

# COUNSEL

**MEN AND WOMEN  
AROUND THE LORD (PART 2)**

**METHODS & MOTIVES MATTER WITH GOD**

**THE NEW BIRTH (JOHN 3:3)**

**LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES—SMYRNA**

**THE RESULTS OF WORSHIP: GOD SHALL BE GLORIFIED**

**THE PRIESTHOOD OF NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS (PART 2)**

**THE T-SHIRT MESSAGE**

**TO BELIEVE OR NOT TO BELIEVE**

*July – August 2006*

# Methods & Motives Matter with God

Throughout her history the church has been plagued by those who fail to obey the teaching of the scriptures. Such disobedience may be the result of the ever present flesh asserting itself or a lack of understanding by otherwise well intentioned believers. The spiritually minded believer will always want to compare methods and motives in service against the Word of God. The unavoidable judgement seat of Christ will not spare a lifetime of 'wood, hay and stubble' service.

Results are often a justification for various forms of service and practice in the church. After all, it is reasoned, if souls are being saved or local churches are growing numerically then whatever methods are employed must be seeing the Lord's blessing. Paul exposed the fallacy of such an argument to the Philippian believers where he observed that *'Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.'* (Phil. 1:15-17). Paul's assessment of this is surprising. Rather than condemning those with an unchristlike motive he writes, *"What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."* (Phil. 1:18). On the surface Paul appears to be unconcerned about those who acted against him even in the gospel. But was he? Was he minimizing the judgement seat of Christ? In no way. Here the apostle takes the high road as

to his personal reaction. In the midst of objectionable behaviour by some, Paul saw that at least Christ was preached, even if the motives were wrong. In this he rejoiced that God would bless the preaching of Christ. Paul could see the big picture and refused to be drawn into controversy or contention, even though he had every right to do so. However it is important to observe, that Paul did not counsel the Philippians to join these who were preaching 'of envy and strife' but rather he exhorted the believers to be steadfast and Christ-like in their own sphere of service.

Today, as in the past, the church is afflicted with various schemes and programs designed to promote spiritual growth or evangelism. A movement develops, an approach is systematized, seminars are presented, programs are sold. Christians who do not participate are considered spiritual 'spoiled sports' or too old fashioned. An assembly is often charged with being out of touch or on the verge of extinction if it does not embrace the latest method.

The problem with methods and schemes is that they soon become the object of faith. We too easily trust 'it' rather than God. What is needed in any work for God is not the latest method, but dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit of God to do His work. Such working is unpredictable and cannot be programmed or scheduled. The Lord Himself stated that *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8). What we

can do is to stay close to His proven methods of operation which is the unsparing use of His word and heavy doses of prayer. Should He lead to a particular method or approach we can gladly follow. But we should not insist everyone do the same.

Even the apostles were not privy to some particular method or scheme. For example Paul himself made various attempts at evangelism but the door was closed by the Spirit of God. Read Acts 16:6-12 and see how the Holy Spirit closed several doors as a means of guiding the apostle to the place where He had already been working. Such dependence on the Spirit is vital today as well.

This is not a call to reject all methods of evangelism or spiritual growth. It is a call however to listen for the Lord's voice of direction. Not all believers will see vast numbers coming to the Lord, as much as we would like to. Peter saw 3,000 saved, but Andrew didn't. And yet, there would be no Peter if there wasn't an Andrew. A desperate desire to see God move should not overtake a willingness to be where the Lord leads us. The Holy Spirit is still at work. The Lord is still building His church. We want to build with Him with 'gold, silver and precious stones'.

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**Brian Gunning**

St. Catharines, Ontario

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**Previous Editors:**

Robert McClurkin  
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**Editor:** Brian Gunning, Ontario

**Editorial matters:**

bgunning@sympatico.ca

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Smyrna acropolis cistern

# Letters to the 7 Churches — Smyrna

**W**e now come to the second of our letters to the seven churches. It is addressed to Smyrna, a city which lay about forty miles due north of Ephesus, and our intrepid messenger would probably have made the journey in two days. When he arrived he would have seen an architecturally beautiful city. Another compelling attraction was that it was all about ‘location, location, location’! It had a sweeping bay surrounded by gentle hillsides covered with cypress pines. Its harbor was deep and practical and all these things made for a colourful and beautiful, yet busy sight. The city still stands today (the only one of the seven) but is nowhere near so small or so pretty as it was in Bible times. It

is now known as Izmir. Apparently it was twice destroyed, once by war and once by earthquake, but each time had been rebuilt in contemporary style and with no expense spared. It was called ‘the crown of Ionia’ in view of its wealth and loveliness. It was truly a city that ‘died, yet lived again’. The citizens were enthusiastic allies of Rome and were rewarded for their faithful allegiance by their city being chosen as the site of a temple dedicated to Tiberias Caesar. This temple became the centre of fanatical emperor worship. Annually, every citizen of the city was required to burn incense to the emperor as God. This was carried out faithfully by most of the citizens. Refusal to do so by Christians would

result in the most fearful abominations being perpetrated against them by a callous crowd exploiting a wicked system. The economy of the city was centred around the production of wine and myrrh. The latter was said to be produced from a small fruit, perhaps slightly larger than a pea. It was bitter to the taste but when crushed produced a fragrant odor.

The assembly which met in the city suffered much persecution from Jews and Romans driven by the devil himself.

## Introduction, v. 8

To the saints at Smyrna the Lord introduces Himself with a two-fold description. He is the One who is ‘First and Last’ also the One who ‘was dead, and is alive’. These together emphasize His deity and His humanity. In Smyrna, that bitterest of places, the believers faced humiliation and death and the opening words of introduction are to encour-

age them that, should they be called upon to pay the ultimate penalty for loyalty to Christ, they could look to the Lord for effective support. The might of the emperor was as nothing compared to the power of the Lord. Then, too, He is 'the First and the Last'. This has to do with His eternal existence. Before anything else existed He was (ever-existing) and after everything on earth is finished He continues. He is unchanging in Himself and cannot be affected by anything that happens on earth. To the suffering saints at Smyrna that would indicate stability in a very dynamic situation. Emperors may come and go; persecution and suffering may vary in its intensity; but He remains the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

The Lord Jesus had 'life in Himself'. His ongoing position is one of life and living. That is how He was in eternity past and that is how

live again. That is a blessed reassurance that death is not just a release from suffering but is also a glorious entrance into the full enjoyment of life in Christ.

### Commendations, v. 9

Verse 9 contains three things that the Lord knows absolutely. The phrase, 'I know thy works' is generally thought not to have been in the original but a later addition. Accepting that to be so it leaves tribulations; poverty; and blasphemy. The first two relate to the saints and the third to 'the synagogue of Satan'. There is no doubt that the saints at Smyrna were enduring harsh and bitter persecution. They were under sustained pressure. Some have likened their experience to the burning bush phenomenon seen by Moses, i.e., burning but not consumed. It may be too that their position is aptly described as being like those

rienced in His life on earth.) Theirs was not an inherited poverty but it had been brought about by robbery of all they possessed. Apparently they had willingly accepted this situation because they appreciated that they were rich in spiritual possessions of which they could never be robbed. These were lodged in a place where thieves could not break through and steal! This strengthened them, like the martyr Polycarp, to resist the demand to deny the faith and denounce the Lord. They set us the highest possible example in their demeanour and loyalty.

The Lord also knew of the blasphemy emanating from those who claimed to be Jews but were not. These were indeed Jews naturally but were

When believers are under pressure  
they may say and do things that seem strange  
to the rest of us and we may criticize them.  
The Lord does not! He understands.

He will be in eternity to come. But in between something happened: He became dead! This was a willing and voluntary submission to the death of the cross. Had He not offered Himself no one could have put Him to death. Yet, having died He lives again. He has returned to His place of glory with the Father. This is a potent reminder that the believer's suffering is on behalf of the Lord and that He Himself has ordained that all saints who die will

in Hebrews 11:36-38, "*and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*" The Lord also noted their poverty. (This, like the suffering, He Himself had expe-

very far from being Jews spiritually. In fact the synagogue where they met and planned their attacks on the Christians and joined the wicked in their persecution had become the local seat of Satan himself. They denied the deity of the Lord Jesus and in persecuting the saints were crucifying the Son of God afresh. That is indeed a most fearful thing and we are reminded that to-

day we need to be able to recognize that which is satanic and whence it comes. And so the saints suffered. It is described to us inadequately 'in words only' but to them it was a horrendous daily event when many who saw the sun rise in the morning were burned at the stake after sunset the very same day to allow the games to continue after dark for the enjoyment of the wicked. That is evil God will not readily forget!

### Condemnations

There is none! In the serious situation at Smyrna it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the assembly to engage in public service in the community. They were just about 'hanging in there' and trying to survive the daily onslaught. Doubtless there were deficiencies and failures but in these circumstances the Lord will have no mention of them. When believers are under pressure they may say and do things that seem strange to the rest of us and we may criticize them. The Lord does not! He understands. We don't.

### Instructions, v. 11

The assembly is given two simple instructions: 'Fear not'; and 'be thou faithful unto death'. Easier said than done! Avoidance of suffering is not promised but the Lord exhorts them to endure it without fear. While they would suffer many things they should fear not even one of them. The suffering is inevitable but they would garner strength by suffering together. Fur-

thermore, the Lord asks that they be faithful to Him right up to the point of death. These were really trying times and I have no doubt that the saints at Smyrna rose magnificently to the challenge. We need to wonder should a storm break over our lives whether we too would be able to stand, and having done all, to stand. The tribulation was to be for ten days. I believe this to be a de-

result of the second death is for those who die it to be cast into the Lake of Fire. These men and women of Smyrna had endured the fires of persecution but they will not be hurt any more. The second death has no power over them. Their love and faithfulness is a stark contrast to the believers at Ephesus who had walked away from their first love. They are an encouragement to us

We need to wonder should  
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finite ten-day period rather than a picture of something else. During this time persecution would reach its high-water mark. While that is so it is good to know that the time is limited and it will come to an end. The Lord is in control. He will not allow it to continue longer than planned. The promise for the overcomer is a crown of life for all who have proved faithful. Precisely what this crown is may be a puzzle but the idea must be that while they would suffer exceptionally and die violently there would be the reward of an exceptional and glorious entry into the kingdom.

### Conclusions, v.11

The usual exhortation regarding the importance of hearing of this message is given and additionally we see that the overcomer 'will not be hurt of the second death'. The known

to persist in love to the Lord and an example of how to suffer patiently for Him.

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**Roy Hill**  
*Bristol, England*



# The New Birth (John 3:3)

**J**esus answered and said unto him, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3 AV)

The subject verse is one of the most important statements made by the Lord Jesus. This is a text that has arrested countless thousands on the road to a lost eternity, and has revealed to them what is required if ever they would enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus said *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."*

Now this statement is devastating to the entire human race. What the Lord is really saying is that man as man, is not able by any means to attain to the Kingdom of God. This destroys any hope that our attempts at reform, or religious observances, or good deeds, will have a bearing on our eternal future. What the Lord is saying is that such is the hopelessness of our condition that nothing can be done to remedy our old selves, and we have to have a new kind of life all together. This is not a message of reformation; it is a message of rebirth.

What kind of person was it that the Lord Jesus made this statement to? We could understand this being said to some human derelict, some incorrigible sinner. Some drug addict, some alcoholic, someone with a criminal record. We can imagine people like this being told to have a fresh start—being *"born again."* But surprisingly, the Lord makes this great statement of truth to a man who had an impeccable character. He was no derelict. He was a

respected member of the religious and political scene in Israel. It is to a man like this, that Jesus said *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."*

Could we challenge your heart today, dear reader? The concept that the message of the gospel is only for the deep dyed sinners of society is still current in 2006. The fact is, that the difference between us and the people who form the criminal element of our society, is only one of degree. In the final analysis, there isn't a hope for them or us. The

**This is not a message of reformation;  
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apostle Paul reinforces this when he writes in 1 Corinthians 15: *"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."* This is why this statement is so powerful and far reaching in its implications. It sweeps away any thought of self help, and casts us completely on the mercy of God: *"Ye must be born again."*

Now what was the reaction of this great man to what the Lord said? He just could not take it in. This man had intellectual problems with the Lord's statement. However, the Lord refuses to be drawn into any philosophical discussion on the subject, because being *"born again"* is not an intellectual experience. It is a spiritual experience between the soul and God. The Lord Jesus said, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."*

As the Lord brought the conver-

sation to a close, He directed this man's attention to Calvary, because that is where the new birth takes place. The Lord said to Nicodemus *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). What a message of hope. If the first statement of our Lord destroyed any hope that man could attain to the Kingdom of God by his own efforts, this great verse tells us how God has arranged it, so that whosoever believeth, can have everlasting life.

Dear friends, we close this article at the foot of the cross. We want you to see God's love in all its fullness, in the giving of His Son, and as we stand there overwhelmed by the awesomeness of the spectacle, to realize it was for us He died. It is through believing in Him and this alone that we shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

May the Lord enable some reader of this article to come to the end of himself in trying to get to heaven on his or her own merit, and to come to Christ who did it all at Calvary, so that sinners might be able to enter the Kingdom of God. For further help email the author at: [wh.burnett@sympatico.ca](mailto:wh.burnett@sympatico.ca)

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**W. H. Burnett**  
Oakville, ON



# Men and Women Around the LORD PART 2

**W**e are looking at the Biblical record of a group of men and women who surrounded the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry. Those were chosen by God from a pious remnant in the nation of the Jews. They were distinct morally and spiritually from the rest of the nation. They lived in anticipation of the coming of Messiah.

This time we will deal with those whom God has ordained to be there to welcome His birth.

## ZACHARIAS AND ELISABETH

First we meet a couple that will be the parents of the forerunner of Messiah. We should be aware that to them was given the responsibility of raising the one whom the Lord Jesus described as *“more than a prophet”*. The Lord says, *“Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist”* (Matt. 11: 9, 11). What kind of people were Zacharias and Elisabeth? They were both Levites, and both were of the house of Aaron.

We are told, *“They were BOTH righteous before God, walking in all the*

*commandments of the Lord blameless”* (Luke 1:6). What a breath of fresh air in the midst of a gloomy scene. To find a couple honoring the Lord by keeping His commandments in the midst of a nation, that has departed from the commandments of the Lord

Zacharias was an exceptional priest. He was not tainted by the Sadducees' doctrine that denied the existence of angels. For if he were a Sadducee how could he have been able to see and converse with Gabriel, who stands in the presence

How very appropriate for us to attribute every good gift and every perfect gift to the Father of lights with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning.

and has largely chosen to live by the traditions of the elders (Matt. 15:2-9).

Do we sometimes feel that we are in the minority because we do not follow the traditions of men? Are we also facing attractions and pressures, not only from outside but even from some in our fellowships to adopt human systems rather than the clear pattern of the Word of God? The example of this couple would affirm that the majority is not always right, and that the only authority we need to accept is the Scripture of truth.

of God (Luke 1:19)? Zacharias was not going to be dissuaded by every wind of doctrine that was blowing and has swept the majority of the priesthood. He was not going to bow to pressures especially from the mighty hierarchy who were all of the Sadducee persuasion. What a great example of tenacity in adhering to the truth!

Moreover Zacharias was a man of prayer, as we learn from the words of the angel how his prayers were heard of God (Luke 1:13). He must

have prayed for many years for a son, and though a clear answer did not seem to be forthcoming, he waited on the Lord to answer in His own time. Meanwhile Zacharias did not faint or lose heart (Luke 18:1). Would that we be men and women of prayer like him.

In his song of praise to God after the birth of his son, John, he displays knowledge of the Scriptures in quoting both Isaiah and Malachi's prophecies concerning the forerunner of the Lord, (Isa. 40:2; Mal. 3:1; Luke 1:76). In spite of the limited light this man had, he seems to have diligently studied the word of truth and delighted himself in learning from it. How do we measure up to this example?

This song also illustrates how he was waiting for the coming of Messiah (Luke 1:68-69). Note that he does not refer to his own son as the one whom he has been waiting for but he speaks clearly of "*an horn of salvation in the house of his servant David*" (not in the house of Aaron) an obvious reference to Messiah. Zacharias' hope was that Messiah would deliver his people from their earthly enemies (Luke 1:71) but we know the Lord Jesus not only as the Messiah of Israel, but also as the Redeemer and Saviour who died for our sins on the cross. How ought we to be in anticipation of His coming again as the One who will deliver us from the wrath to come?

Zacharias' wife, Elisabeth, was a virtuous woman. She had been barren, unable to bare children for her husband all their married life. This was considered a great reproach in Israel. We are not sure whether her husband, now unable to speak, relayed the promise of the Angel Gabriel to her but when she conceives she attributes this mercy to the Lord and gives

Him the glory. How very appropriate for us to attribute every good gift and every perfect gift to the Father of lights with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning, (Jas. 1:17).

Elisabeth's song of praise when Mary, the mother of Jesus, visited her (Luke 1:41-45) shows clearly her conviction of who that yet unborn Baby was, calling her "mother of my lord." She must have been in the same frame of mind as her godly husband in regards to the coming of Messiah.

Both Zacharias and Elisabeth were filled with the Holy Spirit before they uttered their songs of praise. Both of these were Old Testament saints, yet the Holy Spirit would take full control of them to perform this task. How often do we read in the word of God, that as New Testament believers we are to yield every aspect of our lives to the control of the Holy Spirit of God, so that we may bring forth fruit to His glory? Such was the character of the remnant.

#### MARY AND JOSEPH

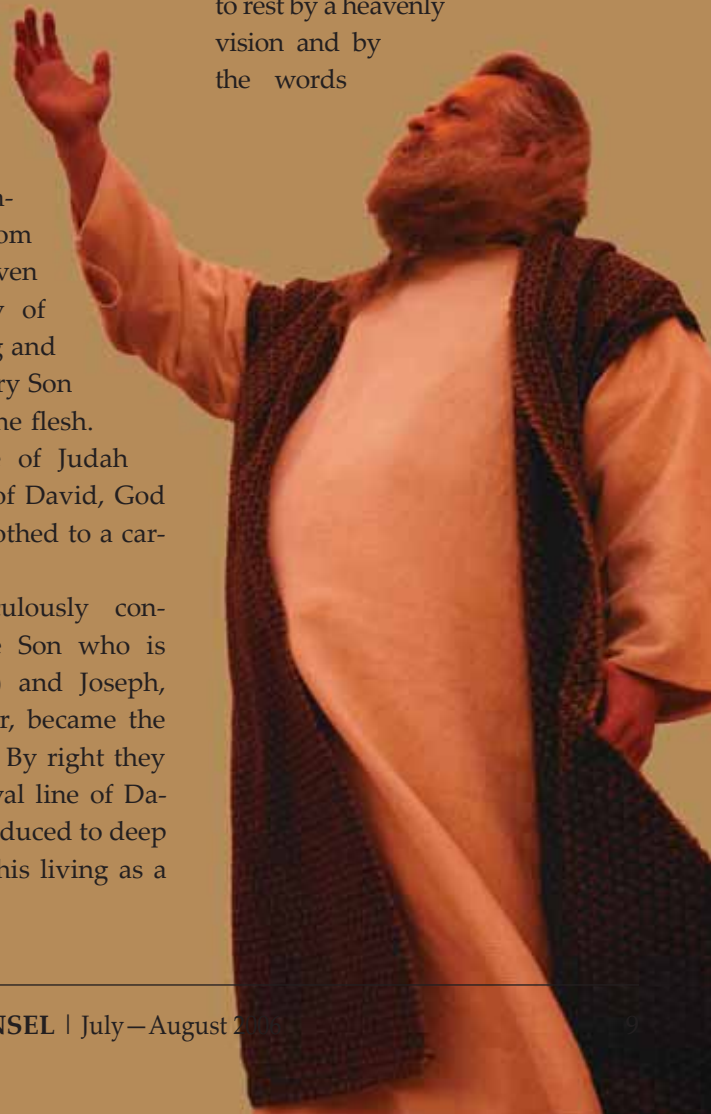
Here we have another couple to whom was entrusted the even greater responsibility of taking care, nurturing and bringing up of the very Son of God, manifest in the flesh. Thus from the tribe of Judah and from the house of David, God chooses a virgin betrothed to a carpenter.

The virgin miraculously conceived and bore the Son who is Immanuel (Isa. 7:14) and Joseph, though not the father, became the guardian of Messiah. By right they were both of the Royal line of David, yet Joseph was reduced to deep poverty, and earned his living as a manual laborer.

Humanly speaking they were the most unlikely couple to perform the task, but God's infinite wisdom proved them to be the best choice.

Joseph is described as "*a just (righteous) man*" (Matt. 1:19). His behavior in regards to the crisis that hit his family clearly showed that. During that most romantic of times, the betrothal period, he learned that his betrothed bride is pregnant before they came together. According to the law of Moses she should be publicly stoned for adultery. Yet this godly man was minded to let her go privately without exposing her, thus refusing to apply the letter of the Law. In contrast to the Scribes and the Pharisees who would have not hesitated to apply the letter of the Law (John 8:3), we see in Joseph the godly trait of delighting in mercy. Would that we emulate such attitude.

His doubts and fears were all put to rest by a heavenly vision and by the words





of an angel of the Lord. Told by the angel not to hesitate to take Mary for his wife he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. When told also how the conception had taken place, he did not doubt the angel's words though there had been no precedent of a virgin birth in the history of the nation. Likely because of his acquaintance with the Scriptures he saw how this was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the virgin birth of Messiah (Matt. 1:20-24). Surely a man of such godly character and stature would be God's choice for a guardian of His own Son.

response to the high honor the Lord has bestowed on her, (Luke 1:42) the greatest privilege any Jewish young woman could have had; to be mother of Messiah. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5). What a lesson we can learn here, that no matter how many honors the Lord may be pleased to bestow on us, we need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. 5:6).

Furthermore, this simple maiden displays an impressive knowledge of the Word of God in her song of praise known as the magnificat. There she spoke of God's promises

Humanly speaking they were the most unlikely couple ... but God's infinite wisdom proved them ... the best choice.

As for Mary, Scripture describes her as *"highly favored."* Yet she was a simple poor maiden engaged to marry a carpenter. She was a descendant of David living in the despised city of Nazareth. But she was the vessel chosen by God to provide the body He promised to prepare for the incarnation of His Son (Heb. 5:10).

What kind of a young woman was Mary? The Bible tells us she was a morally pure woman who asked the angel Gabriel after he told her of her upcoming conception, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man" (Luke 1:34). This is significant because there were four other women mentioned in the Lord's ancestry. Three of those would be described as anything but chaste, but Mary stands out as morally pure. Mary in her own turn shows obedience to the angelic revelation, *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word"* (Luke 1:38).

She also shows a humble spirit in

to His people being fulfilled in the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah (Luke 1:46-56). God's choosing a couple that have not been afforded any formal education to take on this responsibility, illustrates a precious truth: *"And the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are"* (1 Cor. 1:28). And, blessed be His Name, He still does.

Such was God's choice of two people who were the guardian and mother of Messiah. More interesting is that we read the blessed Lord Jesus was subject unto them (Luke 2:51).

---

**Dr. Boushra Mikhael**  
Toronto, Ontario

# To Believe or Not to Believe?

What was it that made the first disciples powerful witnesses to the fact that Christ was risen from the dead? The answer is plain; each had personally seen Him alive, and this was a never-to-be-forgotten occasion! Any believer today would long to have had the same experience, but that is reserved for the time when He shall appear, for *“we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is”* (1 John 3:3). However, Christ makes Himself known to us today by faith, and invites us to discover Him in our reading of Scripture. The Spirit of God warmly gives us the invitation, *“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you”* (Jas. 4:8).

In speaking to the professing religious men of His day, the Lord said, *“Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me”* (John 5:39). They had searched the scriptures, but failed to see the Christ of which they spoke, in fact their eyes and ears had been restricted because they had deliberately shut them to what God was saying. In consequence they were not able to recognize that Jesus was *“the Lord of glory”* whom they crucified. Likewise, any Christian reader of Scripture today must be careful to act upon what the Holy Spirit has shown him concerning the risen Christ lest he find himself as the Apostle Paul has described others, *“ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,”* (2 Tim. 3:7). The Holy Spirit will reveal more and more of our risen Saviour

we have come to know, if only we will act upon what He has already shown us.

Our response then, by faith to spiritual truth, determines whether we will receive deeper knowledge of the truth. The Lord will not take us further in revelation of Himself if we do not accept by faith what He has previously shown. A step by step illustration of this is seen in that beautiful walk to Emmaus when the risen Lord drew near to disciples who were in despair and confusion. (To conserve space in this article the reader is asked to carefully read Luke 24:13-35.)

We must respond in obedience to the spiritual truth the Lord shows us, otherwise it may be months or years before He will take us on to higher levels of enlightenment concerning Himself.

There are five deliberate and progressive actions by the Lord Jesus in these verses that show that this principle is true. He could have revealed Himself alive and risen from the dead as soon as He met them, but He chose instead to make this revelation one step at a time. He deals first with the unbelief and dullness of these disciples. In each of these actions we want to ask the question: *“Why?”* and suggest a possible reason for what the Lord did. First...

## WHY DID JESUS DRAW NEAR?

The most immediate answer is that these disciples needed Him. He drew near because they were in confusion and despair. This happened in other events of the lives of his followers and it happened here! His disciples needed Him, for only the manifestation of His bodily presence could give an explanation to the troubling events of the recent past that rendered them hopeless. In their estimate Jesus was their hope of a Deliverer, but since He was crucified and buried hope was gone. But now Jesus draws near to change all of that!

He knew they needed Him, just as He knew He was needed on previous occasions. When the seasons of life make the going tough, as in the crossing of the stormy waters on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus is never far away. He comes *“walking on the water”* showing that He is always

above the circumstances. Or, when they were toiling through the night and catching nothing, He lifts their discouragement by giving fruitful advice from His perspective. Even today in our own circumstances we may be going through the sorrow of a recent bereavement, loneliness may set in, and a longing for companionship. He will always be present to fill the void and explain *“why”*.

But another reason for Him to draw near was to fulfill His recent



promises to the Eleven, *"You now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you"* (John 16:22). They also must be able to rejoice with the others. The Joy of the resurrection must be shared. He had on the same day met the women coming from the tomb and declared to them *"All Hail"* which really means *"All Joy."* Can we fully grasp what He meant by this brief statement? Is this not the tone of Psalm 118:24, *"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."*

It appears to me that on the occasion of the Lord drawing near to these despairing ones He must have been bursting with excitement to reveal to them that He was alive. For this was the atmosphere of the day. But this must be withheld from them until other matters were made clear.

We move on to the next question:

### **WHY WERE THEY NOT ALLOWED TO RECOGNIZE HIM?**

The answer is clearly set forth in verses 16-27. They were not ready for this new revelation of Him. They had a spiritual problem that must be removed before further light concerning Him would be given. This is our main proposition: The Lord will not take us into further revelation of Himself until we accept by faith what He has previously shown to

us. In their case they did not believe the scriptures they knew (v. 25). The Lord addresses them as *"foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken."* The whole of the Scriptures indicate a suffering Messiah and glory that will follow. Somehow they missed this. In our case this would grieve the Holy Spirit not to believe what the Spirit had revealed to us, and would put us in a similar position as they were to the Lord.

Further to this, it appears they were cold of heart in that they never bothered to examine the empty tomb (22-24). Whereas Peter and John ran and observed He was not there. It also appears their concept of Jesus was only that of *"a prophet,"* while even the High Priest, Caiaphas, who condemned Him to death, suspected He was the Son the God. Another matter in question seems to be their longing for a national Redeemer, not a personal One.

But Jesus wanted them to see Him in the Scriptures first before any revelation of His being risen was given. So in grace He expounded to them all the Scriptures concerning Himself. In this we are reminded afresh *"These are they which testify of Me."* One stage of truth must build upon another otherwise there will be misunderstanding. Following this, we may question:

### **WHY WOULD JESUS HAVE GONE ON FROM EMMAUS ?**

The simply answer is this. It was up to them to desire His company (v. 28-29). The obvious question was, *"Would there be a positive response to His teaching."* Did it stir within them the desire to hear more? Yet the actions of the Lord are true to His nature: He does not force Himself on anyone. He will not impose Himself on those who feel they can get along without Him.

Many of us can testify that it sometimes takes years to learn *"Without me you can do nothing."* as evidenced by barrenness that can result. The Lord has said, *"He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit"* (John 15:5). He was willing to be their guest and abide with them, if they would but say, *"Come in!"* Sadly, He is seen outside the Church at Laodicea whose blindness was such that they knew not how much they needed Him. It is recorded, *"Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and sup with him and He with Me."* (Rev 3:20). The Lord longs to have fellowship with us! Isn't this humbling to think about?

Later in the narrative we learn that the hearts of the two were *"burning"* as Jesus opened to them the Scriptures. Now, should they desire more spiritual light they would invite Him in. In this we are reminded of the gracious invitations of the Lord, *"Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you"* (Jas. 4:8) *"You shall seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart"* (Jer. 29:13). *"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found."* *"Call ye upon Him while He is near"* (Isaiah 55:6).

It is written that they *"constrained Him"*, which in essence meant, *"Tell us more."* They were urging Him not to pass on, but to abide with them, This was to the joy of the hosts as well as to the joy of the Guest. The hearts of the two had been set aglow by the stirring revelations opened to them by the One of Whom they spoke. And we can safely assume that Jesus was willing and ready to tarry with them that their hearts may be filled with the joy of knowing that He was alive.

Likely their dwelling was a place of quietness and seclusion where they could be *"shut in"* with Jesus' com-

pany. How important it is to be alone with the Lord to learn from Him and of Him! The Lord has said “*Learn of Me*”, but our spirit must be quiet and waiting while he draws near. How the Lord longs for this experience with us! In love He came from the presence of God in heaven to take on a body like ours that in love He might take our place in death, and in so doing in love purchase for Himself a blood-bride. The extent and manifestation of that would eventually become clear at a later time as the hosts of this humble dwelling would grow in the grace and knowledge of the One who now sat at

on,— “*Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him;*” (v.31). What words can adequately express this scene, for we can only envision a moment, or moments, of silent amazement as their minds struggled to adjust to the reality that this was JESUS, -- and He was ALIVE!! This must have been an experience that was both breath-taking and heart-stopping!

But, how were their eyes opened? Was it in the process of breaking the bread and giving it to them that they saw His pierced hands – emblems of the Crucified? They themselves testify that it was in the breaking of the

bread and started on the distant journey again to Jerusalem. Oh what conversation now was exchanged between them as they hurried quickly to meet the others. And as they arrived news of Peter’s meeting with the Lord filled the room where they were gathered.

Is this narrative not a lesson for us all? We must respond in obedience to the spiritual truth the Lord shows us, otherwise it may be months or years before He will take us on to higher levels of enlightenment concerning Himself.

In closing I want to suggest that there were five assurances the first disciples had that made them dynamic witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The assurance that He was really risen from the dead. They saw Him, heard Him, handled Him and ate with Him.

2. The assurance that He was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Said the Lord, “*All authority is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations...*”

3. The assurance that He would always be with them regardless of where they went. “*Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.*”

4. The assurance that at any moment He could return and they would be transformed into His likeness and be received into His presence. “*If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself.*”

5. The assurance that if they died before He returned they would be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Do these five assurances compel us to live and witness for Him today?

## The Lord will not take us into further revelation of Himself until we accept by faith what He has previously shown to us.

meat with them. But again,

### **WHY WERE THEIR EYES OPENED?**

The most direct answer would be that their spiritual problem had been corrected, and by the Lord Himself. As He reviewed Scripture, that Christ must suffer and enter into His glory, their understanding of what happened to Jesus Christ of Nazareth likely became clear, even to the point where they actually realized that Jesus was the Christ of whom this stranger was speaking. It would not be presumptuous to arrive at this conclusion, since their spiritual problem had been corrected, and they were now ready for more revelation, namely, the identity of the one who was sitting at meat with them.

How much time intervened before the blessed revelation of who He was came to them we do not know. But it appears that the event occurred in the process of blessing, breaking and giving the bread to them. And then,—just as if a startling light had been turned

bread that He was known to them (35).

By this event we reach at what this writer believes is the key to these wonderful few hours of being in the presence of the Stranger of Galilee—a personal revelation that He was ALIVE! His whole intent was to dispel their clouds of despair and to make known to them that He was alive and risen from the dead. But now there remains but one question to answer.

### **WHY DID HE VANISH OUT OF THEIR SIGHT ?**

This was all the enlightenment they needed for now, and He vanished because they had good news to spread. It is a well-accepted fact that the Lord only leads one step at a time, and when we take it He gives us something else to do. At the present the rest of the disciples needed comfort and they must go and tell how He had revealed Himself to them.

Within the same hour they got

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**Ron Millson**  
Deacon, Ontario

# The Priesthood of New Testament Believers

## Part 2

In our last study we learned that the truth of the priesthood of believers has been an issue that has come up often in church history. All New Testament believers are a “kingdom of priests.” This is a great privilege and part of our birthright as believers. “But still more: every one of these ‘millionaires of heaven’ is, according to God’s call, a priest of the most High. ‘He (Christ) has made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father.’” (In the Arena of Faith, Eric Sauer, page 134) Both in our personal lives and in the local assembly we are to live and function as priests. It embraces the whole of our lives.

### The Sacrifice of Ourselves.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1, NKJV) As priests we offer ourselves to the Lord in dedication. It is immediately noticed that Paul is using priestly language. He probably had in mind the burnt offering sacrifice in the Old Testament (Lev. 1:1-17; 6:13.) The words “present,” “sacrifice” and “reasonable service” (spiritual service of worship in the NASB) all remind us of priestly responsibilities. In the Old Testament both the priests and the people could offer animal sacrifices as “burnt offerings” which symbolized their total dedication to the Lord. (Lev. 1:1-17) All of the offering, with the exception of the skin, was of-

fered to God (Lev. 1:9, 13; Deut. 33:10; I Sam. 7:9; Ps. 51:19) “The burnt offering symbolized the entire surrender to God of the individual or of the congregation, God’s acceptance thereof, with a view to the renewal and sanctification of the entire man and consecration to a course of life pleasing to God.” (Ungers Bible Dictionary, 1960 edition, page 947)

In view of the mercies of God the believer is encouraged to present his body as a living sacrifice. In contrast to Old Testament priests who offered “dead” animals, the believer-priest should offer a “living” sacrifice. “He (Paul) represents us as a priestly people, who, in responsive gratitude for God’s mercy, offer or present our bodies as living sacrifices.” (The Message of Romans, John Stott, page 321)

Our “body” refers to our whole person. To offer (present) ourselves to the Lord Jesus in light of the Cross means that we give ourselves to Him so that He can be the Lord of our lives ... Fundamentally it means that we choose to submit to His will given to us in the Scriptures. The verb “present” (same word is used

in Romans 6:13) does not refer to repeated acts of offering ourselves but of a single, irrevocable act. We present ourselves to Him once and for all. From that point on we make all of the decisions of life in light of our submission to His Lordship. Life will bring many many circumstances where we must decide if we are going to obey Him. Each decision should be made in light of our initial placing ourselves under His Lordship. If we disobey Him, we sin. Our response is not a continuous re-dedication of ourselves to Him but the confession of our sin and disobedience. (1 Jn. 1:9)

This is not a perfect illustration but suppose a young couple gets married and is making arrangements to move into an apartment. They talk to the owner, read over the lease papers and

“ In contrast to Old Testament priests who offered “dead” animals, the believer-priest should offer a “living” sacrifice.” —John Stott

then sign the lease. One of the clauses of the lease is that they should pay the following month’s rent on the last day of the previous month. When the first month has passed and the rent becomes due on the last day, they make the payment. While this is a legal transaction they pay their rent in light of the original agreement they made

with the owner when they signed the lease. In the same way when we make the Lord Jesus the Lord of our lives, we then make all other subsequent decisions in light of this once-for-all commitment to Him.

This presentation of our bodies is “our reasonable service.” As priests we are to recognize that presenting our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice is an act of worship. In light of His sacrifice for us on the Cross and

this by writing “How strange that the Lord should plead with those whom He has saved from the pit to show gratitude for Him.” As priests we should offer praise (express our gratitude) to Him continually.

These Hebrew believers were encouraged to abandon Judaism (v. 13). They were not to be carried about with various and strange doctrines (v. 9) but recognize what the Lord Jesus accomplished by His death (v. 12). They were

salvation thanksgiving will decline along with it.

I once read that the old Anglo-Saxon word for thanksgiving was “thankfulness.”

This is striking since true thankfulness involves true thinking. Our minds must be engaged in the meditation of the Scriptures. This is like the “stoking of fires” of our thankfulness. Spiritual minded people who are thinking people are usually

**“How strange that the Lord should plead with those whom He has saved from the pit to show gratitude or Him.”**

**—Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse**

out of love for Him, the believer-priest, first of all, dedicates himself to the Lord.

Isaac Watts in his challenging hymn, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” wrote, “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my heart, my life, my all.” This is the language of a New Testament priest!

### **Sacrifice of Praise**

*“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* (Heb. 13:15 NKJV) “Blessed occupation! Hallowed exercise! Heavenly employment! This is not to be an occasional thing. It is not merely at some peculiarly favored moment, when all looks bright and smiling around us. It is not to be merely amid the glow and fervor of some specially powerful public meeting, when the current of worship flows deep, wide, and rapid. No; the word is ‘praise continually.’” (The Mackintosh Treasury, C.H. Mackintosh, page 792) Yet this verse strikes in a strange way. Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse expressed

to understand that the believer has no continuing city here on earth but seeks one to come (v. 14). The New Testament priest does not offer animal sacrifices but sacrifices of praise. Again, this is priestly language. The praise of the believer-priest is viewed as a sacrificial offering. As an Old Testament priest offers a peace offering (Lev. 7:11-12) on the altar, so the believer is to offer his praise to the Lord.

Praise to God is described as a sacrifice namely the “fruit of our lips”. The writer isn’t saying that our lips produce the praise. “Fruit” originates else where, namely in the mind and heart of the believer. The lips are the organ that expresses the fruit of praise. The one leper in Luke 17:11-19 when he saw that he had been healed returned and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at His feet giving Him thanks. In the same way when we think of the Cross and the great salvation God has given us we express our praise in the form of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving involves the memory of the heart. When we lose the wonder of our

thankful people. Thankfulness gives fortitude and keeps the soul from shriveling. It can take the strain out of circumstances and will permit us to see hidden blessings.

In 1860 a passenger ship named Lady Elgin was making its way up the western side of Lake Michigan. On September 8 it floundered off the coast of Evanston, Illinois. A young student at Northwestern College jumped into the water to try and save as many people as he could. He was able to pull seventeen people to safety. The ordeal was so severe on his health that sometime later he died. At the funeral of this brave young man it came to light that not one of the seventeen people whom he had saved on that tragic day returned and said “thank you for saving my life.”

God’s Word to us *“by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name!”*

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**Charles Fizer**  
Dubuque, Iowa



# The T-shirt Message

**A**lthough it was late evening on a June day in 2006, the sun was bright, clear, and high in the sky. Darkness, if it came at all this night, would be after midnight. Our little vessel was working its way up a small bay on the eastern coast of Siberia. Except for the tiny Chugiak village that we could see at the head of the bay, absolute desolation surrounded us; the flanks of barren mountains rising from the sea, plus snow and glaciers. We were working our way through a number of small icebergs in the bay itself.

Vast, and very unusual ice fields had blocked our intended course northward out of the Bering Sea into the Arctic Ocean, via the Bering Strait. We simply could not go farther north at this time. Therefore, we had turned aside to enter this little bay, and to visit the tiny village ahead, which Russian authorities told us had - to their knowledge - never before been visited by a foreign vessel.

With the anchor down, we boarded our outboard inflatables and headed

for shore. The boats took us as close as we could get. Then, it was necessary to go over the side, into the ice water and wade ashore.

The village had no pier, or dock, or even a raft to which we could moor. Smiling, fur garmented, Chugiak natives greeted us. They were eager to show us their village. To us, the prospect would have been utterly unpleasant had we found ourselves destined to spend more than a couple of hours in this desolate little village. There was not a foot of paved sidewalk. No paved street. There were no automobiles, and no road led in or out of the place. We found no store; no place where the locals obtained groceries or dry goods, or anything else that we would consider the essentials of life. The people subsist on whales, walrus, seals, fish; all of which they must hunt and kill simply to stay alive. Moreover, it was noted that, contrary to the American Aleutian villages we had earlier visited, there was absolutely no evidence here of any church building. Nor could we find the slightest indication of the presence of any sort of religion.

When we had explored the village, we gathered back on the beach to re-board our boats to head for the comfort of our ship once again. As the last of us were about to board our inflatables and leave the beach, a Chugiak girl, perhaps in her early teens, darted forward and presented to a female member of our crew two neatly folded T-shirts. They were obviously intended as a gift, and were graciously accepted. As we headed back to the ship, it was discovered that there was something silk-screened on each T-shirt in the Russian language. We did not know what the message said,

until we regained our ship. There, while in the warm and comfortable lounge of our vessel, as we stripped off our boots and heavy gear, one of the Russian officers, who had come aboard, appeared among us. Our crew lady held up a T-shirt and asked him, "Please tell us, what does this say in English?" He stared for a moment at the T-shirt message and then announced: "It says: JESUS LOVES YOU." A stunned silence filled our lounge. We were all surprised; and several obviously moved. Slowly we finished changing our clothes, and headed for our staterooms for the night. The engines restarted, and we heard the anchor raised. Slowly, we sailed away, leaving our Chugiak friends in their isolated little village.

We surely will not meet on this earth the little girl who gave us the T-shirt gift. Hopefully, we will meet her in glory. We went to our warm beds reminded that the heavenly anthem will declare its praises to our Redeemer from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9). We have no idea how Christianity has reached that Chugiak village. Yet, among those simple people, so poor in earthly things, there appears to be some who are rich in Christ. The little girl ministered mightily to our band of largely ungodly visitors. And, she reminded some of us that Christ, and His message, indeed is the triumphant theme that is finding its way into every kindred and tribe and people of all the earth. What a delight it will be when every language barrier is gone, and a united throng gathers in glory, there to express to eternal ages the redeeming love of the Saviour, whose message reaches all.

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**Doug Kazen**  
*Kirkland, Washington*

# The Results of Worship: God Shall be Glorified

Worship gives to God His rightful place of absolute pre-eminence in everything. It presents to Him the praise, honor and glory that is His rightful due, by virtue of what He is and what He has done. It has been well said that: "Man's chief end is to enjoy God and glorify Him for ever." As the Christian concentrates his attention upon the triune God, and the exceeding greatness of the Divine attributes, as displayed in creation, redemption and regeneration; he will be lost in wonder, awe, adoration and worship. Thus he displays the excellencies (or glories) of the One who has made it all possible.

As Robert Hall has finely said: "Were we capable of comprehending the Deity, devotion would not be the sublimest employment to which we can attain. In the contemplation of such a Being, we are in no danger of going beyond our subject: we are conversing with an infinite Object, in the depths of Whose essence and purposes, we are forever lost. This will probably give all the emotions of freshness and astonishment to the raptures of the beatific vision, and add a delightful zest to the devotions of eternity. This will enable the Divine

Being to pour in continually fresh accessions of light; to unfold new views of His character, disclose new parts of His perfections, open new mansions in Himself, in which the mind will find ample room to expatiate. Thus we shall learn, to all eternity that, so far from exhausting His infinite fullness, there will remain infinite recesses of His nature unexplored; scenes in His counsels never brought before the view of His crea-

tures; that we know but 'parts of His ways,' and that, instead of exhausting our theme, we are not even approaching nearer to the comprehension of eternal All."

God's purpose, behind all the display of His attributes, has been revealed. Mark carefully the Divine utterance: "*I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people, I will be glorified*" (Lev. 10:3). There can therefore be no greater occupation for man than the glorification of God, and this is what

worship does. We have already seen that God desires the worship of man, His creature. At infinite cost He has provided a way by which man may be redeemed by Him, accepted before Him, approach to Him, be blessed by Him and become a worshipper of Him. When His blood-redeemed people fall down before Him in worship, the purpose of the triune God is thus fulfilled and He is thereby glorified. The Father will

When His blood-redeemed people fall down before Him in worship, the purpose of the triune God is thus fulfilled and He is thereby glorified.

be glorified in the revelation He has given of Himself in the Son of His love. The Son will be glorified in the work He accomplished by the sacrifice of Himself. The Holy Spirit will be glorified, for it was through Him the written revelation came, and His indwelling presence makes possible the worship of the believer. Thus worship redounds to the glory of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## The Believer Will Be Blessed

No one loses by giving to God, for God will be no man's debtor. He will pour multiplied joy into the heart of the worshipper, in "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over" (Luke 6:38). God delights to give, and reveals Himself as

There is no joy so exquisite as that  
which comes from the contemplation  
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in the Person of His beloved Son.

possessing both the ability and willingness to "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). God is described as "the blessed God." Consequently, all who bless Him in worship are blessed by Him in return. Luke's Gospel concludes in a very beautiful way. After describing the ascension of our Lord we read: "And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:52-53). Notice the close connection between their worship of Christ, and the resultant great joy of their own hearts! The worship of God ever results in the great joy of man.

The worshipping believer is a joyous believer, for joy comes through obedience. Christ said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John. 13:17). Worship enables the believer to know God better, and to appreciate Him more; and this

knowledge causes God to become his "exceeding joy" (Ps. 43:4). He who fulfills God's desire for worship, shall have his own desire fulfilled for joy. There is no joy so exquisite as that which comes from the contemplation of God, as He has revealed Himself in the Person of His beloved Son.

While the believer does not worship God in order to obtain this resultant joy; yet the fact remains that this "joy of the Lord" is but one of the many by-products of worship. Thus the adoration that ascends to God from the believer, to delight God's heart, will be more than recompensed by the blessing descending from God to the believer, which will rejoice his heart. God's definite promise is: "Them that

honor Me, I will honor" (1 Sam. 2:30).

Not only does worship minister joy to the worshipper, but it results in his deep soul-satisfaction. This is the very antithesis of self satisfaction, which is the result of favorable occupation with oneself. This is exemplified in the Pharisee's so-called prayer. (Luke 18:11-12). Worship occupies the soul with God, and the believer who spends time in the presence of God proves the truth of David's statement: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them to drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:8-9). The "broken cisterns" of this earth can never satisfy the one who has experienced the regenerating grace of God. With the hymn writer he sings:

"Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,  
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men;  
From the best bliss that earth imparts,  
We turn, unfilled, to Thee again."

All those who bless God shall be blessed by God. He who from his heart exclaims: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" shall also prove, with David, that: "blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple" (Ps. 103:1; 65:4).

## The Assembly Will Be Edified

Not only does worship glorify God and bring blessing to the worshipper



himself; but a company of believers, who give worship its proper place, is blessed and edified thereby; for it is fulfilling its God-given function. It will be recalled that God, in the tabernacle and, later, in the temple, responded to the worship of His people by filling the place with His glory (Exod. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11). Wherever believers gather together for worship today and, with one heart and voice, join to worship God spiritually, sincerely, and intelligently, they too shall be made to experience what it means for the place to become redolent with the glory of the Lord. There is no spot nearer heaven than when the united worship of an assembly of Christians ascends, like fragrant incense, before the face of God.

We have already seen that this calls for spiritual preparation of the highest order, but such an exercise of heart is not in vain. The divine purpose in constituting each believer a priest will be fulfilled when such, audibly or inaudibly, join as an assembly to present their appreciation to God of all He is and has done. When an assembly of believers thus puts "first things first," the saints are thereby built up in their most holy faith. This, in turn, fits and enables them to fulfil the other purposes God has in mind for His gathered people. An assembly that allows its service for the Lord to crowd out its worship to the Lord, not only comes short of God's pur-

pose for it, but the effectiveness of its service is curtailed thereby. Both the desire and ability for true service flows from spiritual worship. It was after Isaiah had seen the glory of the Lord, and been impressed with the majesty of His presence, that the call and commission for service came, and to which he gladly responded: "*Here am I; send me*" (Isa. 6:8).

### **The Unserved Will Be Reached**

As the worshipping Christian moves amongst his fellow men, he will unconsciously carry with him something of God. We are told that Moses, when he returned from the interview he had with God upon the mount, "*Wist not that his face shone*" (Exod. 34:29). The Bible points out that "*None of us liveth to himself*"

(Rom. 14:7). Each life touches some other life, either for good or evil. Each Christian, by the impact of his personality, makes an impression upon others. Only as God, through worship, impresses the believer with Himself, can the believer impress others with God. It is this unconscious influence that counts for so much in one's contact with the world.

It was when the Lord turned the captivity of His people, and their mouth was "*filled with laughter,*" and their "*tongue with singing,*" that the heathen

were moved to testify: "*The Lord had done great things for them*" (Ps. 126:2). The world is looking for reality, and rightly holds in contempt all religious sham, humbug and pretence. An ostentatious display of sanctimoniousness only awakens its ridicule. The believer, who knows what it means to worship the true and living God, is best fitted to present the gospel to the unsaved, both by commending it in his life and proclaiming it with his lips.

It is not an uncommon thing for the worship of an assembled company of God's people to be used by the Lord to impress unsaved people who happened to be present, of the reality of eternal things, so that they were led to trust the Saviour. Such

## **Both the desire and ability for true service flows from spiritual worship.**

certainly are prepared to fall upon their faces, "*worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth*" (1 Cor. 14:23-25). Thus worship is seen to have far reaching and blessed effects, beginning with God Himself, and flowing out to His own people and, through them, to a world that sits in darkness and the shadow of death.

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**A. P. Gibbs**

## The Mercy-Seat

From every stormy wind that blows,  
From every swelling tide of woes,  
There is a calm, a sure retreat;  
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat.

There is a place where Jesus sheds  
The oil of gladness on our heads.  
A place than all beside more sweet;  
It is the blood-stained mercy-seat.

Ah, whither could we flee for aid,  
When tempted, desolate, dismayed,  
Or how the hosts of hell defeat,  
Had suffering saints no mercy-seat?

Oh, may my hand forget her skill,  
My tongue be silent, cold, and still,  
This bounding heart forget to beat,  
If I forget the mercy-seat!

—Hugh Stowell