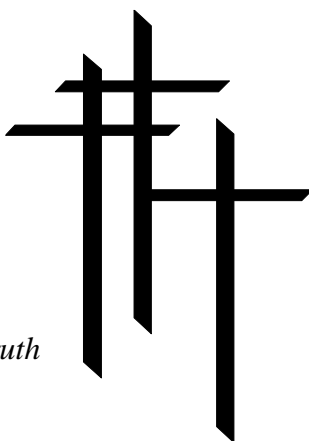


Timely Messenger

*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*



Volume 64 No. 12

December 2004

GLORY IN HUMILIATION

By Charles Wages

“Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands.” (Heb. 2:7)

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Heb. 2:9)

Usually, when we think of the birth of

our Lord Jesus Christ, we think of the place He was born (Bethlehem), the persons associated with His birth (Mary, Joseph, shepherds, etc.), and the portions bestowed upon Him (gold, frankincense, and myrrh). However, of greater importance is the person who was born, the purpose for which He was born, and the position He took by coming from glory to earth.

Our thoughts in this lesson will be principally concerned with the position He voluntarily occupied by entering our world, and

then the position He now occupies in the glory.

We are told in the Scripture above, that He “was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” In other words, He was for a short time on equality with man (Phil. 2:6-8) and under the angels. This, possibly, led many false teachers to imply that He was only a lower order of the angels, and therefore led to the worshipping of angels. The apostle Paul referred to this in warning the Colossians,

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind.” (Col. 2:18)

The wonderful truth of the matter is that He triumphed over them (Col. 2:15) in His death on the cross thereby “openly” putting them in subjection. No doubt, Christ’s death and resurrection proved that He was more powerful than the angelic beings He cre-

ated. However, the false teachers in Paul's day and ours have substituted more and more ritualism, worshipping of departed saints, superior sanctity of some humans, and every form of asceticism. Also, in our most recent times, the intense, and over-occupation with beings of other planets, talking to the dead, and religious incarnations has become popular.

We must fully realize that He took an earthly position (lower than angels) for only a short time. He completely fulfilled God's will and God's purpose by suffering for our sin. Because of that completed work, He has been "highly exalted" into a position in glory.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:9)

Once, He was "lower" than the angels, now He is "above" every name or authority. When we compare Colossians 1:15-19, we see that He is not only "above" all, but that He is "before"

all, and that He has the pre-eminence!

His position now is as the "head of the church, which is His body."

"Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:20-23)

When we fully realize that He was born in this world, made a little lower than the angels for a time, suffered the reproaches of men, was crowned with thorns, and crucified on Calvary, what should be our attitude toward Him, "who loved us and gave Himself for us?" We should take our position at

the foot of the cross and realize that it was our sin that nailed Him to the tree. We who have trusted Him must see that we "are only sinners saved by grace," and say with Paul of old, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:15). Then, and only then, can we know "the peace that passeth understanding," and fully realize that we, who have trusted Him as personal Saviour, are now "seated in heavenly places."

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6)

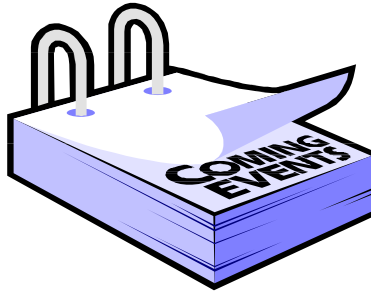
He took our position on earth that we might be with Him in His position in the heavenlies! When we fully realize that it was an absolute divine purpose that Christ reside in flesh for a time, suffer and then enter into the glory, it helps us to understand our life better and look for that time when we will be with Him in the glory. We can say with the

apostle Paul:

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour. yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” (Phil. 1:21-24)

For ye know the
grace of our
Lord Jesus
Christ, that,
though he was
rich, yet for your
sakes he became
poor, that ye
through his pov-
erty might be rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9



WINTER YOUTH RETREAT

Dec. 30 — Jan. 1

WHO? This retreat is for young people, ages 13 through college age.

WHERE? The retreat will be held at Three Mountain Retreat near Clifton, Texas. They have wonderful facilities, good home cooking, and horseback riding.

WHY? The focus of this retreat is Bible study and Christian fun and fellowship. The theme this year will be *“Matters of the Heart—A Biblical View of Love, Dating, Marriage, and Sex.”*

HOW? A registration form is included in this issue of the *Timely Messenger*. Fill out the form and return it to us in the mail.

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Gregg Bing — Editor

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10:00 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Morning Worship
6:00 PM Evening Worship

Mid-Week Services:

Tues. 10:00 AM Ladies Class
Wed. 7:00 PM Bible Study

ADDRESS CHANGED?

If so, please notify Grace Bible Church. Be sure to include your name, your old address, and your new address. This will help us keep our mailing list current and reduce the cost of postage.

*Thanks for your help
in this matter!*

AN INFORMAL SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A Dispensational Approach

By R. B. Shiflet

II PETER

- I. INTRODUCTION 1:1
- II. INVOCATION 1:2-4
- III. IDEAL SPIRITUAL LIVING 1:5-7
- IV. INCREASING KNOWLEDGE 1:8
- V. IMMINENT DANGER 1:9

“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” (2 Peter 1:9)

To fail to grow in grace and manifest the fruits Peter has listed can have dire results. There is no human being more precious than a newborn baby and nothing more tragic than an infant that does not mature normally. Failure to grow in the graces Peter has listed results in:

A. Walking in Darkness—“is blind.”

This is the “flip side” of John’s admonition that “if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” We cannot expect to grow in the knowledge of God’s Word as long as we refuse to walk in the light that we have received. Many great Bible teachers have failed to walk in all the light they have received from God’s Word because of fear of ostracism or persecution for preaching a truth that is not popular.

B. Shows Short-sightedness—“cannot see afar off.”

The word Peter uses can have either of two meanings.

1. To be Short-sighted—so see only the here and now and not view life “with eternity’s values in view.” How many Christians grow more concerned over a

favorite team's losing a game than over the fact of a world that is perishing without Christ.

2. To be Blinking—shutting our eyes to that which we do not wish to see. These verses are a serious call to get our priorities straight.

C. Short Memory—"hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

This implies that hatred for sin and its consequences has faded into insignificance. A new Christian is keenly aware of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the great price that was paid for our redemption. We need to be reminded daily of the fact that it was the blood of His cross by which we obtained redemption. We need to sing to ourselves frequently such great old gospel songs as "Lead Me to Calvary" and "O Happy Day."

I recall a dear old brother who has been with the Lord now for many years, but as long as he lived, when I would preach on the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross as the only means of salvation, tears would roll down his cheeks. We must never blink or shut our eyes to that precious cardinal truth.

(To Be Continued)

<p>ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED</p> <p><i>"According to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath had us accepted in the beloved."</i></p> <p>—Ephesians 1:5-6</p> <p>It is a great comfort to know that our standing in Christ, and acceptance in Him, are not according to the measure of our faith or of our spiritual experience, but "according to the good pleasure of His</p>	<p>will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."</p> <p>"Hath made us"—it is the Father's own doing and it is already done, and so done, that no want of experience, or weakness of faith, or failure of testimony, or slowness of progress, or want of realization, or consciousness of evil within, can possibly alter it in the least.</p> <p>This is an unchangeable acceptance. We stand in Christ; and as He stands. This, then, is a sure foundation for</p>	<p>our hope, and a sure foundation for our joy, notwithstanding the fact that everything of our own is marred and worthless.</p> <p>We rejoice in the Lord Jesus always, as our ground of acceptance, though often sorrowful because of increasing consciousness of our ill-desert. We rejoice also in the love and grace of our Father who has, because of that love and grace, "made us accepted in the Beloved."</p> <p>—From the May 21, 1964 <i>Timely Messenger</i></p>
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UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE

By Gregg Bing

“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...” (Psalm 127:1)



While this expression might apply to anything that God’s people build, when you read the following verses of this Psalm (vs. 3-5), it seems clear that the word “house” refers to a household or a home, that is, a family. One of greatest problems in our world today is that too many homes and families are not built by the Lord; they are not built according to the principles which God

laid out in His Word. While we can understand why this is the case with families of unbelievers, it is sad to say that the same problem exists in Christian homes as well. Statistics show that the divorce rate of Christian marriages is about the same as those of unbelievers.

In his letter to the Colossian saints, the apostle Paul deals with the issue of God’s principles for godly homes and families. While he covers these issues in much more detail in his letter to the Ephesians, we can learn a great deal from looking at the brief statements found in Colossians. Paul condenses these principles for home and family into what are the key responsibilities for each member of the family: the wife, the husband, children, and parents.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fit-

ting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” (Col. 3:18-21)

Marriage—Instituted by God

Paul begins with the institution which is the foundation of the home: marriage. Marriage was instituted by God in the beginning. We read in Genesis 1 and 2 how God created all things in six days and rested from His work on the seventh. It is interesting to note that at the end of each day, God “saw that it was good.” However, after God had created the man on the sixth day, He declared that something was “not good.”

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” (Gen. 2:18)

God Himself declared that man needed a “helper,” someone comparable or like him. As all of the animals that God had created were brought before Adam for him to name, none of them was found to be suitable or comparable to him. None of the animals could be the helper that Adam needed (Genesis 2:19-20). So God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, took one of his ribs, fashioned the woman from the rib, and then brought her to Adam. It reminds us of modern day wedding ceremonies where the bride’s father escorts her down the aisle and presents her to the groom. In this first wedding, God presented the bride to Adam.

When Adam first saw the woman, he knew that she was the one, the one who was comparable to him, and yet wonderfully different. Adam cried out, no doubt in great joy:

“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of

man.” (Gen. 2:23)

This wonderful person was so very special to Adam because she was part of him, “bone of my bones” and “flesh of my flesh.” What a wonderful first marriage! Not as formal as our modern day ceremonies, but filled with just as much joy and gladness for both Adam and Eve.

Following Adam’s exclamation, we find these words:

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (Gen. 2:24-25)

God’s statement that “a man shall leave his father and mother” indicates that the institution of marriage was for all mankind. These weren’t instructions for Adam and Eve alone, since they had no earthly father and mother.

Genesis 2:24 sets forth

God’s description for what makes a good marriage: leaving father and mother, being joined as husband and wife, and becoming one flesh.

When a man is to be married, he is to leave his father and mother. Before a man is married his most important relationship and his strongest bond is with his parents, but after he is married this is no longer the case. This does not mean that he breaks all ties with his parents, but his relationship with them must change. He can still have a loving and close relationship with his parents, but it is no longer the most important one in his life.

When a man marries, he is to be “joined to his wife.” The word “joined” means to be glued or cemented together so strongly that, if you tried to separate the two, both would be damaged or broken. From the very word that God used here, it is clear that God intended marriage to be “till death do us part.” God never intended for marriages to end in divorce. Jesus told the

Pharisees, "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:6).

When a man and woman are "joined" as husband and wife, they "become one flesh." While this does refer to the sexual union of husband and wife, it seems to indicate more. Marriage is to be an intimate relationship, not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually as well. What a beautiful design by our Creator to meet the needs of both men and women. Most of us need this kind of intimacy with another human being. God, in His infinite wisdom, provided for this need from the very beginning

when He instituted marriage.

If marriage is such a wonderful institution, why do so many marriages, including Christian marriages, end in divorce? Because marriage can only be successful and honoring to the Lord when both the husband and wife recognize and follow the guidelines that God laid down regarding their respective roles and responsibilities in the marriage relationship.

Next month we will look at the roles and responsibilities God has given to wives and husbands.

Continued next month.

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