not for the Lord's command and King David's subsequent repentance and sacrifice of burnt offerings and peace offerings, Jerusalem would have been utterly destroyed.

Through the many pictures and patterns given to us in these two passages, let us examine this figure known as the Angel of the Lord, and how we see a picture of both the chastening work and redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as His work to come.



The Old City of Jerusalem as viewed across the Kidron Valley from the Mount of Olives.

David commanded Joab and the rulers to number Israel from Beer-sheba to Dan (2 Sam. 24:2; 1 Chr. 21:2). Since he did not honor God by ransoming the half-shekel for each person counted, as was required by law (Ex. 30:12-13), we conclude that David's heart was lifted up with pride in his numbers. God was displeased, and three options for the punishment of the nation were given to David through Gad the

Who was the Angel?

As with His other appearances, in this instance the Angel of the Lord is equated with the Lord Himself. Notice how Gad the seer delivers the message of the Lord and the message of the Angel with equal authority (compare 1 Chr. 21:11-12 with vv. 18-19). Also, the works and the message which the Angel delivers are consistent with those of the Lord Jesus. The

appearance of the Angel inspired fear whenever David, the elders of Israel, Ornan, or Ornan's sons beheld Him, even to the point of hiding from His presence (1 Chr. 21:16, 20). Likewise, there will come a day when our Lord Jesus Christ will inspire fear on earth as a Man called Faithful and True, sitting upon a white horse, judging and making war in righteousness (Rev. 19:11).

The Angel's Work

The Angel's mission in this particular event was to destroy, throughout all the coasts of Israel, for three days with pestilence, using the sword of the Lord (1 Chr. 21:12). We see that by the time the Angel reached Jerusalem, seventy thousand men of Israel had died (2 Sam. 24:15). If God hadn't "*repented Him of the evil,*" the Angel would have continued destroying.

This reminds us that, although the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world at His first advent in grace and truth, He is still the righteous Judge of the quick and the dead (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8). Before the remnant in Jerusalem was destroyed, we hear that wonderful command from God, "*It is enough, stay now Thine hand*" (2 Sam. 24:16; 1 Chr. 21:15).

We see that the Angel of the Lord began as the Destroyer but became the Deliverer, as David wrote in Psalm 34:7, "*the Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.*" Likewise, if we receive the grace and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, He is our Saviour, or Deliverer. However, if we reject His truth, He remains the Destroyer, since He is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Mt. 10:28).

The Angel's Whereabouts

We are told of three places where the Angel of the Lord stood. First of all, He stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Sam. 24:16). The threshingfloor was the place where the wheat was separated from the chaff. In Scripture, the picture of the threshingfloor is often used to describe God's decision to judge, or "thresh," a certain nation (Jer. 51:33; Dan. 2:35; Mic. 4:13). There-

fore, it is appropriate to see that the Angel's position at the threshingfloor coincides with the decision God made as to the survival of the nation of Israel. His wrath had to be appeased first. As a result of David's repentance and the acceptable offering, the Lord in mercy stayed the plague. At



Photo: Roy Gustafson

His second advent, the Lord Jesus Christ will judge Israel, receiving the faithful believers out of the Tribulation and into His kingdom. But He will also condemn the unbelievers into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 25:1-30). Likewise, with the nations, the Lord will usher the believers into His kingdom, but the unfaithful into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (vv. 31-46).

Secondly, we see that the Angel of the Lord stood between the heaven and the earth (1 Chr. 21:16). This reminds us that there is One mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:5). Also, this position speaks of His Lordship over heaven

The threshing floor was located at Moriah where a substitute was found for Isaac centuries earlier.

and earth (Acts 17:24).

Finally, we are told that the threshingfloor was located at mount Moriah (2 Chr. 3:1), where a substitute was found for Isaac centuries earlier (Gen. 22:13). In the case of David and Israel, the substitute was the offering upon the altar (1 Chr. 21:26). In our case, God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all (Rom. 8:32). Isaac was one man spared from death. In David's time, the remnant of a nation was spared. And finally, the death of Jesus Christ is enough to save the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2).

The Angel's Weapon

The pestilence was represented by the sword of the Lord (1 Chr. 21:12). The sword is a picture of the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16). Therefore, not only did the sword of the Lord symbolize the Angel's power to chasten His people, but also His authority to declare the Word of the Lord, as he would command David through Gad the seer (1 Chr. 21:18). We're told that our Lord Jesus is the Word which was made flesh (Jn. 1:14). Not only does He have authority to declare God's Word, but His Word chastens us, *"piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb. 4:12). Praise God, His work regarding His word is not over! At His return, His name will be *"the Word of God...and out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations"* (Rev. 19:13, 15).

The Angel's Words

As His title implies, the Angel of the Lord did indeed have a message to deliver to David through Gad the seer. He told David to set up an altar to the Lord in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite (1 Chr. 21:18). David volunteered his life in the stead of his people, saying, *"even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done?"* (1 Chr. 21:17). The Lord had taken David from the sheepfolds to shepherd Jacob (Ps. 78:71), but there was only one Good Shepherd worthy enough to give His life for


the sheep (Jn. 10:11). The Angel's solution was not David's life, but the offering of animals upon the altar. It reminds us that sin could only be dealt with through the shedding of blood of unblemished beasts upon the altar.

As for the ultimate satisfaction of God, only Christ's death at Calvary could take away sins once and for all (Heb. 10:12). We see God's acceptance

Through this appearance of the Angel of the Lord, we see Christ's wonderful character, His power to chasten and destroy, and His redemptive work.

and satisfaction pictured in the fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering (1 Chr. 21:26). The fire did not consume Israel, nor David, but it consumed the altar. Likewise, the Lord Jesus Christ was the Shepherd who was smitten in our place (Mt. 26:31). The Angel's message led to God's acceptance of this offering, resulting in His sword going back into its sheath.

The threshingfloor would also be the site of the future temple (see 1 Chr. 22:1-2; 2 Chr 3:1), where all Israel would seek to worship Him, and where all nations will one day come to worship (Zech. 14:16-19).

In summary, through this appearance of the Angel of the Lord, we see Christ's wonderful character, His power to chasten and destroy, and His redemptive work. However, we know that the judgment of the Angel of the Lord was minor compared to what awaits the world. As 2 Corinthians 5:11 says, *"knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."* May we continue to proclaim His good news until He comes! 

Elijah and Encouragement

Pyrotechnics at Horeb teach the lesson of the still small voice.

Because he was a man “of like passions” we can identify with Elijah’s melancholy and be inspired by the secret of his restoration to service.

Elijah was a prophet of God and a man of faith. As our chapter opens he has seen God do a powerful work. The prophets of Baal were destroyed and the drought was over. There must have been joy in Israel, but not for Jezebel, and she sent a messenger to Elijah to say she was intent on destroying him (v. 2).

Elijah had tried hard to revive God’s people (18:37). Mt. Carmel’s victory had demonstrated God’s power and seemed to begin the revival. So Elijah prayed for rain. But once the drought was over there was no need to fear killing Elijah. Clearly, this was not the revival he had expected. Elijah ran for his life to the wilderness of Judah. Fear turned to depression (v. 4). He looked inward and knew he was no better than his ancestors. He was exhausted physical-

ly and emotionally. He could not deny his mortal weakness. He could do no more. He wanted to die. He would rather be with the Lord.

It was then—at Elijah’s lowest point—that he received a second “messenger.” An angel (same word as “messenger” in v. 2) appeared to him. It was the Angel of the Lord (v. 7); it was the “*word of the Lord*” (note the “*He*” referring to the “*word of the Lord*” in verse 9); it was YHWH Himself (v. 15); it was a Christophany—an Old Testa-

ment appearance of the Lord Jesus.

The Angel of the Lord came to encourage Elijah. Encouragement is more than reassurance; it also strengthens for battle. The Angel woke Elijah out of the sleep of despair. The New Testament exhorts us often to wake up. We do

not see when we are asleep, and many believers need spiritual sight.

Then He told Elijah to eat. Elijah looked (v. 6) and, behold, he saw food and drink. What food is this, prepared by the Lord Himself! How tender and selfless His love for His own. Elijah ate and slept again. Sometimes we do likewise: we get a fresh glimpse of spiritual reality, tasting the sweetness of the Word, then lie down and sleep again. And so the Lord woke him again to eat and drink more (v. 7).

Clearly eating and drinking are more important than sleeping in the spiritual economy. Elijah was not capable of the journey in his own strength, but he travelled forty days and nights in the strength of that food and drink (v. 8) to a cave at Mt. Horeb.

In that cave the Word (Jn. 1:1) spoke and asked Elijah what he was doing there (v. 9). Having received sight and strength, Elijah (as we must do today) had to face his motivations. He answered in terms of appearances (v. 10). He thought he was the only active believer. He was wrong. But the faithful remnant was so small and scattered that they seldom met one another. Lonely Elijah could no longer resist his enemies.

Elijah was told to “*stand before the Lord*,” and there followed a strong wind, an earthquake, and fire. However, God was not in these. Elijah’s victory on Mt. Carmel was by fire; there even rocks were consumed. But God was showing Elijah that such power will not revive anyone. Demonstrations of force do not compare with the presence of YHWH.

God makes His presence known by His word (v. 13). The written or spoken word leads us to the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a still (in the sense of calm), small (used of the manna in the wilderness) voice, but the power



Mt. Horeb (Sinai)

of God's word cannot be overestimated. He created the worlds by His word (Heb. 11:3). He spoke to a dead man, and he obeyed Him (Jn. 11:43). His voice is like thunder (Jn. 12:29). But the power of God to change lives is a calm, sustaining, strengthening voice.

In our noisy world we hardly hear one another. Conversations end where neither side has been heard. We wish God would speak to us. But God *has* spoken to us (Heb. 1:2). His is a still, small voice. Quiet, prayerful meditation brings hearing until we "see." Faith replaces knowledge. An active life of faith is born in quiet fellowship with Him. When we, like Elijah in verse 3, see men and circumstances, we despair (also Mt. 14:30). When we see by faith and hear the Word, we are strong.

Elijah responded in humility, covering his face (v. 13) and hearing YHWH's voice. Again the Lord asked why he there. Again He challenged Elijah to see spiritual truth. And although Elijah felt very much alone (v. 14), the Lord sent him back into the heat of the battle. Elijah obeyed. His weakness no longer mattered. He had seen the Lord. It did not take fire and lightning to convince Elijah to serve Him. Elijah had been refreshed with rest, food, reviving of his own spirit, instruction, a new vision, and, finally, obedience.

Elijah returned to Damascus (v. 15) and anointed a new king over Syria, another over Israel (v. 16), and a successor to himself. No man could do such work apart from the anointing that Elijah would give. These men would be as wind, earthquake, and fire. God would yet do a powerful work in these nations. But Elijah had learned that God's strength and wisdom are known through our weakness (1 Cor. 1:27). What a great God and Saviour we have!

The full meaning of this story must be seen in the New Testament. John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Lk. 1:17). He was God's voice crying in the wilderness. He baptized Jesus Christ (the anointed One) who is the true Prophet, Priest, and King. The Holy Spirit came upon Him. He led our Lord into the wilderness to meet His adversary in the power of God's word. Jesus was

forty days without food except for the word of God. Then angels came and ministered to Him (Mt. 4:11). Eventually He came out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit (Lk. 4:14). Later we see our Lord on the Mountain of Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah.

For those who were weary and hungry and thirsty, our Lord said to come to Him for rest (Mt. 11:28) and food (Jn. 6)

and drink (Jn. 7:37-39)—enough to not only satisfy us, but allow us to overflow in blessing to others. Our Lord taught that we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood (Jn. 6:53ff) in order to live and be strong. He was not referring to the Lord's Supper (which had not yet been instituted) but to personal fellowship with Him.

Then comes Gethsemane. This battle is against greater forces than Elijah knew. Our Lord Jesus Christ, alone with His Father, was strengthened for our eternal well-being by prayer and the word. An angel was sent to Him (Lk. 22:43) while Peter and the others slept, reminding us of Elijah under the broom tree. And so prepared, He endured the cross. What power! What glory! What eternal praise and worship are due to Him!

Elijah shows the comforting ministry of the Angel of the Lord. Remember the two on the road to Emmaus? They were despondent. But He met them, taught them, broke bread with them, and they "saw" (Lk. 24:30-31). They were revived and strengthened (vv. 32-35).


The Lord gives us rest, feeds us His own food, teaches us intimacy, empowers us, and commissions us to serve Him in that power. Perhaps most importantly, He reminds us that God's power is still shown by our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). May it be so in our lives. 



Photo: Wolf Schubach

Remember the two on the road to Emmaus? They were despondent. But He met them, taught them, broke bread with them, and they "saw."

What's missing in our gospel work?

We're beginning to spread seed around more than in the recent past. Where are the sheaves?

We often treat revival as if it were as capricious as lightning striking. Is that true? The wind of the Spirit is evidently blowing in China, north India and parts of Africa. Must we just satisfy ourselves with quoting, "The wind blows where it wants to" and leave it at that? Or are there keys in the Word that show us the way into real blessing? WHERE IS THE RAIN?

Read carefully the words of Isaiah 55:10-11, "*As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I send it.*"

It is easy to misapply this illustration. We know that often in Scripture the seed and bread are pictures of the Word in two distinct aspects—the seed as the potential of the gospel for the lost, and bread as the provision of nourishing truth for the believer. And surely that is true in this passage as well.

However, you will note that here the "as" and "so" link *the rain and snow* with God's Word. May I suggest that there is a *third* aspect to the Word of God here. The bread is the Word as we receive it for personal sustenance. The seed is the Word as we speak it to the lost. But this is not enough. Much seed has been spread around but seems to be lying dormant without springing to life. What is the matter?

Thank the Lord for a soul being saved now and again, a sprout of true life springing up here and there in the vast fields of North America. But we certainly are not seeing the sheaves being gathered as the Lord promised. Did He promise sheaves? Yes, "*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his*

sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:6). If this is the sure promise of God, what is missing?

There have been various suggestions made for the lack of blessing seen in gospel work in North America. Here are some of the more popular:

THE WEST HAS HAD ITS CHANCE, some say; our time has passed. Yet millions of non-Westerners (who have not had their chance) are flooding onto our shores—who, if they stayed in their own countries, might have a better chance of being saved! That certainly would be true of the Chinese, for example, where thousands every day are coming to Christ.

THIS IS A DAY OF SMALL THINGS. We have already pointed out in other articles that misapplying a verse describing the situation during the Tribulation just won't fly. Besides, Zechariah (4:10) isn't describing small results. The results are a company that no man can number, according to John (Rev. 7:9)! No, he is referring to small resources—two witnesses who will reap this mighty harvest from all nations.

THIS IS THE LAODICEAN AGE. Assuming that the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 portray seven ages in the history of the Church, it should be noted that the last four churches are promised the coming of the Lord. You don't have to be a Laodicean assembly during the Laodicean period. Besides, it surely isn't Laodicean in other parts of the world. No, this excuse won't do, either. The Lord Jesus, after all, promised to be with us right to the end of the age as

WHAT'S MISSING IN OUR GOSPEL WORK? *continued*

we seek to fulfill the Commission.

It would be good to remind ourselves of the factors that *haven't* changed since the days when believers brought in armloads of souls.

THE GREAT COMMISSION HASN'T CHANGED. The gospel is still to be preached to every creature—in our cities, our neighborhoods, our families, to our workmates (but not on company time). We are all to be involved.

THE POWER OF GOD TO SAVE HASN'T CHANGED. His arm isn't shortened; His ear isn't heavy. He is the one who calls us to redouble our efforts: if those invited refuse, go elsewhere and compel them to come in.

THE WORD OF GOD HASN'T CHANGED. It is still *"the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes."* THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK HASN'T CHANGED, convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. NOR HAS THE POWER OF PRAYER CHANGED. So what has changed?

Of course, to have successful harvests we must sow the good seed *"beside all waters"* (Isa. 32:20) at all times (Eccl. 11:6) and in all conditions—*"in season and out of season."* We do need to think about where, when, how, and how much seed is being distributed.

But there are two ingredients missing if we are merely throwing seed around. Hosea puts his finger on the problem: *"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you"* (10:12).

Here are the missing two key factors.

First, before sowing the Word, we must break up the fallow ground. If not, you might as well sow corn on concrete. Notice that it is *"your"* ground. The plowing must begin in our own hearts, exposing ourselves to God.

Second, and directly related to this, we need the rain and snow. The moisture is the heavenly influence that germinates the seed and causes it to grow. Of what do they speak?

We know that a person is not saved by merely hearing Christians quote Bible verses. It is not hearing *about* Christ that saves a person; this occurs when they *hear Him*. Conviction and conversion come to the soul when we realize that Christ is risen indeed and is personally calling us. What a day!

It is the water of God's word spoken from heaven that confirms and germinates the seed planted by men. It is the rain and snow (in season and out of season) that we need. Why does it not fall? Is it as uncertain as our modern weather reports?

Israel is a narrow strip of land along the windward edge of the Mediterranean. Unlike Egypt with its seasonal Nile flood, it was *"a land...[that] drinketh water of the rain of heaven"* (Dt. 11:11). The Lord promised two annual rainy seasons, regular as clockwork: *"I will give you the rain of your land in due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn..."* (v. 14).

But while these rains were regular, not capricious, they were contingent on obedience. Jeremiah, Hosea and Joel (5:24; 6:3; 2:23) spoke of this, as did Solomon in his dedicatory prayer: *"When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because we have sinned against Thee, and shall turn again to Thee, and confess Thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto Thee...Then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy people"* (1 Ki. 8:35f).

I believe we will not begin to bring in sheaves until, our hearts broken up before God, we make detailed confession of our sins. Only then can we expect God's rain, fulfilling Paul's prayer: *"Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness"* (2 Cor. 9:10). JBN



We will not begin to bring in sheaves until, our hearts broken before God, we make detailed confession of our sin.

Delivered

Because He is our helper, we shall not fear what man can do to us.

The author shows the immutability of Christ in being “a very present help” for His people through the ages.

“**J**esus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). This verse seems primarily to point our hearts and minds to the Deity of our Lord Jesus. For, as God, He is immutable: “*Thou art the same and Thy years shall not fail*” (Heb. 1:12). Certainly this unchangeability must include His character, His love to His own, and His relationship with them.

He is seen in the Gospel narratives caring for both weary multitudes (Mt. 14:14) and needy individuals (Lk. 18:41). He had compassion on the bereaved (Lk. 7:13), and met the needs of the sick (Jn. 5:6) and the oppressed (Mt. 17:18). Today, He is still the same loving, caring, compassionate Lord; who, having loved His own that are in the world, loved them to the uttermost (Jn.13:1).

the Lord. We will consider two incidents in the book of Daniel where we see Him delivering His faithful witnesses from certain death.

The Fiery Furnace

In Daniel chapter 3 we have an intriguing story of human atrocity and divine deliverance—a story that has a prophetic application to future events that will befall the pious remnant of the Jewish nation.

God, in His divine purposes for Israel, and in light of their rebellion against Him, had handed over governmental power to the head of the first Gentile empire. Nebuchadnezzar was made a king of kings. To him was committed the affairs of a vast domain. This included many kingdoms that spoke different languages and had various traditions, policies, and reli-



Yet that One who in the Gospels delivered His saints in times of trouble, and was near them in their dire needs, is the very same One who did so in Old Testament times. This same Jesus who showed such care for His people in the days of His flesh as the Son of Man has so cared for them in prior times as the Angel of

religious systems. Perhaps with his own political ends in mind, and to unite those varied peoples around a common cause, Nebuchadnezzar thought of setting up his new religion and forcing it on all of his subjects. Those who disobeyed would face the risk of suffering a horrible death in a fiery furnace. Rather than being

thankful to God, whom he confessed to be the God of gods (Dan. 2:47) and who has given him such great authority, Nebuchadnezzar went on to set up an image of gold in the plain of Dura. Such is the pride, haughtiness, and ingratitude of the human heart.

This, however, was an occasion for God to bring into view the faithfulness of His own witnesses. Three young men of the captives of Judah were reported to the king as having refused to bow to or worship his idol. So, after offering them a second chance to obey his call to worship his idol, the insolent king defied the living God by his blasphemous words, "...and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Dan. 3:15).

The answer of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego reflects their confidence in their faithful God, for with the calm assurance and dignity that becomes believers in Jehovah, they addressed the king: "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" (see Dan. 3:16f).

Having thus expressed their confidence in God's delivering power, they went on to say that even if God did not put forth His power to deliver them, they would still serve Him, and not the gods of this world.

The deliverance was marvelous, even in the eyes of the heathen king, who was amazed to see a fourth Man among the flames. Here we also marvel at the fourth Person walking with Daniel's friends in the furnace. He freed them from their bands and protected them from the power of fire. The smell of fire did not pass on them, nor was their hair singed, nor their coats changed.

Nebuchadnezzar described this fourth Man as "a son of the gods"—the best description the heathen king could come up with, using his pagan imagination. But we know Him as the Son of God indeed. Who else but the Son of God, the "Angel of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1), could bring about such deliverance? As Son of God He is able to give life in the midst of death. He is able to free those that

are bound, "for if the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36), and could protect them from the power of fire.

Jehovah had promised His people: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (Isa. 43:2-3). In Daniel 3, He presents Himself in the Person of His blessed Son to deliver His faithful witnesses who jeopardized their lives in order to be faithful to Him.

This is much the same scene that will take place in a future day. The head of the fourth Gentile empire will try to force the entire world to worship him. More specifically, he will persecute the faithful Jews of the time who will be going through the fiery furnace of the Great Tribulation. Those who refuse to bow and worship the image will be in danger of suffering and death (Rev. 13:11-18). When

the time comes for that tyrant to plan the total annihilation of Israel (the time of "Jacob's trouble" indeed!), then the Son of God Himself will appear in glory to save His faithful witnesses. For His feet will touch the Mount of Olives to create a way of escape for them (Zec. 14:4-5). "The Angel of the Lord encompasseth round about those who fear Him and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7). He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

The Den of Lions

We see a similar record in chapter 6, yet the differences are instructive. Darius the Mede is in charge of Babylon. His officials, whom he had appointed over the kingdom, were moved with envy against Daniel. Since they could not find fault with the



performance of his duties to the king, they sought to find occasion in him concerning the Law of his God. How very much like the world's attitude towards the true Christian today.

Taking advantage of the legal customs of the day, they plotted to have Daniel thrown into the lions' den. Remarkably, however, even after being made aware of the danger that awaited him, Daniel continued to openly and faithfully address his God alone in prayer (v. 10).



Notwithstanding the fact that the king was not personally involved in the original plot, he was certainly to blame for agreeing to be the only authority to whom request in prayer was to be made. Perhaps this pandered to his personal vanity and pride. But in so doing he was usurping the authority of the God of heaven.

When the motive of the conspirators became clear to the king, he was very displeased. He tried all he could to save his friend Daniel, but to no avail (see v. 14f). He found himself unwittingly caught in a web of intrigue and, against his own will, he ordered that Daniel be thrown into the den of lions. Yet he expressed his hope that Daniel's God, whom Daniel served continually, would deliver him.

Having spent a remorseful, sleepless night, the king came to the den in the morning to ask if indeed Daniel's God has been able to deliver him. The answer was loud and clear: "*my God hath sent His Angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me*" (v. 22).

Certainly this was yet another pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God. He is seen here in His eternal glory, as the Angel of God, rescuing His faithful servant from a sure death.

This is the same One who has come into the world in incarnation. And, having redeemed His own to Himself through the death of the cross, He still cares for them in like manner.

Paul...reported how all had forsaken him. Yet he says that the Lord stood by him and strengthened him, and "delivered [him] out of the mouth of the lion."

Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, nearing the end of his ministry, reported how all had forsaken him. Yet he says that the Lord had stood by him and strengthened him, and "*delivered [him] out of the mouth of the lion*" (2 Tim. 4:16-18). This is the same Lord who delivered Daniel. This is the same One who delivers His own even today. In the future He will deliver the pious remnant of the Jewish nation who will refuse to worship the usurper at the end times (2 Thes. 2:4).

To this day He remains what He ever has and will be: the one and only Deliverer.

*He is able to deliver thee;
He is able to deliver thee,
Though by sin oppressed
Come to Him for rest,
Our God is able to deliver thee.*




North Koreans Targeting Christians

As reported by Meghan Cline in the Nov 16, 2005 edition of the New York Sun.

A woman in her 20s executed by a firing squad after being caught with a Bible. Five Christian church leaders punished by being run over by a steamroller before a crowd of spectators who “cried, screamed out, or fainted when the skulls made a popping sound as they were crushed.” These and other horrifying violations of human rights and religious freedom in North Korea are reported in a new study by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, titled “Thank You, Father Kim Il Sung: Eyewitness Accounts of Severe Violations of Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion in North Korea.”

The report, released Nov 15, came as President Bush toured Asia, calling for increased political freedom. In remarks prepared for delivery in Japan, the president called on Red China to extend more freedom to its population of 1.3 billion. In an advance text of the speech, President Bush also extolled Taiwan, which Beijing considers a renegade province, as “a free and democratic Chinese society.” The president also noted North Korean human rights abuses. “Satellite maps of North Korea show prison camps the size of whole cities,” Mr. Bush said. “We will not forget the people of North Korea.”

Reps. Frank Wolf of Virginia and Chris Smith of New Jersey called on Mr. Bush to include the specific findings of the North Korean report in his diplomatic discussions with Chinese and South Korean officials this week, and to urge leaders of both Asian nations to take a firmer stand against their communist neighbor. 

SHORT-TERM IN ZAMBIA

Echoes recently announced this short-term opportunity forwarded from Dr. Viv Davies, Kalene Hospital, Zambia:

“We have an urgent need for a Nurse Midwife at Kalene Mission Hospital, which is a 140 bed hospital in rural Zambia among the Lunda people. The period of service required is March to August 2006, for furlough cover for a missionary nurse.”

For further details, email Dr Viv Davies at vbd@doctors.org.uk

ADMIN/PRINCIPAL

Victory Christian School in St. Louis, MO has an immediate need for an administrator/principal for their K-8 school (150 students).

Contact: Doug Traxler

314-971-1072 cell

314-843-8688 home

Doug.Traxler@concordiatech.org

RAIN IN ALBANIA

We have been advised that Albania is in desperate need of rain. Electricity within the country is produced by hydro-electric power. At present the reservoirs are almost empty, which is severely affecting the production of electricity. Please remember this situation in your prayers.

NORWAY TAKES A TURN

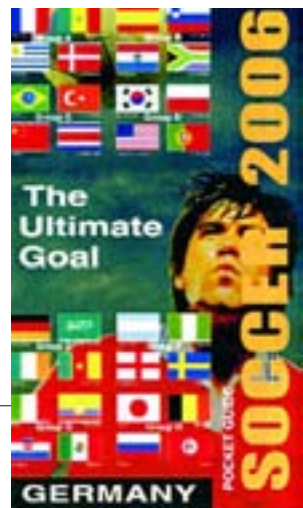
Nat and Jennifer Rodgers (serving from the UK) advise that the previous Prime Minister of Norway, who was a believer, was defeated in

the recent elections. The current ruling party adhere to policies that are detrimental to the Christian faith and the liberty to proclaim basic biblical truths. Please pray for Norway, her people, and the believers there.

OUTREACH IN GERMANY

Pray and prepare for an outreach at the World Soccer Cup in Germany (mid-Jun to mid-Jul). A 16-page souvenir booklet will include a schedule, the gospel, and an offer of a Bible course.

Contact: lem5@juno.com





After the ascension of Christ, we have only one prayer recorded by the Eleven. Its subject? BOLDNESS. See Acts 4:29.

Are we missing something here? When did you last hear such a prayer for the saints in the meetings of our “New Testament churches”?

Motivation for Evangelization

Breaking through barriers on the road to becoming a soul winner.

Paul was not naturally bold; at least he didn't think so. We know this because he wrote to the Ephesians: “Pray...for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel...that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (6:18-20). He asked not once but twice that he might be bold in testimony.

Paul knew what his detractors said of him: “His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (2 Cor. 10:10). What helped him to break through the natural barriers of diminutive stature and halting speech to become not only the articulate teacher of those “weighty” letters, but also the principal evangelist of Europe?

I find it relatively enjoyable to minister the Word to believers or to write Bible-based material, either for saved or lost. Even to witness one-on-one (once a hard challenge) has become a joy to me after being honest with the Lord about my cowardice and asking Him for boldness and opportunities. But to speak wisely, creatively, biblically, powerfully, and winsomely to a non-captive mixed audience as Paul did at Mars' Hill—that is something I only do well in my dreams. That's why I'm personally interested in Paul's motivations. Let him tell us:

1. “Knowing...the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11). Not His terror against us, of course. But, says Paul, we believe in the lake of fire even if many unbelievers don't. So we don't just casually mention the possibility of salvation—we want to persuade. We sound somewhat like fire alarms because we believe there is a fire. We preach to men “condemned already.”

2. “I purposed to come unto you...that I might have some fruit among you also... I am ready to preach the gospel...” (see Rom. 1:13-15). Paul longed for fruit everywhere, in answer to the words of His Master, “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” (Jn. 15:8). Paul felt the burden to look after the Father's vineyard better than the previous husbandmen had done. Do we long for “much fruit”? Paul did, and Jesus did, too. They didn't subscribe to the “as long as you're faithful, don't be concerned about fruit” philosophy.

3. “...I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them” (Rom. 11:13-14). Paul had been called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, but he hoped that the more Gentiles were saved, the more Jews would be provoked to salvation. What vision! What strategic thinking! How like the heart of God were Paul's varied efforts that, “by all means” (consistent with the message), he might win some.

4. “The love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Cor. 5:14). Paul goes on to explain that the logic of Calvary is flawless. One died for all, therefore all must have been dead. Therefore the life we have is not our own. Therefore we should live as He wants us to live. In other words, to live daily as ambassadors for heaven. The love that moved Him to leave heaven for this sorry planet should be the great motivator that moves us out into the streets and lanes for Him.

5. “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ...?” (1 Thes. 2:19). The Lord is coming! But though the catching up is to “the Lord,” it will be “with them” (1 Thes. 4:17). With whom? Hopefully that number will include those whom we have invited to join us there. “When I get to that beautiful city, and the saints all around me appear, I want to have somebody tell me, ‘It was you who invited me here.’”



UPLOOK

If the outlook is dark, try the uplook.

“NO MAN CARED FOR MY SOUL”

Why should it be thought strange that those that are full of the Spirit of Christ should be proportionately, in their love for souls, like Christ? He had so strong a love and concern for them as to be willing to drink to the dregs the cup of God’s fury for them. At the same time that He offered up His blood for souls, He offered up also strong crying and tears when in travail for us....The spirit of those that have been in distress for the souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not to be different from that of the apostle Paul who travailed for souls, and was ready to wish himself accursed from Christ for others (Rom. 9:3). Nor from that of the Psalmist: *“Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law...Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law”* (Ps. 119:53, 136). Nor from that of the prophet Jeremiah: *“My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me: I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war”* (4:19). We read of Mordechai, when he saw his people in danger of being destroyed with a temporal destruction (Est 4:1) that he *“rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry.”* And why then should persons be thought to be distracted when they cannot forbear crying out at the consideration of the misery of those that are going to eternal destruction?



—Jonathan Edwards in *Thoughts on Revival*