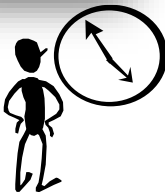


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
(every other week)	

Wednesday:

Bible Study	6:30 p. m.
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One Last Verse

By Matthew W. Bassford

[Brother Bassford crossed the finish line on October 25, 2023]

Throughout my life, there was a series of verses that I identified as “my verse.” These were verses that, in some way, exemplified me or what I needed to become. I kept II Timothy 2:24-25 on my bathroom mirror for years because I needed the reminder. Later, I took great encouragement from the promise of Matthew 5:6.

Now that my life is over, one last verse has become mine, though really it is not my verse but yours. It is Hebrews 13:7. My work under the sun has ceased. I no longer speak the word of God to you or anyone else.

However, the Hebrews writer, himself long since departed, imposes three obligations on you. The first is to remember. This is not a matter of sentimentality. Rather, just as there were important spiritual lessons in the word I spoke, so too there are important spiritual lessons in the word I lived.

Do not forget them! Otherwise, you will be like the forgetful hearer of James 1:23-24. If you do not carry the memory of my life within you, you will gain no lasting benefit from having known me.

Second, you must carefully observe my conduct. You must carefully consider it. In this, you must use discernment, just as you use discernment in evaluating any of the flawed heroes of faith in Scripture. At times, you have seen me behave foolishly and even wickedly. My failings certainly are not worthy of imitation!

Despite these stumbles, though, you know that I was a man who walked by faith. Now that my course is finished, consider the outcome of that walk. My path was not always easy. I battled chronic depression throughout the time that you knew me, and my last year at Jackson Heights was dominated by a devastating terminal diagnosis.

Ask yourselves, then, if it mattered to me that I lived by faith. What would my life have been like if I had been an atheist to whom these things happened? For that matter, what would have become of me if I had been a weak, uncommitted Christian?

You know the answer. Indeed, many of you have known the answer since you were small children. Those who wisely build on the rock can withstand the flood, but those who build on sand are swept away.

I was not swept away. ALS invariably destroys unbelievers, but I was not destroyed. Rather, my faith grew stronger throughout my trials, and I finished my race with joy and hope. The presence of God in my life made all the difference.

Finally, the Hebrews writer urges you to imitate my faith. Don't imitate my imperfections; imitate my loyalty to Christ. It is nearly certain that at some point in your life, you will face trials that are beyond your strength too. It is absolutely certain that your life will end as mine has. The flood is coming for you too, and only the Lord can keep you safe. Build on Him, and you will never regret it.

I believe that the spirits of the departed remain aware of earthly events. That is why we are encouraged to run our race before a great cloud of witnesses. If so, then right now I am cheering for every one of you! Run with endurance. Lay hold of the prize. When you cross the finish line, my beloved, I'll be waiting to welcome you in.

“That is the Man That Died for Me”

By Calvin Miller

Let me tell you a true story about a young fireman. In the midst of a blaze, he stepped forward and volunteered to rescue a baby, even though the chief had said that the flames were too strong and the building too vulnerable. As the fireman got that little girl out the window into the rescue net, the building collapsed, and he ceased in the flames.

Twenty years later, at a graveside with a statue of a fireman, stood a young woman sobbing. A man stopped and asked politely, “Was that your father or brother?”

“No,” she replied. “That is the man who died for me.”

Christ did something for humanity that no one else could do. While we struggle with the finality of death, we should be more concerned about the finality of eternity. Everyone is going somewhere...Christ has provided the way to live eternally with Him.

In Jesus we have the yearning God in pursuit of people. In Christ we find that God is not content to let people live and die beyond His circle of love. Saul of Tarsus was overwhelmed in the Syrian Desert by the Savior whose religion he had set out to destroy. The story may be apocryphal, but when Karl Barth was asked what was the most profound theological truth he knew, he replied. “Jesus love me, this I know.”

(—from *The Book of Jesus*—)

Israel and the Promised Land

By Roger L. Leonard

Because the Jews in the time of Jesus rejected the Old Testament prophets who foretold of Him and subsequently rejected Him as the Messiah, He said to them: *"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"* (Matthew 23:37-39).

Israel ended as a nation of God's people when the Lord Jesus Christ ascended back to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. Note Luke's record regarding the apostles before the Sanhedrin Jews: *"When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, saying, 'We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.'" But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him"* (Acts 5:27-32).

Paul wrote: *"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God"* (Galatians 6:15-16).

God has nothing in the Palestinian Arabs or Israeli Jews today. Today, the church of Jesus Christ, which began on Pentecost in AD 33, is "the Israel of God".

Notice also Galatians 3:26-29: *"For you are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."*

The ultimate promise the Lord made to Abraham was spiritual. God did promise the land of Canaan to the children of Israel. (See Joshua 1:1-9.) That encompassed the whole of the land of promise. Joshua later said that every word God had spoken to the children of Israel had been "fulfilled" (Joshua 24:14-16). Note also I Kings 4:21: *"Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life."*

But the Lord also warned them earlier that if they rebelled against Him and forgot Him, they would lose the land. Note Deuteronomy 30:15-20: *"See, I have set before*

you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

The Messianic prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 66:7-8, wrote about the blessings in the New Zion, which is the Church/Christian age. The fulfillment of this is spiritual, not physical, and culminated in Jesus Christ and His spiritual Kingdom. Things become complicated when we view Palestine and the land, the nation of Israel, and the kingdom as physical, and something to come in the distant future. Israel had the land but lost it due to their rebellion. However, it never was intended to be permanent. Just as the nation, physically speaking, was never intended to be permanent physically speaking. God's seed promise to Abraham and his descendants was ultimately and completely fulfilled in Christ. Paul wrote in Galatians 3:16: "*Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is, Christ.*" This "boy" or "son" of Isaiah 66:8 is the Christ.

In Hebrews 11:13-16, we read: "*All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*"

Note Hebrews 12:22-24: "*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*"

There is not even a hint in the New Covenant of Christ that God will restore the nation of Israel physically or restore the Jews to the land of Canaan and Jerusalem.

Why I Believe We Should Still Marry and Bring Children into the World

By Terry Wane Benton

Is having children too risky? Seeing that the majority will end up lost, I have seen a number of faithful Christians lose their children to the world.

ANSWER :

That is a pretty defeatist way of viewing things. When was it not risky? I've seen people, who go at it already prepared to be defeated, get what they prepared for-- defeat. But it seems that the Christian ought to feel more confident that "*greater is He who is in us, than he that is in the world*" (I John 4:4).

Do we let the darkness that is in the world totally drown out the light that should be in us? I can't see that the darkness in the world should be allowed to be greater than the glorious and marvelous light that is in us. (See II Corinthians 4:4-16; I Peter 2:8-9).

Shouldn't we at least, of all people, believe that since God is seeking godly offspring, with His help, we are able to work with Him to have them, enjoy them, and share our internal light with them? (Malachi 2:15). Are we not in a great position to give godly offspring?

Where was this pessimism that Paul had in his world that was probably worse in many ways than ours? What was in him that gave him such a positive outlook? I wonder if God is disappointed in us for not learning what Paul knew when we could read and learn all he knew (Ephesians 3:3-5).

Of all the people in the world, our light inside should be something we want to share, and little souls are such that we can help mold into lights in this dark world. The world needs more lights, not less, and we need to share the "marvelous light" with little souls who are open to learning it. There is a risk that some souls will rebel and go into darkness despite our best efforts, but giving them a chance to know Jesus and know the way to heaven is more than worth the risk that they could still resist the Spirit and be lost.

Each soul is precious and is accountable for himself. Not giving a soul a chance to see the light of Jesus Christ, enjoy that marvelous light in this dark world, and forever live with the brightness of His glory, is a dark form of pessimism that should concern us more than the possibility of having a child who goes astray from the light you try hard to share with him.

So technically Moses was the first man to download files from the cloud using a tablet.

