

# THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

April – June 2020

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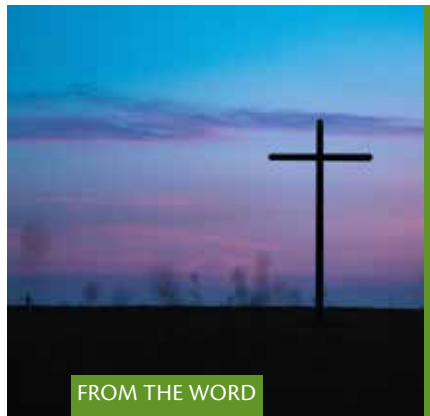


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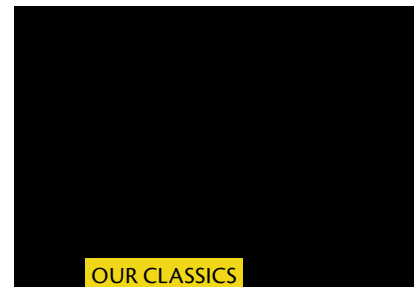
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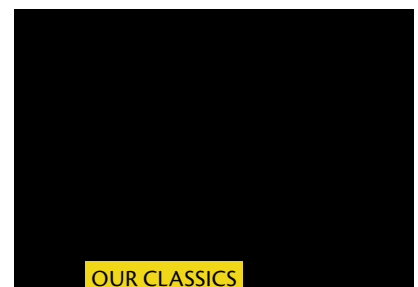
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# VIEWPOINT

By Darrel Lee, Superintendent General



Seldom does anyone independently walk into a church service or experience salvation.

**I**n the 1960s, a Christian mother took her children to Sunday school and church in Roseburg, Oregon. In time, one of those children was saved, and when she became a teen and attended Roseburg High School, she invited my sister to an Apostolic Faith church service. My sister, in turn, invited me, and I was saved.

That mother, her daughter, and my sister each did their part to fulfil the Great Commission. In a similar way, Sylvia Nees (see page XX) relates how she was saved as a result of her mother's conversion, which had been partially the result of her own upbringing. In fact, it is striking that all the authors of the articles in this magazine are the product of personal evangelism—a parent or grandparent, a friend, teacher, or colleague extended an invitation, and the author ended up being saved.

Seldom does anyone independently walk into a church service or experience salvation. Most of us came to God because someone we knew invited us. The spread of the Gospel worked in the same fashion in John chapter 1. John the Baptist pointed his disciple Andrew to Jesus, who in turn witnessed to his brother, Simon Peter. Then Jesus called Philip, who was already acquainted with Andrew and Peter, and Philip found Nathanael, declaring to him that "we have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write . . ." (John 1:45). Though he at first doubted, Nathanael joined the others in forming the foundation of the Early Church.

Jesus' parting instruction to His disciples, to "go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), has come to be known as "The Great Commission." In a personal

THE GREAT COMMISSION BEGINS NEARBY.

sense, each of us can view our commission to evangelize as something great for two reasons. First, our charge is to act on behalf of the Son of God. Second, the eternal souls of men and women, and boys and girls, are at stake. The task itself is also great because it commands that we go into "all the world." Individually, that is physically impossible to

## Photo Caption

accomplish. Collectively, it can be done. When each of us focuses on the people we meet wherever our day carries us, our witness for Christ spans the globe.

Though my role as Superintendent General takes Debbie and me throughout the world, it is the dedicated Christians in each location, rather than the two of us, who are fulfilling the Great Commission in the places we visit. The charge before us is much more personal than The Great Commission; it is a great commission entrusted by God to each of us, to share the good news of salvation wherever we go. We pray this issue of The Apostolic Faith challenges you to do just that.

*From*  
**THE WORD**

*All scripture is given by inspiration  
of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for  
reproof, for correction, for instruction in  
righteousness – 2 Timothy 3:16*

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By Darrel Lee

# LIVING IN ANTICIPATION

## THIS COULD BE THE DAY THAT JESUS RETURNS! ARE YOU READY?

**T**o inform people of a fact is different than reminding them of a fact. To inform is to provide information not previously known; to remind is to relate information previously known but at risk of being forgotten. We heard an example of the difference in our church service today. If you are not familiar with our schedule, our pastor informed you that we will have another service this evening at 6:00 p.m. If you are familiar with our schedule, he reminded you that we have a service tonight at 6:00 p.m.

Those in the Early Church knew Jesus was going to return to this earth—that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night. So the Apostle Peter was reminding the believers of a fact they already knew when he wrote, “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3:14). We know this was a reminder because earlier in this same epistle he had written, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance

of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth” (2 Peter 1:12).

In verse 1 of chapter 3, Peter told the recipients of his epistle that his intention was to “stir up” their pure minds by way of remembrance. He had purposed to do this so they would anticipate the return of Jesus, and live in such a way that they would be ready when He came.

Today, I am reminding you of the same event—that Jesus is coming back to this earth. Even pure minds need to be stirred up and reminded that He could return at any moment. We do not know the day or the hour when that will take place, but we want to be prepared to be raptured if it should happen today.

### THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF CHRIST'S RETURN

Those in the Early Church could look back to the prophets for information regarding the return of Jesus, as inspired men of old had pointed ahead to that event. Peter instructed the recipients of his epistle to “be mindful of the words which were spoken before by

the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior" (2 Peter 3:2).

Today, we too can hearken back to the holy prophets. We think of Enoch who "was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Walking with God was the hallmark of Enoch's life. Although less is said about the fact that he was a preacher of righteousness, Jude, the Lord's brother, wrote that Enoch prophesied, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints" (Jude 1:14). Think of it! Five millenniums ago, Enoch anticipated that the Lord would one day come back with ten thousands of His saints, and he informed those of his generation of that fact.

Isaiah was one prophet who looked ahead to Christ and the time when He will rule this earth. In Isaiah 65:17 we read, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

Peter's audience also knew of Daniel, a prophet who declared, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). There is a day coming when that will occur! We want to be among those who are resurrected to everlasting life.

### THE APOSTLES SPOKE OF CHRIST'S RETURN

We can also look to the Apostles, of whom Peter was one, for information regarding the return of Christ; they too referred to that event. Matthew wrote, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). The Apostle John quoted Jesus' words in John 14:2-3, where we read, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

James, another Apostle and the Lord's brother, wrote, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (James 5:7). He spoke of the husbandman—the farmer or gardener—who plants and reaps. Between planting and reaping, there is a period where patience is needed. In verse 8 we read, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." We are being reminded of that today. If the

believers over two thousand years ago in the time of the Apostles expected Jesus' return imminently, we can be certain we are closer to it in our day!

### SCOFFERS OF THE LAST DAYS

Some individuals in today's society mock the idea of the Lord's return. Peter warned of this, saying, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:3-4). Peter stated that such scoffers were willingly ignorant when they said all things have continued as they were since creation. In fact, all things have not continued the same. Throughout the generations, there have been times when God, who created the order of natural events, has chosen to suspend that order for His own purposes.

One example of this is the flood of Noah's day.



Whatever the scoffers may say, we can be certain, based on the promise of God himself, that one day Jesus will return to this earth.

No such thing had ever occurred before, nor has a flood of that magnitude occurred since. God's mercy was extended during the 120-year period that Noah was building the ark, so souls could prepare to avoid the judgment that was to come. When the flood did occur, God saved eight souls alive, while He sent judgment upon the remainder of the population on earth.

Another example is the manna God sent for the Children of Israel. For almost forty years, God provided manna to sustain His chosen people. That had not happened before. God also sent water from the rock for the Israelites, and gave them a pillar of a cloud by day and a fire by night to guide them during their wanderings in the desert. Those things had not happened before. He caused the sun to stand still during a battle so that Israel could win a military victory. That had not happened before either!

During Jesus' time on earth, He healed the sick; He raised the dead; He calmed the tempest; He took a child's lunch and fed five thousand men plus women and children. All of these occurrences were outside the realm of normal events. After Jesus gave His life on Calvary, He arose from the dead after three days. At the same time, many of the saints who had previously died arose in Jerusalem and appeared unto many witnesses. That had not happened before! So, those who suggest that events in this world keep on going the same as they always have are ignoring the clear record of history. They are willingly ignorant!

### **GOD'S PROMISED RETURN IS SURE**

Whatever the scoffers may say, we can be certain, based on the promise of God himself, that one day Jesus will return to this earth. In Acts 1:11 we read that God's messengers told the disciples present at Jesus' ascension, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." He is coming back! He will return! Those are promises. Peter calls them "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4). They are precious because we know that what God has promised, He will bring to pass.

God has promised in His Word to suspend the natural laws of gravity at the Rapture, and save us from sure judgment to come. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God's delay is not a failure to keep His promises. Just as God in His infinite love and patience gave humanity a 120-year opportunity to turn to Him in the days of Noah, the tarrying of Jesus in our generation gives people the opportunity to get right with God and prepare for His return.

### **ARE YOU READY?**

We are told that in a moment—in the "twinkling of an eye"—the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and those who are right with God will be raptured out of this world (see 1 Corinthians 15:52). As we anticipate that great event, it is important that we live accordingly.

Continuing in 2 Peter 3, we read, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11). The word conversation refers to conduct, or what others see—the way we behave ourselves and our manner of living. Godliness is what God sees—the purity of heart, the piety, the holiness, of the inner man. If godliness truly does exist within, what others see on the outside will reflect that inward condition.

What will you be doing when Jesus returns? Consider this: What were you doing last Friday? That is what you will be doing if Jesus returns on a Friday. How do you spend most Saturdays? That is what you will be doing if Jesus comes back on a Saturday. Very likely, you will be doing what you normally do on whatever day Christ returns.

Jesus himself said, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44). That verse tells us that at the moment of Jesus' return, we will not necessarily be expecting Him to return right then. In Noah's day, when the Flood came, the people were marrying and giving in marriage. In Lot's day, they were building and planting. Life was going on as usual. The same will be true in the day when Jesus returns to this earth.

Some people try to chart out the signs and prophecies and the sequence in order to determine when the events of the last days will transpire. However, we must be careful not to pinpoint a date for the Rapture. Just before Jesus ascended into Heaven, His disciples asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" His answer was, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:6-7). Our responsibility is simply to be ready whenever Jesus returns.

### **LIVING IN ANTICIPATION**

We want to be eager for the return of Jesus; we want to anticipate His coming rather than feeling dread or fear when it comes to mind. We don't need to fear—we can have hope! Though we experience trials and tribulations and anxiety in this life, a better day is coming, and we are looking forward to that day. Jesus' return to this earth is





**We want a  
clear path for  
God's blessing  
to flow from  
where He is to  
where we are.  
If we do our  
part, God will  
do His.**

an event to anticipate! In 2 Peter 3:12 we read, “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.” “Looking for” is to live in expectation. “Hasting unto” is hoping and being eager for it to come to pass.

My wife Debbie and I experienced what it means to live in expectation recently when our five grandchildren, who live in Medford, Oregon, were coming for a visit.

We knew the day they were scheduled to visit, but we did not know what time they would arrive. We did not want to bother my son and daughter-in-law by calling to ask, “Have you left yet?” However, we were eager—we were anticipating seeing our grandkids. We thought perhaps the family would show up early and surprise us; one time they left at 4:00 a.m. and arrived at our house in time for breakfast! So, from 8:00 a.m. on, the two of us were glancing out the window, thinking perhaps they would arrive imminently. However, the hours went by. Finally, in the mid-afternoon when we thought surely they would arrive at any minute, I called my son. He said, “We figure it will be a couple of hours before we leave here.” So we knew that in spite of our eagerness to see those kids, we would have to wait awhile longer.

Do you feel hope when you think of the return of Christ? A feeling of hope is in contrast to what those feel who are willingly ignorant and scoff at the thought of Jesus’ return. There is quietness and peace within the hearts of those who know they are ready for Christ’s Second Coming. We have that hope to strengthen and encourage us.

### “WITHOUT SPOT, AND BLAMELESS”

In 2 Peter 3:13, we read that we look for “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Now let’s review Peter’s reminder



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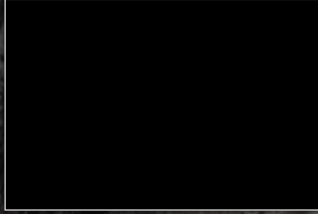
that was referenced earlier: “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” To be diligent is to make an effort. Being a Christian in this wicked world is serious business! It takes courage and grit to take a stand for Christ! While those who do so will be challenged, we are diligent because we want to be “found of

him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

Jesus gave Himself—He died for the Church—so that “He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:26-27). By the grace of God and His saving and sanctifying power, we can meet that standard. When the trumpet of the Lord sounds, those who have prepared themselves and are living the way God intends will be taken out of this world.

Today, we are challenged to be stirred within and to remember what we already know—that those who are prepared for Jesus’ return to earth will leave this world one of these days. Let us purpose to live in such a way that whenever that great event does take place, we will be among those who go to be forever with the Lord. ■

*Darrel Lee is Superintendent General of the Apostolic Faith Church.*



By John Musgrave

# THE WEIGHT OF OUR WORDS

OUR SPEECH IS POWERFUL,  
FOR GOOD OR BAD



Call out

**I**n his epistle, the Apostle James made the observation that “if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (James 3:2). James was the half-brother of our Lord Jesus, and leader of the Jerusalem church. It must have been interesting for him to grow up having Jesus as an older brother. Certainly, James would have learned Gospel truths from the teachings that were being circulated in the Early Church, but Jesus was and is the Son of God. He would have been the perfect role model, the very example of someone who could bridle his tongue. Having been raised together, there must have been things the Lord did or shared that James pondered for the rest of his life.

The importance of controlling one’s tongue seems to be a lesson James learned not just from teachings, but from growing up with the Lord. It

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is apparent that this was a lesson he highly valued; advice concerning it is woven throughout his letter. Controlling our tongues, or having godly speech, is something we should value also. God designed our tongues to be a blessing, and we want all aspects of our lives to glorify Him. James brought out in his letter that the tongue is powerful and not easily tamed, but if we will follow his advice, we will find that with God it is possible.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEECH

In chapter 1 James advised, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak . . .” (verse 19). While growing up, James might have heard an adage with a similar message taught by the rabbis of his day. It stated that everyone is given two ears, but only one tongue, and while the ears are open and visible, the tongue is guarded behind a wall of teeth. The implication, that one should listen twice as much as he speaks, is good advice for our day as well.

When it comes to the Lord and His Word, we want to be swift to hear. There are many similarities between the Sermon on the Mount and James’ epistle, and this is one of them. In His sermon, Jesus taught,

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24). James echoed this sentiment in his letter saying, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (verse 22).

When interacting with others, we want to be slow to speak. Continuing in chapter 1, James said, “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (verse 26). Throughout his letter, James was direct and practical in his approach. Here, he pointed out that if a person represents piety, or as we would say today, professes Christianity, and does not control his speech, his

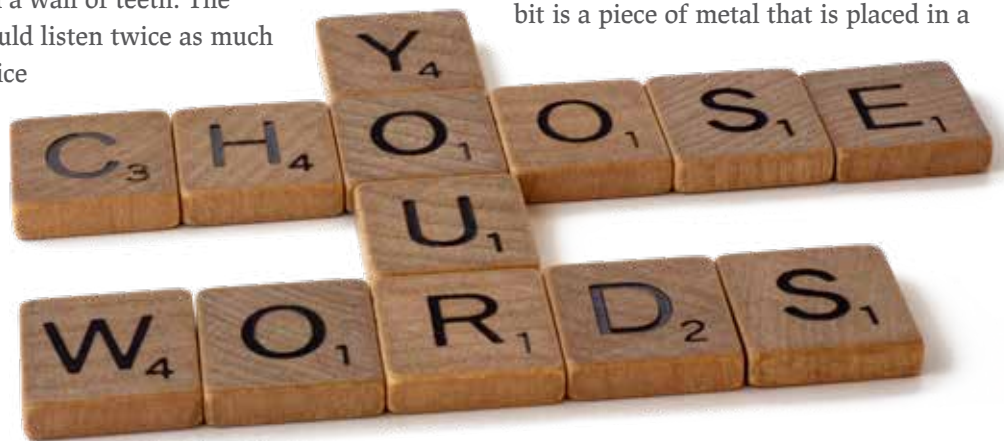
religion is empty and worthless.

In chapter 2, James charged, “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” (verse 12). This was an admonishment that a person’s words or profession of faith should be backed by his or her actions.

### JAMES’ “DISCOURSE ON THE TONGUE”

Within the first two chapters, James established the importance of words and speech, and that the tongue should be governed. In the third chapter, he began what has been referred to as the “Discourse on the Tongue.” Using three illustrations, he demonstrated the power of the tongue.

In the first illustration, James compared the tongue to a horse’s bit. He said, “Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body” (verse 3). A bit is a piece of metal that is placed in a



horse’s mouth and attached to a bridle or headgear. It weighs less than one pound, yet is used to control a very powerful animal that often weighs more than a thousand pounds. Once, while in Romania, I saw a horse wearing a yoke and being used to haul timber. It was a big horse, capable of doing tremendous work, and probably dangerous in some situations, but it was controlled by the small bit in its mouth.

For his second illustration, James compared the tongue to the helm of a large ship. He said, “Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth” (verse 4). Some ocean-going vessels carry thousands of people

and others carry millions of tons of cargo. In comparison to a cargo ship, a rudder is very small. Yet even when a ship is thought to be unsinkable, if it is steered wrong, everything can be lost.

These two illustrations demonstrate the potential for words to have a devastating effect or to be a tremendous blessing. James went on in his third illustration to compare the tongue to a fire. He said in verse 5, “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” A small fire can be useful for light or for warmth, as in the case of a campfire. However, a fire can also get out of control and cause immense destruction. We witnessed that in Oregon a couple of years ago when a teenage boy set off some firecrackers in the Eagle Creek Canyon. By the time the resulting fire was contained, over



Gossip is like that. When gossip finds a conducive environment, it spreads like a fire. We must be careful with our words!

fifty thousand acres of land had been consumed. The devastation can still be seen when driving through the Columbia River Gorge.

James continued this illustration in verse 6 saying, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.” This reminds me of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 where over three hundred people lost their lives and thousands of buildings were destroyed. It is thought that the fire began when a cow kicked over a lantern in a barn. An incident that was seemingly so small—and in this case an accident—quickly grew because it found a conducive environment of dry straw and wood.

Gossip is like that. When gossip finds a conducive environment, it spreads like a fire. We must be careful with our words! We do not want to be that accommodating environment. Proverbs 26:20 informs us, “Where no wood is, there the

fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.” If the people of Chicago could have removed structures from the fire’s path, they might have been able to contain it sooner. In fact, that is what they tried to do, but the wind shifted and sent the fire in a different direction. Those people could do nothing about that, but you and I are not helpless. We have the ability to curtail gossip simply by not listening to it in the first place, or at the very least by not passing it on.

James identified the source of ungodly speech when he said the tongue “is set on fire of hell.” The devil is very good at taking something that seems insignificant, fanning it a little, and getting a good fire going. We don’t want to give him the opportunity to do that. The writer of Proverbs said, “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding” (Proverbs 17:28). Every one of us would like to be considered wise, and in most cases, we can achieve this by remaining silent.

## TAMING THE TONGUE

Following the three illustrations on the power of the tongue, James continued his discourse with, “Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind” (James 3:7). A while ago, my wife and I experienced the truth of this verse when we went to Zambia for an annual camp meeting. We arrived a day early, so were invited to go with a group to the Chaminuka Game Reserve. While there, we had the opportunity to walk a couple of cheetahs. Everyone in our group was a little nervous, especially when we were given instructions like, “Stay behind the animal so it doesn’t think you are challenging it,” and, “Don’t let it sense fear in you.” I was thankful that these animals had been “tamed of mankind.”

It is amazing that man has been able to tame such wild animals, and this makes the next statement by James even more remarkable. He said, “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (verse 8). This is because the tongue expresses what is in the heart. The Lord summed it up this way: “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth

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forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

James agreed that a righteous heart does not bring forth both good and evil speech. He said, “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh” (verses 9-12).

From the time a person is born, sin is in the heart, and therefore what proceeds from the tongue is evil. The prophet Jeremiah said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Thankfully, God knows it! It is true that man cannot tame the tongue, but God can, because He is able to change the heart.

God wants our speech to be a blessing. James brought this out by asking and answering the question, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (verse 13). He then warned, “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (verses 14-16). He was expressing that sheer determination and the wisdom of this world are not enough to tame the tongue.

Jesus told the spiritually blind Pharisees they needed to “cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matthew 23:26). When we have the precious Blood of Jesus applied to our hearts, not only does it cleanse our hearts from sin, but also our speech. When I received salvation on January 4, 1984, I realized in an instant of time that God had delivered me from several habits that had gripped my life, such as alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. However, it was a few days before I noticed that another habit was missing. This was one that had caused me embarrassment and shame at times. It was the habit of using profanity—the bad language, cursing, and

swearing that used to come out of my mouth were gone. When God saved me, He took all of that out of my heart, and so it no longer came out in my speech.

Just as James had identified the source of an evil tongue, he identified the source of godly speech. He said, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (verses 17-18). When we surrender our lives to God, He changes us from the inside out, cleansing our speech as well.

## MAINTAINING GODLY SPEECH

Then we must allow that wisdom that is from above to continue to work in our hearts and our lives. We must determine not to be drawn back into the very things God has delivered us from. The devil will try to kindle a little fire, but if we will resist him and yield ourselves to God, He will help us. Paul admonished the church at Ephesus concerning this saying, “Neither give place to the devil,” and then offering practical advice. He said, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:27, 29). We can encourage ourselves and others by sharing the testimonies of what God has done in our lives. Paul also said to speak “to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). We can gather together with thankful attitudes to worship God, and also spend time at the altar praising Him. If we will do these things, the goodness of God will well up within our hearts and pour forth through our speech.

The tongue is powerful and not easily tamed. However, if we will surrender our lives to God and daily yield to His will, we can be assured that what proceeds from our mouths will glorify Him and bless others. ■

*John Musgrave is the Director of Africa Work for the Apostolic Faith Church, and serves as an associate pastor at the headquarters church in Portland, Oregon.*

# ATONEMENT: THE MEANING AND MESSAGE OF THE CROSS



## THE NECESSITY, PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF WHAT CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED AT CALVARY

*Compiled by the Apostolic Faith Editorial Team*

**T**he atonement of Jesus Christ is a theme that runs throughout the entire Bible—it is at the very heart of God’s redemptive purpose for humanity. In secular usage, the word atonement refers to reparation for a wrong or injury; it is derived from Anglo-Saxon words meaning “making at one.” Atonement infers doing what is necessary to reconcile two alienated parties through making amends or providing compensation for a transgression, wrong, or injury. In effect, it levels out an imbalance created by wrongdoing.

In Christian theology, atonement refers to the substitutionary work of the incarnate Son of God, accomplished through the giving of His life at Calvary in payment for sin. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word kaphar, translated atonement, literally means “to cover; cancel.” Figuratively, it carries the implication of appeasement, pardoning, and reconciling. In the New Testament, the Greek word katallage, is translated as

atonement only in Romans 5:11. However, the same word is translated as reconciliation in numerous other instances. Both the Hebrew and Greek words indicate the reconciliation of man to God made possible by the death of the Perfect Sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Without the covering for sin provided through Jesus’ death, there could be no possibility of reconciliation. Thus, the atonement is fundamental to the Gospel message, as it makes forgiveness for sin possible.

The atonement is a provision of God’s love for humanity. The Apostle John made this vital truth clear in 1 John 4:10, where he wrote, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

### WHY ATONEMENT IS NECESSARY

Sin is what made the atonement necessary. When God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, they enjoyed perfect fellowship

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with Him. However, God made them free moral agents—they had the ability and liberty to choose to obey or disobey Him. God gave them only one prohibition: they were not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In spite of knowing there was a penalty for disobedience (see Genesis 2:17), Adam and Eve chose to defy God’s directive. They ate from the forbidden tree, and as a result of this act of deliberate rebellion, sin entered into their hearts. Since God cannot tolerate sin, they were immediately estranged from Him.

The descendants of Adam and Eve—every person born into this world—inherited the sinful nature of their ancestors. Romans 5:12 states that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Instead of being born with a desire to do right, every individual is born with an innate predisposition toward evil. Thus, sin is not only a series of committed transgressions, but also the inbred condition or nature out of which acts of sin originate.

Sins may be obvious or subtle, flagrant or hidden, but they always separate from God. The prophet Isaiah indicated this in Isaiah 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” Romans 1:18 states, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” “Wrath” in this context does not refer to anger or fury, but to God’s absolute antipathy and holy revulsion toward sin. He cannot tolerate it in any degree, because God’s perfect moral nature can never be stained by complicity with or allowance for unrighteousness.

The immediate result of sin is spiritual death and separation from God, while the end result of sin is death and separation from God for eternity. Paul explained, “For the wages of sin is death”—physical death, spiritual death (separation from God), and eternal death (forever separated from God with no hope of ever experiencing His saving grace). However, he went on to add, “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). In God’s infinite love and mercy, He provided salvation through the propitiatory sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ as a way for humanity to escape sin’s awful consequences and be reconciled to God.

Only a sinless sacrifice could avail, and because Christ was sinless, He could pay the atoning price. Christ willingly gave His life on the Cross, suffering an agonizing death so that we could be saved.

## FOREORDAINED AND UNIVERSAL

The atonement was foreordained by God. We read in Revelation 13:8 that Jesus was slain “from the foundation of the world.” God, in His foreknowledge, was fully aware that Adam and Eve eventually would sin, and made provision for the redemption of fallen humanity. Before the world was created, Christ understood that He would take upon Himself the disobedience and rebellion of humanity, thus providing an atonement for sin.

The atonement of Christ is a universal provision—it is for all people everywhere. Some hold that Jesus died only for a select group of individuals, but the Word of God teaches otherwise. The unlimited nature of Christ’s atonement is evident throughout the New Testament. For example, Paul wrote, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). He asserted that God wills “for all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” and that He “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:4,6). We read in Hebrews 2:9 that Jesus tasted death for every man. Christ died to make atonement available to all, but receiving the benefits of the atonement depends upon each individual’s acceptance or rejection of God’s offer of forgiveness and reconciliation.



## THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

- † **Redemption:** setting free of one who is enslaved
- † **Substitution:** Christ was our substitution
- † **Propitiation:** appeasement for our sins



## THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

The words redemption, substitution, propitiation, and reconciliation illuminate the nature of Christ's atonement.

**Redemption:** The concept of redemption, as explained in Leviticus 25:47-49, has to do with the setting free of one who is enslaved, through the payment of a ransom price or penalty. Jesus Christ, through His death on the Cross, paid the price for all who were "sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). The Apostle Peter states that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-20). In Old Testament times, if a slave preferred to remain a slave, redemption was not forced upon him, and the same is true of the redemption offered by Jesus Christ. Individuals must choose to accept the provision Christ made for deliverance, or pay the penalty for sin.

**Substitution:** The death of Christ was substitutionary in nature. Although the words substitute and substitution do not appear in Scripture, the principle of replacement is clearly seen in what Christ did upon the Cross. There, as our Substitute, He bore the awful judgments of God against sin. Paul explains this in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

**Propitiation:** The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The word propitiation, translated from the Greek word *hilasmos*, expresses the concept of appeasement or reconciliation. A propitiatory sacrifice averts punishment for sin.

In New Testament writings, the word propitiation points to Jesus' atoning sacrifice, as the means by which God's judgment against sin is appeased or placated. God is eternally righteous and holy, so He cannot overlook sin or excuse the guilty—justice demands that a penalty be paid for an offense. The prophet Nahum reminds us that God does not acquit the wicked. A price must be paid for wickedness and sin (see Nahum



## OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES FORESHADOWED CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

...blood is set forth as the means of atonement.



1:3). Christ paid the price for our sins through His death; this conciliation or appeasement made it consistent with God's righteous nature to pardon sinners. The Innocent Blood was shed for the guilty, that we might be pardoned and made free.

**Reconciliation:** The concept of reconciliation is also a theme of the Atonement, and is closely related to propitiation in what it accomplishes. Adam's sin alienated humanity from God, but Jesus' death made reconciliation available and possible for all. Colossians 1:21-22 states, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight."

## OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES FORESHADOWED CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

Throughout the Old Testament, blood is set forth as the means of atonement. Leviticus 17:11 indicates why blood is necessary. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood life that maketh an

## FROM THE WORD

atonement for the soul.” That point is reiterated in New Testament teaching. Hebrews 9:22 states, “And without shedding of blood is no remission.” Since the wages of sin is death and life is in the blood, blood is required in order for the wages of sin to be paid.

This was first demonstrated in the Book of Genesis when God created a covering for Adam and Eve—a covering necessitated by their act of sin—based on the shedding of the blood of innocent animals. Later, God accepted Abel’s blood offering, while Cain’s offering of the fruit of the ground was rejected. Noah offered animal sacrifices when he came out of the ark after the Flood. Abraham was known for the many blood sacrifices he made unto the Lord.

On the eve of the day the Israelites were released from Egyptian bondage, the blood of a lamb without blemish was applied to the door posts and lintels (top of door frame) of their houses (see Exodus 12:3-7). This exempted them from death when the Lord passed through the land that night to smite the Egyptians, slaying the eldest in every Egyptian home. God had told the Israelites, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exodus 12:13). If they had ignored God’s instruction to apply the blood, had ventured out from under the blood that night, or had substituted something for the blood on the doorways of their houses, the firstborn sons in their families would have perished as well. The slaying of the Passover lamb looked ahead to the time when Christ, our Passover Lamb, would be “sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Many of the ceremonies of the Tabernacle worship and commandments of the Levitical Law prefigured the death of Jesus Christ as the Perfect Sacrifice—they were “a shadow of good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1). Daily sacrifices reinforced that God could not tolerate uncleanness or impurity, and gave the Israelites an example of the blood of a pure, undefiled creature as a cleansing agent (see Hebrews 9:19-22). The scapegoat taken into the wilderness on the annual Day of Atonement represented Christ, who took the condemnation and curse of sin upon Himself when He suffered on the Cross outside the city

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## THE ATONEMENT IN OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The Old Testament contains over one hundred distinct prophecies about Jesus, and a number of these deal with His atoning death.

(Hebrews 13:12). Before the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, an offering was presented and killed at the brazen altar, and the blood carefully drained. That blood was then taken into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, where it was applied as directed by God.

## THE ATONEMENT IN OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The Old Testament contains over one hundred distinct prophecies about Jesus, and a number of these deal with His atoning death. For example, verses 14-16 of Psalm 22 describe the Messiah's suffering when He was crucified for the sins of mankind. "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."

Zechariah is another Old Testament prophet who foretold Christ's death. We read in Zechariah 12:10 that in the last days, all the people of Jerusalem "shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." Zechariah 13:6 records, "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

The majority of Old Testament references to Christ's atonement are found in the Book of Isaiah; Chapter 53 especially is known as the great prophecy of the Suffering Servant. Isaiah 53:8-12 prophetically described Christ's death and the provision He made for atonement, stating, "he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall

be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

All the types, shadows, and Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament culminated at Calvary when Christ "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

## ACCESSING THE ATONEMENT

The fact that Jesus died for the sins of humanity does not mean that individuals are no longer separated from God. Salvation is provisional: it is available for all, but each person must come to God personally in order to receive pardon from sin.

The benefits of the atonement are appropriated through faith in the provision made by Christ's death. When repentant sinners come to God acknowledging their need, confessing their sins, and believing that Christ's atoning work at Calvary avails for them, they will experience reconciliation with God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Ephesians 2:8-9 makes the same point, noting, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

## BENEFITS OF THE ATONEMENT

The power of the atoning Blood is not limited to salvation; believers enjoy many other benefits through the Blood of Jesus. These benefits include the following:

**Joy and freedom from guilt.** Paul wrote in Romans 5:11, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." In Romans 8:1 he stated, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Sinners try many ways of soothing their guilty consciences, but the Bible says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth

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and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). There is only one place sinners can go to find relief from guilt. That place is described in the words of an old hymn, “There is a fountain filled with Blood, drawn from Emmanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath its flood, lose all their guilty stains.” The Blood of Jesus Christ can set one free from the bondage of sin and eliminate all condemnation and guilt.

**Sanctification.** The Atonement not only provides for justification and forgiveness of sins, but it also provides for entire sanctification, a second work of grace by which the inbred nature of sin is removed, making the saved individual pure and holy in heart and motive. The writer of Hebrews addressed this, stating, “Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Hebrews 13:12).

The Apostle John pointed to the two-fold remedy for sin provided in the Atonement when he wrote, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin [singular, denoting the sin nature]. If we say that we have no sin [that we were not born with a sin nature], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, [plural, meaning committed sins] he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins [salvation], and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [sanctification]” (1 John 1:7-9). We obtain both forgiveness for committed sins and cleansing for the sin nature through the Atonement.

**Divine healing.** Divine healing is provided by the atonement. We read in Isaiah 53:5 that by His stripes, endured at the Crucifixion, we are healed. Peter reinforced this truth when he said of Christ, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). This includes healing of physical ailments and disease (see Matthew 8:16-17). Whether our need is physical, spiritual, or emotional, we can find the remedy in Jesus’ Blood.

Gives power in prayer. The atoning Blood is of primary importance in intercessory prayer. When we are living in obedience to every known command of God and find ourselves in need of

protection, deliverance, or strength, we have access to God through the Blood of Jesus. We read, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, . . . Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:19,22). In Romans 8:34, Paul stated, “It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

**Enables victorious living.** Christ’s death at Calvary dealt a crushing blow to the enemy of our souls. The writer of Hebrews stated that Christ took on the form of human flesh and blood “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14-15). Through the Blood and the word of our testimonies, Satan is a vanquished enemy, for we read in Revelation 12:11, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Knowing and recounting what God has done for us protects us from Satan’s deceptions.

**Eternal life.** If we believe and receive salvation and remain faithful to God, we will have the joyful privilege of being united with Christ throughout eternity, and the Atonement is the means by which this is possible. One of the most familiar verses in Scripture, John 3:16, states, “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.”

Clearly, any attempt to place a value on the Blood of Christ would be impossible. It is priceless! The Blood is essential and can never be set aside or replaced.

## A QUESTION FOR YOU

Have you availed yourself of the benefits that are available through the atoning work of Christ? Have your sins been forgiven? Do you know what it means to have the Blood of Jesus applied to your heart? If not, you can find deliverance from sin and power to live a life without sin from now to eternity. There truly is wonder-working power in the Blood of Jesus! ■

# WITNESS

*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.*

– 1 Corinthians 15:1

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25 GOD'S MIGHTY DELIVERANCE

28 TURNING BACK AFTER TURNING AWAY

32 EVIDENCE

# WATCH YOUR STEP



By Cheryl Paulson



## WE MAY COME ACROSS SOME BUMPS ON LIFE'S PATHWAY, BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO AVOID TRIPPING OVER THEM.

**F**or years it has been common knowledge in our family that I can stumble over almost anything. Even a little irregularity in the pavement can be sufficient to cause me to become quite a spectacle. For this reason, Jude 24 has been a theme of my prayers both physically and spiritually for a long time. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling . . .”

This was particularly brought to my attention a few months ago when our family visited Israel. In Jerusalem we stayed at a Christian guest facility just inside the Jaffa Gate. Each morning as breakfast was being served, one of the staff members read a passage of Scripture. The first day's text included this same verse, read from a different version which said, “To him who is able to keep you from stumbling . . .”

Be assured, I was quoting that verse in my mind as we went about the city of Jerusalem. We walked miles (literally) over rough, ancient stone sidewalks, up and down stone steps, on rocky paths, and through narrow tunnels. Thankfully, the Lord helped me not to fall.

Almost invariably there is one cause for my stumbling problem—when I walk, I do not lift up my toes quite enough to avoid irregularities in the terrain. Spiritually speaking, the difficulties in our lives can be stumbling blocks or stepping stones. Often the decisive factor is how much we lift our focus toward God and His plan for us.

Consideration of the full context of these verses in Jude can be helpful. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 24-25).

Who is able to keep us from falling? “The only wise God our Saviour.” Not only is He able to keep us from falling, but He is able to present us “faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” He is worthy of our focus.

What are some ways to keep our focus lifted toward Jesus, thereby turning potential stumbling blocks into stepping stones? Here are a few, and you can probably add to the list.

Submit to God and resist the enemy. James 4:7 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” This is a two-part instruction. It is important to be certain that we have submitted our wills, our plans, our desires to God. We want to be fully controlled by Him. Then we can trust Him to give us strength to resist the devil. Resisting shows active determination.

Ask God. We can pray, “What do You want me to learn from this?” At times God allows trials or temptations to teach us a lesson or to develop our faith or patience. It is important to remind ourselves that God sees the big picture—every aspect of every situation. He has a purpose in mind when He allows difficulties to come our way. We want to be receptive to His instruction and quick to learn any necessary lessons.

Sing. A lady in our congregation tells of facing a difficult time in her life, and pouring out her concerns to the Lord. The Spirit spoke to her heart, “Sing!” She said, “I don't want to sing; I don't feel like singing.” Again, the instruction came, “Sing!” She went to her piano and began to sing old hymns. You can guess what happened—God's Spirit came down and touched her soul, lifting her spirits. The stumbling block had become a stepping stone and a valuable lesson for her and the rest of us.

Praise. Singing is one way to praise, but there are other ways as well. Hebrews 13:15 instructs, “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” The word “sacrifice” implies giving when it may be painful. God wants us to thank, worship, and praise Him even in the difficult times. We can always praise Him for His love to us, Jesus' death on the Cross to pay for our redemption, and for His power to help in every situation. However, we can also praise Him for the

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good He has promised to bring from our current challenge.

Check perspective. With a little consideration, we can probably think of numerous people who have turned what seemed to be immense stumbling blocks into stepping stones. Lowell Montgomery, a minister in our organization, is one who comes to my mind. It was my privilege to work with him and he had an amazing perspective. Through many years of his life, he had debilitating physical problems, yet it would have been hard to meet a more positive man. He could see the good in everyone and every situation. One of his favorite words was “wonderful” and he applied it liberally to many circumstances. It was always an encouragement to be around him. He had turned stumbling blocks into stepping stones.

Matthew Henry, a well-known Bible scholar, was robbed, and he made a journal entry which was later adapted into a commonly referenced prayer, “I thank Thee first because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, and not I who robbed.” This is choosing a perspective of thanksgiving.

Quote God’s promises. God and His Word are unchanging and infallible. Reciting His promises and even praying them back to Him can steady us and increase our faith. Of course He remembers His promises, but reminding Him of them will benefit us. When we rehearse how God stood behind His promises in the past, it will help us have courage for the situation that we are currently facing.

Assess your focus. Where we look is important. When I walk, I do a lot of looking at where I’m going as a preventative measure. Spiritually, we need to be “looking at” God, because He knows exactly what is ahead of us. We need to have our focus on Him and His instructions, power, and promises. When challenges come our way, He is not surprised because He has allowed them for some good purpose. We can trust Him to help us not to stumble.

In Biblical history, King Jehoshaphat faced a

challenge when three armies combined together to invade the land of Judah. Although he was afraid, Jehoshaphat took the right steps. He looked to the Lord and proclaimed a fast. In response, the people of Judah gathered to seek God. They began to rehearse what God had done for them in the past and remind Him of His promises. Jehoshaphat said, “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

God heard their prayers and promised deliverance without a battle. When Jehoshaphat and the people heard this, they fell down and worshiped God, even though the invading armies were still marching toward them. Singers were appointed to go before Judah’s army, and when they began to sing and praise, God gave them the victory.

Thank God. Not only should we thank God for what He has already done, we need to thank Him for what He is going to do. In 1 John 5:14-15 we read, “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” We can quote this promise to God for yet unanswered prayers and thank Him that He is going to answer.

All of us may choose either to stumble or to step up in the daily circumstances that face us. We can lift our focus to God and rejoice in His plan for us, or we can stumble along with complaints, anger, or self-pity. Let’s step up! ■

*Cheryl Paulsen is a member of the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, Oregon, and serves as Corporate Secretary for the organization.*



# GOD'S MIGHTY DELIVERANCE

By Mary Fasola

**F**rom an early age, I had a longing for satisfaction within. My parents

introduced my sister and me to a number of Christian denominations, and from that time God gave me a hunger to serve Him.

However, we went from one church to another, never staying at one of them for long because the church leaders did not lead good lives. Though we still did not know what Christianity really was, we somehow understood that there must be more to it than what we saw in those churches.

Our family lived in Delta State, Nigeria, and in the 1980s my sister and I were attending grade school. One of my teachers was a Christian, and something about him seemed different from the other instructors. In fact, he seemed different than all the people I knew. One day when I saw him, a quiet Voice spoke within my heart, "That is the man," and I felt I should find out what church he attended. At the time, I did not recognize that Voice as the Spirit of God leading me. I told my sister about it, but initially neither of us wanted to go talk to the teacher because we worried that he would be the same as the other Christians we had met. My sister was two years younger than me, and she feared that he was too strict and would be upset with us.

However, we finally went. When we asked him what church he attended, his response was, "Who sent you?" He thought we were trying to set him up for trouble! Looking back, I believe he must

**IN PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND EVEN LIFE-THREATENING SITUATIONS, MARY HAS PROVED GOD'S FAITHFULNESS!**

have been going through some persecution at the school because of his faith. He kept questioning us, and my sister became afraid. Standing there, I said a tiny prayer, "God, You know no one sent us," and immediately my teacher's attitude changed. He gave us a tract with the location of an Apostolic Faith Church and we made plans to go there.

The moment I stepped into the church, I heard the same quiet Voice again, "This is where you are to worship." I do not remember who preached or what was said; I only remember the Voice that spoke to me. My sister and I began attending the church from then on. Before long she had received the Christian experiences of salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For some reason, I did not feel compelled to seek those experiences. I was content with just going to church.

When my sister was eighteen years old, one day as she was on her way out of town, she was struck by a car. It was a terrible accident that caused a severe brain injury. She ended up in the intensive care unit

at one of the big teaching hospitals in Nigeria, and I went there to stay with her. I loved her so much and was desperate for God to heal her. I took all the tracts and other church literature that we had to the hospital, and some of the church members also visited her. The teacher who had first told us about the Apostolic Faith came regularly to pray for her as well, but she remained in a critical state.

On one of the teacher's visits, he looked at me and told me that my sister's condition was better than mine because I was not saved. That really struck me because the injury had left her with almost no ability to function. Before leaving, he also opened his Bible and read to me from it. Afterward, I wanted to find the verses he had read, but at that time I still did not know much about the Bible. I had seen that he was reading from somewhere toward the back of the Book, and I prayed to God to please help me find those verses. God

answered my prayer. When I opened the Bible, I found where he had read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). For the first time, I read the Bible and understood it, and that made me so happy. There in the hospital by my sister's bedside, I prayed a simple prayer based on that verse, confessing my sin and asking God to be merciful to me. He made a change in me that was a turning point in my life. My sister passed away shortly after, which was very sad for me, but I came to understand that she had everything she needed from God, and He was ready to take her to Heaven.

The difference in my life after salvation was noticeable. My mother had tried to make me a good person through harsh discipline, but salvation accomplished the change that her punishments could not. I became a blessing instead of a problem to my mother, and it was completely because of what Jesus had done in my heart.

Later on God sanctified me, and then I sought

for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which became a struggle for me. At church, I would always pray somewhere off by myself because I did not like the loud praying that took place at the altars. One Sunday, God gave me a deep hunger for the baptism and the courage to go pray at the altar, but I still went to a corner at the altar where I hoped no one would see or hear me. When a friend noticed me and came to help me pray, I became distracted by her being there. Yet because I had such a hunger to receive the Holy Ghost, I decided to simply focus on my own prayer. That day, God poured out the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and it was powerful. I went home and prayed to God, "What You did in the church, do it

again," and He did! That was a day I will never forget. For over a week I had such joy in my heart that nothing could upset me. I was so happy, and now I love spending time at the altars.



Caption goes here.

## The intruders eventually did find me and ordered me to give them the money. My mind went blank;



Every year, our branch church held a New Year's service where we would spend the entire day in prayer. One year, I spent that day seeking the Lord about who would be my life partner. About three months after that service, a young man showed an interest in me, but I was not sure this was God's will. Prior to that, I had been in communication with Sister Ruth Ashwell at the world headquarters office about marriage, and she often encouraged me, "Take your time and pray." That is what I continued to do for about eight months, until finally God confirmed to me that it was His will. Sanjo and I were soon married, and later God gave us two beautiful children.

God has delivered our family in many situations, and healed us so many times that I could not name them all. I worked at a bank for over ten years, and during that time God's protecting hand was always with me. Once, the federal investigation agency of Nigeria came to our office and arrested all of the staff. However, just before they arrived, the Spirit

of God had urged me, "Leave where you are and go somewhere else." Before I knew it, people were arrested and spending the night in jail, but God had spared me. Another time when police were doing an investigation, my boss said he would not let me testify because he knew I would tell the truth! God used something as simple as that to shield me. He always made a way for me.

In my late twenties, I left my job at the bank and started my own business. My new job involved traveling to Europe and transporting goods to Nigeria. One terrifying night, armed robbers broke into our home yelling, "Where's the Madame of this house?" That day, I was supposed to have brought home almost \$5,000 USD. However, I had given that money to somebody else, so there was nothing for the robbers. My younger brother was in the house and he and my husband helped me to hide under a bed in one of the rooms, but I could hear the burglars terrorizing my family, demanding to know where I was. They shot holes in our bedroom walls; how we escaped those bullets was only by God's divine mercies. They told my son, who was only about three years old, to say goodbye to his dad because they were going to kill him, and he told his dad goodbye. I heard one of the men say, "Let's finish the man," and in agony I cried out, "Jesus!" from under the bed, but my brother was in the room with me and insisted I stay quiet so I would not be found.

The intruders eventually did find me and ordered me to give them the money. My mind went blank; I just looked at them and did nothing. My husband had offered them our cars, but they wanted the money. They told me, "You love money more than your life." Then they forced me outside to search the cars. I do not know how we escaped harm, but somehow God preserved us and eventually the raiders left.

That incident became a serious trial of my faith, because up to that point, since the day God had saved me, I had always experienced His mercy and protection in every part of my life. He was my trust and my confidence. Yet, I knew the thieves had not entered without God's knowledge. I began to question

why God had allowed that incident to happen, and fear and doubt started to set in. It affected me so much that I could not sleep at night. I was worried intruders would come again, and I would stay awake until the time the robbers had left—about 4:00 a.m. I had not experienced fear like that since before I was saved.

I needed God to speak to me and restore peace in my heart, and in His mercy, God did just that. He walked me back through every detail of the day the robbers had come, and showed me how He had protected us. He reminded me how they had taken my husband and said, "Let's finish him off," yet they did not hurt him. They shot their weapons, yet not one person was harmed. When they found me in my hiding spot and then led me out to the car alone,

they could have beaten me up, but they did not even touch me. In fact, God reminded me that before the invasion, He woke me up and urged me to dress properly and to pray. Also, that \$5,000 USD could have been stolen, but by God's grace it was not in the house. God had protected us through the whole ordeal. When the Lord brought all of this to my mind, I realized that yes, He was always with me. My questions and doubts disappeared, and I could thank God for being with us.

Finally I understood that whatever situation we may go through, God will always be with His children.

In 2009, we moved to Calgary, Alberta, Canada. I had never thought of living in the Western world, but God made it happen. He has also helped us start an Apostolic Faith group in that city, and at the end of this summer we will have a celebration of the ten-year anniversary since we began fellowshiping here.

God has done so much for me that I cannot tell it all. Today, I'm happy for all the circumstances He has taken me through. There have been mountains and there have been valleys, but through it all He has been with me. God has given me peace that passes all understanding, a love to be in His presence all the time, and the hope of Heaven someday. My sister is already there, and I pray all of my family will make it there too. ■

*Mary Fasola is the leader of the Apostolic Faith group in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.*



**Caption goes here.**

# TURNING BACK AFTER TURNING AWAY

GOD DIDN'T GIVE ME WHAT  
I DESERVED. HE GAVE ME  
MERCY.



By Jeff Yellot

**M**y heart is grateful for the love and mercy of the Lord to me. As a child growing up, I had a loving and caring mother, although God did not have a proper place in our home. My mother had been carefully taught to serve the Lord with her whole heart, but for a time she departed from the faith of her childhood. I was raised during that time, and no matter how good the home is, when the Lord is not the head, other things that are not good occupy the space. Later in her life, my mother submitted her life to God, and He turned her into a loving and caring Christian mother.

Meanwhile, I had a wonderful Christian grandmother, and when I was at her house, she was faithful to take every opportunity to teach me about the Lord. It seemed as if she often had a number of my cousins at her home, and at night, she would always gather us around while she read the Bible. Then we would all get down on our knees and pray. That gave me a tremendous advantage, going through life, in that I always believed in God, even though I did not know Him in a personal way.

Later, in my teenage years, I actually lived with my grandmother for a while, and again she was faithful to do what she could to speak a word for the Lord here and there. She had a way of bringing Heaven so close as she talked about the goodness and glory of God. Sometimes, after partying all night, I would come home as daylight was dawning. Upon entering the front door, I would stop and listen. Many times, she was on her knees, and I could hear her praying. I'm sure many of those prayers were for me.

That same grandmother gave me some Christian literature, and when I was in my late teens, my job included working at night and often by myself. Interestingly enough, I would read what she had given me. As I did, the Lord began to deal with my heart. One night, as I was reading that literature and considering what it said, I just looked up and with a very simple prayer asked the Lord to make me right with Him. While it was just a simple prayer, it was from my heart. God's Spirit came down in a wonderful and powerful way, and I knew I was washed clean and forgiven of my

sins. Nobody was there with me, but I didn't need anyone to say, "Hey, Jeff, that's the Lord." I just knew.

It was a wonderful experience, and after that I started listening to Christian radio, and because I hadn't really been to church, I began considering different churches to attend. I went to one place

**...as time went on, I slowly began to take my life back, just a little at a time, until I compromised to the point where I didn't feel like I was doing the Lord any favors by calling myself a Christian.**

that sounded good on the radio, but something seemed to be missing. Then I tried coming here to the Apostolic Faith Church, and everything just seemed so right. After the meetings, we were always offered the opportunity to come to the front altar benches and pray. The Lord met me so many times at the altars, and it was so good.

I went along for years like that. By then I had married the woman I loved, and we had three little boys. Yet as time went on, I slowly began to take my life back, just a little at a time, until I compromised to the point where I didn't feel like I was doing the Lord any favors by calling myself a Christian. Then I made the decision to turn and go away from the good life that the Lord had given me. It seems unbelievable now, but it was definitely a trick of the enemy to get me to that point. I know I could have turned to the Lord at that time for help, and He would have straightened it all out, but I didn't. Instead, I went away for over ten years.

Even so, God was always faithful to me. He sent people my way who testified to me of Him. He reminded me every day—I don't think there was one day that passed that I didn't think about

the Lord and truly wish that I was saved. But the further I went, the more impossible getting back to God seemed to become. The sins built up and wove their way around me, and my wife as well.

Sometimes at night I would dream, and during whatever was happening in my dreams, I would cry out to God and ask for help. It would remind

all that way to give me what I deserved; He was calling after my heart in mercy.

At the end of the service, everyone was invited to pray, and I poured my heart out to God. I said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner,” and told Him I was sorry for all my sins. I told Him I was sorry for ever turning away. The Lord came down and

**It was a Friday night, and I went to the service still dressed in my work clothes. I sat and listened to the sermon, just wishing that the minister would stop so I could go forward and pray.**



me of the peace and the witness that was down in my heart when I was saved. But in the morning when I woke up, my life was always the same.

On Sundays, I dropped my boys off at church for Sunday school. Then I began attending the Sunday morning services sometimes, and started reading the Bible a little and secretly praying. God was dealing with me in His wonderful way, bringing me back to where I needed to be, even though I did not realize it at the time.

On March 19, 1999, I came home after work, and some events transpired that the Lord used to bring me to a crossroads—one that I could really see. Again, I was by myself, and He spoke to my heart. He let me know that if I would turn to Him, He would help me. As I thought about that, still I waited. For a moment I thought, If I turn away now—I had gone so far—where will I be if He ever calls me again? And then I thought, Well, this is like an opportunity and an invitation just from the Lord, so I decided to go to church. It was a Friday night, and I went to the service still dressed in my work clothes. I sat and listened to the sermon, just wishing that the minister would stop so I could go forward and pray.

During that service, the enemy of my soul was battling, putting thoughts in my mind like, What if the Lord doesn't actually save you? You've got to this point, what if He won't do it? It was more lies of the enemy, because God did not bring me

put peace in my heart, and I grabbed onto that. Years before I had injured my back, and after I had been kneeling in prayer for a while and then stood up, I thought the Lord had healed it. Although He actually had not healed my back, He had removed the burden of sin. I didn't realize how heavy it was until the Lord took it off. It was wonderful!

The next day I woke up really early, and I knew what had happened to me wasn't a dream. God had restored the relationship that I had broken when I walked away from Him. I didn't deserve it, but I thank God for His mercy and His love.

I'm thankful that God planted me in this church where I could hear the truth. I needed that and still do. Also, I appreciate that we are still offered the opportunity to pray after services. I need that as well. It has been over twenty years since the day God saved me again. Many events have transpired in my life during that time, yet there has never been a problem, there has never been an issue, there has never been a concern that I could not give to God by getting down to pray. I thank the Lord for all of His mercy and love to me. ■

*Jeff Yellott is a member of the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, Oregon, where he is the Operations Manager for the church facilities.*

A photograph of a man with a shaved head, wearing a red shirt, resting his head on his hand. He is looking down at an open Bible on a table in front of him. The background is a blurred church interior with wooden pews and windows.

# WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

**ACKNOWLEDGE** “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” *Romans 3:23*. “God be merciful to me a sinner” *Luke 18:13*.

**CONFESS** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” *1 John 1:9*.

**REPENT** “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” *Luke 13:3*. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” *Acts 3:19*.

**FORSAKE** “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him...for he will abundantly pardon” *Isaiah 55:7*.

**BELIEVE** “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*.

If you are a new Christian, write us and request the tract entitled “Starting Out.”

# EVIDENCE



Let your **LIGHT** so shine  
before men, that they may  
see your **GOOD WORKS**,  
and **GLORIFY** your **FATHER**  
which is in **HEAVEN**.



**Diana Erdmann**  
PORTLAND, OREGON

**M**y husband is getting ready to visit some of our churches in Romania in April, so he has been looking at his family heritage and how they migrated from Europe to America and started attending this church. This has caused me to think about how my family came from Romania to America and then to this church. When I was a child, Brother Bud Johnson was leading a group of workers on visitations, and they came to my mom's adult foster care home where some of the elderly saints were being cared for. He told us about the wonderful Sunday school program at his church, and said a bus would come pick us up and take us there. A Sunday or two later, we were on the bus route, and we continued to attend faithfully. I am so thankful for the workers who drive the Sunday school vans. They allowed me to receive a solid foundation in the Gospel, and later I came back and was saved.

Life is not always easy, and in particular, this has been kind of a rough week. I lost a tooth and had some challenges at work, but God is always there, and He is in control. I am so thankful to be part of this church. It is where my husband and I want to be, where we want our kids to grow up. We love the Lord.





Emily Luka  
PORTLAND, OREGON

**I** am so thankful that I can say I am a Christian, and I don't want that profession to be just words; I want to truly be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Even though I was raised in a good home and had a father who was a minister, somehow those early lessons just went right over my head. I knew there was a God in Heaven watching over us, but I thought He wanted us to be perfect and was just looking to see me mess up.

I tried in my own strength to do right, but as a seventeen-year-old girl, I found myself so confused. At school I tried to do what everybody there wanted me to do, and at home I tried to do what everybody at home wanted me to do. Then I had the opportunity to come to the Apostolic Faith Church. I started to do things that I thought the people here wanted me to do. The real Gospel was lost on me; I didn't understand that I could not do right in my own strength. However, every night when I pillowed my head, I knew something was missing.

God saw my confusion, and He saved me, He sanctified me, and He baptized me with the Holy Ghost and fire, even before I truly and fully understood it all. He has been so good.

Fast forward to when I needed to find a husband, and the Lord was there. Fast forward to when we had our children, and our daughter was so sick with chicken pox on the inside that we didn't know what to do, and the Lord healed her. Fast forward to when we moved to California, to the responsibilities we had in the church, to finding work, to everything throughout our lives, and God has been there.

God has been good, and the Gospel is as good now as it was when I was seventeen.



It feels good to be in church. I have been thinking lately, now that my children are getting older, about how much they appreciate being in church. They love the youth fellowship activities. That is what they live for. Also, camp meeting is their favorite time of the year. They like it even more than Disneyland—I know, because I have asked. Seeing where their hearts are really thrills me.

Another thing that I have been thinking about lately is something that God did for me when I was in my late teens. My childhood was a little different from some, and it was not always so great. I had a Christian mother who was very faithful to teach me the right way from my earliest memories, but my dad was an alcoholic and a drug addict. I had a lot of bitterness toward him for how he treated my mom; I saw things that no kid should ever see. It was getting to the point where I would find myself in rages toward him. Then one Sunday morning in church, I realized I did not want to go through life with those emotions. I didn't pray right then, but went home. My mom and brother were not home from church yet, so I went to my room and knelt down by my bed and prayed. I simply asked God to remove the bad feelings that I had toward my dad, and in an instant He took out all the bitterness and hatred. I have never felt those emotions since.

God has blessed my life. I am thankful for His salvation and I want to make Heaven one day.



Michael McCarville  
PORTLAND, OREGON



**Tom Pricskett**  
PORTLAND, OREGON

**I**went to church pretty much my whole life from the time I was a baby, so I should have been saved many years before I was. I had a praying grandmother and many friends at church. There were a lot of young people in the church back in western New York where I grew up, and we attended weeknight services and youth camps. We had fun, and it was a good thing for me to get in the habit of going to church.

However, I didn't really understand the Gospel; I didn't know that you could pray through to a definite experience. I was a church member, but that didn't change my heart.

I went into the United States Air Force, and eventually made some friends and had good buddies. They kept pushing me to drink saying, "You can take just one drink." I told them, "No, I don't drink." This went on for a very long time. Then one night—it was probably on New Year's Eve—they pushed one more time and I gave in. That was the stupidest thing I could have done, because it led me in a wrong direction.

Even though I was not saved, I was an usher at the chapel on base. During the Sunday morning service, the chaplain would pray, and in one of those services I prayed as well saying, "God, get me out of this rut." Not long after that, I received orders to go to a little island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Johnston Island, about 750 miles from Honolulu, Hawaii. I arrived at the very end of September on a Sunday. That evening, I went to the chapel service like I usually did. There, I met a Christian man from the Apostolic Faith Church in Honolulu who told me about the old-time religion. I heard a Gospel story quite different from what I was familiar with, and it took me a while to catch on.

I ran into this man all the time, so whether going to church or at the chow hall, I heard the Gospel. I had to listen too, because there was nowhere to go. The island is only about six hundred acres in size, so it's a pretty small place to hide. That was good, because that was exactly what I needed. He encouraged me to attend prayer meetings, and I went.

As time went on, I realized that just being a church member would not get me to Heaven. Finally, on a Sunday afternoon—March 16, 1969—while listening to a recording of a testimony of a young girl who spoke of how Jesus loved her,



I realized Jesus loved me. At that moment I surrendered my life to the Lord. It was as if I let go of sin on one hand and took hold of the Lord with the other. I didn't yet know what had happened, but something was different.

The following morning as I headed to my truck, I realized that this was what that Christian man had been talking about for the past several weeks. How thankful I am today that I made the decision to follow Jesus because He first loved me.



**Gayle Warberg**  
PORTLAND, OREGON

**T**he Lord came into my heart seven years ago. In coming to the Lord at my later age, He could have given up on me many, many times, but He did not, and I am so thankful for that. I knelt at the altar and prayed, and instantaneously He entered my heart and forgave my sins. Then He blessed me with sanctification, and last summer with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He has been so good to me that I cannot thank Him enough.

He is a merciful God who is there any time I call on Him. He brought me through some huge financial hurdles recently. I thought I had the perfect plan, but the dear Lord had a much better plan in store for me. It showed me that I need to learn to trust Him and be patient and have faith that He will guide me through all difficulties.

Each and every day God is with me through a million little decisions. It is such a comfort and joy to know that He is there, and I am looking forward to meeting Him in Heaven.

# WORLD REPORT

*And in thy seed shall all the nations of  
the earth be blessed; because thou hast  
obeyed my voice..*

– Genesis 22:18

## SHORT TAKES

Brief updates on our international work

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# TANZANIA SPECIAL MEETINGS YIELD MANY BLESSINGS



A fact about the work in Tanzania

**R**everend Boniface Banda, the Eastern Africa District Superintendent, led a team of eleven from the headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, to hold special meetings at the Tanzania headquarters church in Mbeya from September 29 to October 6.

Due to the local restrictions in that area, the church was not allowed to conduct services in the mornings. However, the two hours allowed in the afternoons by the local authorities proved to be a blessing to many as it increased the hunger to pray in the short time given. During the meetings, three received salvation, five were sanctified, three were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and fourteen were healed. One man testified that he had been backslidden for years, but the Lord restored him.

A second week of special meetings was held November 3-10 at the Kigoma church. In addition to Reverend Boniface attending, Reverend Bayo Adeniran, the Western and Central Africa District Superintendent, and Reverend Onias Gumbo, the Southern Africa District Superintendent, were present.

During the week, it was announced that the Eastern Africa churches would start the process of transitioning to the Sunday school curriculum of Primary Pals, Answer, and Search, which is currently used by the Portland headquarters.

The altar benches were full throughout the week, and God poured out His blessings. Eight received salvation, eight were sanctified, eleven were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and two were healed. In addition, a water baptismal service was held, and nine candidates were baptized in the nearby Tanganyika Lake.

# BULAWAYO HOSTS ZIMBABWE CAMP MEETING

**F**or the first time in fifteen years, the annual Zimbabwe camp meeting was held in Bulawayo on the campground that was once the headquarters location for our Southern Africa district. Ownership of the property had been in legal dispute since 2005, but a July 2018 ruling by the Zimbabwe Supreme Court resolved the matter.

As the campground previously had been the site of many blessings poured out, returning to hold the camp meeting there was a joyous occasion. It took place December 15-29 with representatives coming from branch churches in all of the neighboring countries: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia. The host country of Zimbabwe was also well represented. In addition, all of the country leaders for our Southern Africa district were present, as well as the Superintendent General, Reverend Darrel Lee.

A workers' meeting preceded the camp meeting, and the theme was "Unity"—something that was apparent among the brethren from the time they began to arrive.

The opening service was led by Reverend Onias Gumbo, the Southern Africa District Superintendent, and featured beautiful music and an inspiring message. The sanctuary was filled to capacity, and before the invitation song was over, the altars were filled also.



A fact about the  
work in Zimbabwe





# THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP PASSES IN THE PHILIPPINES

**A** new district superintendent of the Philippines was appointed on Sunday, January 5, during the morning devotional service at the Bagong Sikat headquarters church.

Reverend Bill McKibben, Director of Asia Work, announced that Reverend Zenaida Ruiz was retiring after twenty-five years as the district superintendent. She was honored with flowers and a plaque of appreciation for her service, including as pastor of the headquarters church. She was also surprised with a gift from the Philippine churches: a trip to the Portland headquarters for the March special meetings, while visiting her son and daughter-in-law who reside in Portland.

In the same meeting, a letter was read from the Superintendent General, Reverend Darrel Lee, thanking Reverend Ruiz for her service and outlining the model for appointing new leaders in our churches. The letter also stated that the Philippine Board of Directors were in unanimous agreement with the Portland headquarters that the mantle of leadership had fallen on Reverend Joseph Ruiz. As the name was read, the congregation of about four hundred erupted in spontaneous applause, showing their support for God's choice. The board members then gathered around Reverend Joseph, laying hands on him and praying over him.

Reverend Joseph Ruiz is married with four children, and has been serving as pastor of the Bagong Sikat church since August. He received salvation in 1982, and began preaching in 2006. For many years he served as a circuit preacher, delivering seven sermons in five of our churches nearly every weekend. His full testimony can be read in the January 2019 edition of *The Apostolic Faith* magazine.

# SUPERINTENDENT ORDAINED AND 26 BAPTIZED AT INDIA PASTOR CONFERENCE

**O**ur churches in the Maharashtra Province of India held a three-day pastor and spouse conference in Aurangabad on February 12-14, with 125 in attendance.

Each day of the conference began with a song and then prayer. Morning and afternoon sessions were held with such topics as "A Brief History of the Apostolic Faith," "Bible Doctrines and Our Mission Statement," "The Importance of Youth Work and Sunday School," and "How to Prepare and Deliver Effective Sermons."

Following the afternoon session on Thursday, Reverend Surya Gajbhiv was ordained and formally installed as the Maharashtra District Superintendent. According to the Scriptural example, several of the other ministers gathered around to lay hands on him and pray. As the prayer ended, everyone stood to their feet with lively applause in support of his leadership.

On the last day of the conference, a baptismal service was held at a nearby canal for twenty-six converts who had received salvation in the last few months.





# OUR CLASSICS

*In the 1960s, Gospel workers traveled on the "Wings of the Morning" aircraft to support and encourage branch churches across the United States. Della Edmonds (see page 42) is on the far right.*

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# MOTHER LED THE WAY

WHEN MY MOTHER WALKED UP THE SIDEWALK THAT DAY, I KNEW SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT. AND THE EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED PROVED IT.

By Sylvia Nees

*Originally published in the October 2002 edition of our magazine.*

**T**he story of Jesus changed the whole course of my life.

My mother was brought up in a religious home, and it was more strict than she liked. Thinking the world looked bright, she left her home and married my father, who was a fiddle player and could play all night without repeating a number. With Mother accompanying him on the piano, they played at the hometown amusements.

On Saturday evenings we went to the dance halls where my parents provided the entertainment for most of the night. When I was tired, they put me to sleep behind the piano. In the wee hours of the morning, we

went home. Father was usually in a drunken condition, and jealous if Mother had danced with anyone. Finally she said she wouldn't go again, and Dad became so angry that I was afraid of him.

Since Father was a building contractor by trade, his work often took him away from home for weeks at a time. His absences made him like

**Soon we saw Mother coming up the sidewalk. What a change! The sad look was gone and her face beamed. She said Jesus had come into her heart, and I saw the difference it made.**



a stranger to me, and I hated to see him come home. He lost work because of his drinking and gambling, which often caused us to be without the necessities of life. Eventually he and my mother divorced.

A while later he came back and wanted to start a new life with Mother. She agreed to try once more. He won my love by promising me a new pair of patent leather shoes. We were so poor that it didn't take much to win me over. My parents married the second time, and because of an economic boom in Port Angeles, Washington, we moved there.

Mother asked if she could go to church on Easter Sunday that year, and Dad gave his consent. My sister and I wanted to watch an Easter parade so we stayed outside while Mother went into the Apostolic Faith Church. After the parade was over, we decided to go on home.

Soon we saw Mother coming up the sidewalk. What a change! The sad look was gone and her face beamed. She said Jesus had come into her heart, and I saw the difference it made. From then on she sang hymns and prayed every day. She prayed for me, and God healed me of an affliction I'd had since I was a small child.

My mother's good life convicted me, making me feel mean and miserable. I truly wanted to be happy like my mother. At church I heard young people tell of how thrilled they were with the

Gospel. God had saved their souls, and they were jubilant in their Christian lives. Finally, one day at the close of a service I knelt to pray, asking Jesus to come into my heart. Such a calm came over me. My sins were forgiven.

From then on, I was a different person. The hateful feeling in my heart was completely gone.

I did not tell lies anymore. At school the next day, my friends noticed the difference.

For a few months our family was happy. However, Dad soon started objecting to our church attendance. He moved us to Seattle, Washington, where he worked for his brother.

However, Mother kept serving the Lord. In the evenings when my father was gone, my mother, sister, and I gathered around the piano and sang. My mother loved the songs "Angels, Get My Mansion Ready" and "The Pearly White City." Oh, we felt God so near!

Then Dad left us again. Mother took us back to Port Angeles, where the church people had treated us so kindly. They let us live in two rooms



**Caption**

in the back of the church building. Mother did housework to support us, but she had diabetes and weighed only ninety-eight pounds. My sister quit school and worked in a laundry to help out. After Mother died, my sister and I continued to live in the church building.

When I was thirteen, my sister and I started

singing duets in the church services. She also played a small saxophone, and I played a banjo-



### ***Caption***

mandolin. When the orchestra grew larger, I wanted a violin. My uncle was the Chief of Police in Seattle. Although I did not know him very well, I wrote asking for a violin. I waited a long time for an answer, and just about gave up. Then on my fourteenth birthday, a package came from Sears and Roebuck. It contained a violin, bow, and case. What a thrill!

That same day I took a job in a bakery and could help my sister with our finances. What a birthday present! I was truly happy. Soon I was playing my violin in the church orchestra. It was such a privilege to sing and play for the Lord.

Learning about the experience of sanctification, I consecrated deeper to the Lord, offering Him my life in service. What waves of blessing flowed over my soul when the Lord answered my prayer! Then I had a deep hunger for the baptism of the Holy Ghost—power for service. It was wonderful when the Lord gave me that experience too.

Eventually, my sister and I worked together in a department store. We had the joy of seeing one of our employers and his family saved and serving the Lord. They are in Heaven now.

After some years, my sister and I were asked to move to Portland, Oregon, to assist in the music at the Apostolic Faith headquarters church. God provided us both with good jobs, which made it possible for me to purchase a better violin, and to take both voice and violin lessons.

I worked as a saleslady in a downtown Portland department store. One day, standing by my supervisor, I looked up and saw a man who looked like my father. When I told my supervisor, she said, "Go ask him." I went over and said, "Pardon me. Is your name Mr. Comstock?" He said, "What do you want to know for?" I said, "Is it Mr. Ona G. Comstock?" He said, "It used to be." I said, "I'm Sylvia." He looked at me and said, "Oh no. I have a picture of her." He pulled the picture out of his pocket, and I said, "That's me." He turned white as a sheet, but still could not believe me. So I told him to go up the street to the store where my sister worked. He did go see my sister, and then came back to see me again.

Several times Dad came to church. When we had open air meetings on the streets and invited people to services, he often showed up. He knew where we were. I never heard what became of him, but I know he heard the story of Jesus, just as I did. I am sure God talked to him.

Many years have come and gone since then. I wouldn't exchange the privileges I've had in helping spread the Gospel for anything in the world. God has never failed. Three times I have been widowed. In sickness, He has helped me. He's always there when I need Him.

I have a bright future. Every day I'm looking for Jesus' coming. My greatest desire is to be ready to meet Him. ■

*Sylvia Nees had a beautiful voice and sang for the Lord in church services and a variety of outreach efforts. She was a member of the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, Oregon, until her death on April 16, 2001.*





# SIX REASONS WHY PEOPLE NEED NOT GO TO HELL

THOSE WHO REJECT GOD WILL BE SEPARATED FROM HIM ETERNALLY, BUT  
THAT DOESN'T NEED TO BE THE CASE FOR YOU!

By Leon Dicks

**M**y thoughts are often directed to those who are lost, that they will see the beauty of the Gospel and want to share in it. The Lord has made marvelous plans for mankind's eternal welfare. The Bible teaches that every soul will spend eternity either in Heaven or Hell. Today, I want to give you six reasons why people need not go to Hell.

## **1. GOD DOESN'T WANT ANYONE TO GO TO HELL.**

The first reason is that it is not God's will for people to go there. Luke 15 tells the parable of the lost sheep. The shepherd had ninety-nine sheep, but he left them and went out into the night to search for the one that was lost until he found it. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:5-7). Isn't that wonderful! Think of God's compassion for one lost soul!

God so longs to save people from Hell that He sends the Holy Ghost to convict and convince the sinner of the reality of the Gospel. Jesus said of the Holy Ghost: "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). His work is to woo the ungodly to decide for Christ. The Spirit works through God's Word, anointed preaching, singing, and witnessing, and in many other ways.

Many times I have seen sinners come into a service, thinking they were coming into an ordinary meeting; but when the Holy Ghost began dealing with them, they stepped toward the altar. Once, a woman was on her way to a theater one Sunday, but it had not yet opened so to pass some time she came into the church. She heard a few testimonies and told the Lord, "Oh God, if these people are sanctified and living holy lives, I want to be holy." When the altar call was given, she started forward, but the devil said, "If you give your heart to the Lord, your husband will leave you. He doesn't want a Christian wife." She sat

down, but conviction continued to grip her. She started forward again and saw some friends she thought would laugh at her if she gave her heart to the Lord. Again she sat down. But the Holy Ghost was doing His work, and continued to plead with her. From Sunday until Thursday she hardly ate or slept. Then, in her kitchen the Lord spoke to her, again urging her to go to church and the altar. She obeyed, and was saved. Within a year, she went to be with the Lord. God did not want her to go to Hell.

## **2. SALVATION IS AVAILABLE TO ALL.**

Reason number two is that Jesus died on the Cross to redeem humanity from sin. He understood the horrors of Hell and didn't want you to go there. Before the world was even in existence, He agreed to be the sacrifice for your sin. We read in 1 Peter 1:18-20, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." Through the love of God, this sacrifice was made available to all. "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). If you are a "whosoever," you can join this band that is on its way to Heaven.

## **3. SOME ARE ALREADY IN HEAVEN.**

Another reason not to go to Hell is that others have already made the goal of Heaven, and they are waiting to welcome you there. Hebrews 12:1 says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." You can be encouraged to follow the example of those who have shown how to overcome the trials and temptations of this life. Your old father or mother, or the Gospel leaders who got you started in the faith, finished the course, and one day there will be a grand reunion with them in Heaven.

4. You can cause Heaven to rejoice.

Jesus said: "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). Just think, every person can make Heaven rejoice by coming to God in repentance! What a far better outcome than to cause God sorrow by rejecting His plan of salvation.

## 5. NO ONE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR ARRIVAL IN HELL.

Another good reason not to go to Hell is that the people there do not want you to join them. Sometimes people will make a joke and say, "I'm not worried; if I go to Hell, I'll have lots of company." It is true that there will be many in Hell, but there will be no joy in fellowship.

Listen to this plea of a man who went to Hell: "In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame . . . Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:23-28). There was no rejoicing, no hope of a reunion. He didn't want his brothers there. He wanted Lazarus to go testify to his people so they wouldn't be lost.

Some people—even Christians—have a hard time comprehending the reality of Hell. Many people like to think of Heaven as eternal, but they won't believe that Hell is just as long. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches that Hell will last forever. Mark 9:43-44 records Jesus' words, "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." That is what Jesus said about Hell. It is more than just the grave, as some people think. It is a place of eternal punishment—never ending! It is a place no one wishes to see you in.

## 6. HELL WAS CREATED FOR SATAN, NOT YOU.

My final reason is that Hell was not prepared for you. Jesus said the everlasting fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). The Book of Revelation foretells how Satan will one day be banished there. Revelation 20:10 reads, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Some may think they deserve Hell—that they have been so bad that the love of God cannot reach them. But "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). Jesus will do anything He can to help you avoid that place. He said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Another time He said: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). God doesn't want anyone in Hell. He is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

You are destined for eternity in Heaven

Jesus has gone to prepare a wonderful place for those who love Him. He wants you in Heaven with Him, and He paved the way for every lost sinner to make his peace with God. He shed His Blood to pay the debt of mankind, and there is enough for all to come.

You don't have to worry about how it can be done. Just come in repentance, and believe God's promise, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). Now, Jesus bids you come. ■

*Leon Dicks was saved in Brooklyn, New York, in 1949, and served as a pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in that city from 1958 to 1989. He was also the District Superintendent of the Southern and Eastern United States work from 1985 until his death on March 17, 1989.*

# A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

WE BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE, AND ENDORSE ALL THE TEACHINGS CONTAINED IN IT. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF OUR BASIC DOCTRINES.

**THE DIVINE TRINITY** consists of three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, perfectly united as one. *Matthew 3:16-17; 1 John 5:7.*

**REPENTANCE** is a godly sorrow for and a renouncing of all sin. *Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 4:17.*

**JUSTIFICATION** (or salvation) is the act of God's grace through which we receive forgiveness for sins and stand before God as though we had never sinned. *Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

**ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION**, the act of God's grace whereby we are made holy, is the second definite work and is subsequent to justification. *John 17:15-21; Hebrews 13:12.*

**THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST** is the endowment of power upon the sanctified life, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. *John 14:16-17,26; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4.*

**DIVINE HEALING** of sickness is provided through the atonement. *James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24.*

**THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS** will be as literal and visible as His going away (*Acts 1:9-11*) and will consist of two appearances. First, He comes to catch away His waiting Bride. *Matthew 24:40-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.* Second, He comes to execute judgment upon the ungodly. *2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14-15.*

**THE TRIBULATION** will occur between Christ's coming for His Bride and His return in judgment. *Isaiah 26:20-21; Revelation 9 and 16.*

**CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN** is the 1000 years of peaceful reign by Jesus on earth. *Isaiah 11 and 35; Revelation 20:1-6.*

**THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT** is the final judgment when all the wicked dead will stand before God. *Revelation 20:11-15.*

**THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH** will replace the present heaven and earth, which will be destroyed after the Great White Throne Judgment. *2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-3.*

**ETERNAL HEAVEN AND ETERNAL HELL** are literal places of final and eternal destiny. *Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:22-28.*

**MARRIAGE** is a covenant between one man and one woman that is binding before God for life. Neither person has a right to marry again while the first companion lives. *Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:1-3.*

**RESTITUTION** is necessary, wherein wrongs against others are righted. *Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24.*

**WATER BAPTISM** is by one immersion "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *Matthew 3:16; 28:19.*

**THE LORD'S SUPPER** is an institution ordained by Jesus so that we might remember His death until He returns. *Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23,26.*

**FOOT WASHING** is practiced according to the example and commandment Jesus gave. *John 13:14-15.*

You may obtain additional information about these doctrines and learn about our other publications in both English and foreign languages by writing to the Apostolic Faith Church at 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. or visiting our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org). Before these magazines are sent out, they are always prayed over for the healing of the sick and the salvation of souls.

The Apostolic Faith (ISSN #2475-9988-print; ISSN #2572-4401-online) is published quarterly by the Apostolic Faith Church, 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. and is available free of charge. Periodicals postage is paid at Portland, Oregon. Postmaster: please send address changes to The Apostolic Faith Church, 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A.

*Jesus*