



CHURCH OF GOD
GENERAL CONFERENCE

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF THE **KINGDOM OF GOD** | ACTS 3:21

... heaven must receive [Jesus] until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Abraham and the Abrahamic Faith

By Dennis Sharp (SC)

The Foundation for What We Believe

The people who were responsible for the formation of our movement believed it was critical that we should be called “The Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.” Why? Understanding the answer to that question allows us to understand God and his plan for all people. Indeed, we cannot have a full understanding of the scriptures if we do not understand who Abraham was, his relationship to God, and our relationship to him. We should desperately want to know about a man whom scripture says was “God’s friend”, “the father of us all”, and the “heir of the world.”

The founders of the Abrahamic Faith understood that Abraham was an excellent starting point in our faith journey. The very first verse of the New Testament speaks of Abraham and tells us that Jesus the Messiah is “the son of Abraham.” The Old Testament promise of the land to Abraham is the beginning of the gospel message of the kingdom of God, which then becomes the central teaching of Jesus in the New Testament (Luke 4:43). Also, following the example of Abraham, we are monotheistic – we worship only one God. There is much we can learn by understanding the life of Abraham.

Our first encounter with Abraham (or, Abram before God changed his name) is in Genesis 11:26. There we learn that he is a descendant of Noah’s son

Shem, from which word Semite is derived. Joshua 24:2 says that Abraham’s father, Terah, “worshipped other gods” making Abraham’s faith in the one true God all the more impressive. Our understanding of the significance of Abraham, and, therefore our Abrahamic Faith, starts in Genesis 12:

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. So Abram left, as the Lord had told him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran” (Gen. 12:1-4).

We learn much about God, Abraham, and God’s plan for his people from this initial encounter. First, the words “The Lord had said to Abram” informs us that God chooses Abraham. He chooses Abraham to initiate the plan of restoration. The first 12 chapters of Genesis cover approximately 2000 years. What has happened during that time? We have seen the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the flood that was a result of the corruption and violence on the earth, and the thwarting of the plans of a proud and egotistical people to build a Tower of Babel. God’s call of Abram is an excellent example of how the one true

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Abraham and the Abrahamic Faith (cont.)

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God works with his people. God reveals himself in the history and events of his people. "The Old Testament is not the story of Israel's discovery of God, but the story of God's revelation of himself to Israel. God initiates revelation and individuals respond."¹ He works intimately with his people through his prophets and angels, who are his representatives. This differentiates the one true God from the pagan gods who were personifications of the forces of nature and idols made by the hands of men. "Israel believed that her God both could and did control the events of history, that in them he might reveal his righteous judgement and saving power. Here is the sharpest break with paganism imaginable."² The call and covenant made to Abraham by God is an example of his intervention into history and giving direction to future events. "In the Old Testament, the greatest act by which God made himself known is the Exodus (Exod. 6:6-7). The acts of God reveal both his love and his judgement, his mercy and his wrath. Since God is invisible, he chose to reveal his nature through tangible events."³ God's action of choosing Abraham sets in motion an eternal plan for his people.

Second, Abraham is told to "leave your country, your people, and your father's household." Abraham is told by God to "break ties," and he does so obediently. He is called to leave the certainty of a life he knows for the uncertainty of a life unknown to him. How many of us could just up and leave our families, homes, and communities and go to a place we didn't know? Abraham's faith is an example for us, and it is the reason we strive to be of the faith of Abraham, or the Abrahamic Faith.

Third, God tells Abraham, "I will make you into a great nation." The word "great" here is more than a mere adjective. From Abraham's descendants will come kings who will possess a kingdom, a throne, and a dynasty that will be established forever (Gen. 13:15; 17:6). This is the promise of a great nation that will ultimately be ruled by Abraham's descendant, Jesus the Messiah (II Sam. 7:16).

Fourth, God tells Abraham that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." How will all people on earth be blessed through Abraham? To answer this question, we must examine further dialogue between God and Abraham.

"The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, 'Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring

could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.'" (Gen. 13:14-17)

Twice in this passage, God speaks of "the land" and that he is giving it to Abraham and his offspring forever. As referenced earlier, the promise of the land to Abraham is the beginning of the gospel message of the kingdom of God and the central of teaching of Jesus in the New Testament (Luke 4:43). This is where our Abrahamic Faith starts, and it is a message, often ignored, that is revealed throughout the entire Bible. In Genesis, God tells man to fill the earth, subdue it and rule over it. God tells Abraham that he is giving him the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:8), to him and also to his descendants after him. From the very beginning it is clear that the future of the faithful is on a glorified earth and not in heaven. Jesus teaches us to pray, "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Here again, the teaching is that the kingdom is on the earth, on the land given to Abraham and his descendants as an everlasting possession that will be the eternal home of the faithful. Our understanding of God's covenant promise of the land is essential to our understanding of the Abrahamic Faith.

So significant are the promises God made to Abraham that the word "covenant" appears 13 times in the 21 verses of Genesis 17. In this chapter, God changes Abraham's name from Abram (meaning high father) to Abraham (meaning father of a multitude). He establishes his covenant with Abraham as an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:19) and gives the land to Abraham and his descendants as an everlasting possession (Gen. 13:15; 15:18; 17:7-8). "The Hebrew Bible describes this promised land as an actual piece of earthly real estate with specific geographical boundaries (Gen. 15:18-21; Num. 34:2-12; Josh. 15:1-12; Ezek. 47:13-20; etc.)."⁴ The promised land, the land of Canaan, is not just a spiritual concept. God is the true owner of this land (Deut. 1:20, 25; 2:29), and he has given it to Abraham and the Hebrew people. When Jesus the Messiah returns, he will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem in this promised land. He will be given authority over the whole world, all nations, people, and every language (Dan. 7:13-14) and his saints (believers) will rule with him (I Cor. 6:2; Rev. 2:26-27; II Tim. 2:12). This land promised to Abraham and his descendants is the foundation from which comes the future kingdom of God on the earth.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Jewish confession of faith that God is one (Deut. 6:4), the Shema,

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Abraham and the Abrahamic Faith (cont.)

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(which is quoted by Jesus in Mark 12:29) is followed by a reference to the land. "When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you..." (Deut. 6:10). Here these two great truths are spoken together, the understanding that God is one, and the land he swore to Abraham. These teachings are the cornerstone of our Abrahamic Faith.

It would be almost impossible to overemphasize the importance of Abraham in God's plan for mankind. Given that it is often said that Abraham is of central importance to the three great religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, one must ask if his significance gets the proper teaching and attention it deserves. Let's examine the person of Abraham further and why we choose to be identified "of the Abrahamic Faith." Consider the following:

- Proof Abraham's importance to the authors of scripture is the fact that he is mentioned 230 times in our Bible, 160 times in the Old Testament and 70 times in the New Testament.
- Abraham is the ancestor from which the Hebrew people sprang and the first person in the Bible to be called a "Hebrew" (Gen. 14:13).
- Abraham is the first great patriarch of ancient Israel and a primary model of faithfulness for Christianity.
- All Jews trace their ancestry to Abraham as father of the Hebrew nation.

"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him, he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many (Isa. 51:1-2).

Notice here that Abraham is called "the rock." God is also called "the rock" in Deuteronomy 32:3-4 and I Samuel 2:2.

- The biblical phrase "our father Abraham" expresses the family relationship every person of faith has with Abraham. He is the father of all of the faithful. The phrase "our father Abraham" is used by Jesus (John 8:53), Stephen (Acts 7:2-3), and Paul (Romans 4:12, 16-17).
- Abraham receives the special recognition of being called "God's friend" (II Chr. 20:7; James 2:23).

- James links all Christians to Abraham by calling him "our ancestor Abraham" (James 2:21).
- Abraham is the first person in the Bible to bear the title "prophet" and is given the title "anointed one" (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:15).
- God's own self-identification includes the name of Abraham. "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:6).

The Psalmist tells us that God will remember his covenant with Abraham forever. "He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded for a thousand generations, the covenant he made to Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: "to you I give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit" (Psalms 105:8-11). Just as almighty God has made, repeated, and vowed to remember this covenant forever, it demands that we do also.

We will conclude this article in the next issue of the RESTITUTION HERALD where we will look at how Abraham and the Abrahamic Faith continues to be well documented in the New Testament.

End Notes

1. Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham – Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), p. 161
2. John Bright, *The Kingdom of God*, (Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 25
3. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham – Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, p. 161
4. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham – Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, p. 260

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We Are Members In Particular

By Tom Siderius (MI)

In the first quarter RESTITUTION HERALD, Nicole Wu wrote a wonderful article on the financial principles that Christians should follow in our lives, specifically our financial plans. She provoked many thoughts with her article, pointing us to our God as our sufficiency and strength in time of fear and confusion in the world.

As the world wide Covid-19 pandemic continues, we as Christians need to actively consider what our response should be. The current plan is to spend another 1.9 trillion dollars on Covid help, but also a whole list of "needs" that we should address. What are the great priorities of our lives and faith?

Here's some recent headlines with the stark realities of the world in our midst, headlines which have colored our lives and thinking every day for 12 months or more. We think and pray, stay at home or work, but the uncertainty of the situation continues in our minds like the 24/7 feed of world news.

Unemployment Claims Remain High as Millions Still Struggle to Find Work

When Business as Usual Was Turned Upside Down

U.S. unemployment claims down 19,000 yet still 4 times higher than pre-pandemic level

Coronavirus pandemic 'may cause famine of biblical proportions'; UN food chief warns

Covid-19 could push 130 million people into starvation

Jobless benefits for 1.2M New Yorkers are about to expire. What's next?

Warning of famine, UN releases \$100M to seven countries

Where do we go in our time of need? What should our Christian responses be?

When I was a much younger Christian and my children were growing up, we memorized and sang a song from the verse from King James Version Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". We sang the words and marched up and down, putting our trust in the idea that whatever happens, we could overcome it. We would bring out this verse like superman takes off his street clothes, and then with the superman suit on, go out to win every encounter with all forms of evil and violence in the world. We thought of this verse as the bulletproof all-purpose application regardless of what we faced in life. Financial trouble? I can do all things. Health issue? I can do all things. Family issue? I can do all things.

But, is this really the biblical viewpoint? Do we read and study the Word with a "Me-centered" viewpoint? We look for scriptures that seem to apply to our given situations, and we see our Christian experiences from a personal viewpoint. We want the Bible to give us the answers to our immediate situations that we feel apply to "Me".

Christopher Hall in *Christianity Today* magazine in 2012 wrote:

Clearly, our experiences shape our reading of the Bible. We are all wearing tinted glasses, lenses that help us to see some things very clearly but distort our vision elsewhere. Think, for instance, of the parable of the Prodigal Son. When 100 North American students were asked to read the parable and retell it, only six mentioned the famine the prodigal experiences away from home. In a word, American readers tend to be "famine-forgetters," perhaps because most Americans simply have not experienced terrible famine. Compare the response of 50 Russian readers to the very same parable: 42 out of 50 mentioned the famine. Why? The cultural history of famine in World War II has deeply embedded itself in the Russian consciousness, and this cultural lens influences what Russian Christians see in a biblical text.

So, what is the true biblical perspective? God calls us to a "We-centered" viewpoint.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 (NKJV) For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

Paul gives the metaphor of our physical body being composed of many parts and compares the functions to the body of Christ being built up of many members. Each has a particular function that God has called us to, just as the eye, ear, foot and hand are part of the whole, but not the same. We are baptized (gone from death to life) by gift of grace by the holy spirit that all have received. When you confess the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that he has been raised from the dead, you will be baptized into the body of Christ. Look at Romans 6.

Romans 6:4-5 (NKJV) Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.

Titus 3:5-7 (NKJV) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1 Corinthians 12:27 (NKJV) Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

What does this verse mean? Remember "Me-centric" or "We-centric" thinking.

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We Are Members In Particular (cont.)

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Jan Magiera, in her translation of this verse from the Aramaic Peshitta text, writes as "We are the body of Messiah and members in your place" (APNT). Members that are in our place? What is my place? How does this translation of the verse change your perspective?

Continue in our reading in 1 Cor 12.

1 Corinthians 12:28-30 (NKJV) And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

"God has appointed" is the first thing to look at. The Me-centric viewpoint looks for what I think I should be chosen for and be good at. What if we asked the question, "What has God appointed me for in the church? To be a minister of Christ to it? Is my place to pastor? To teach? To give? To serve physically or spiritually?"

Let's go back to where we started from and look at Phil 4:13 again. What about this translation of the verse? "I find strength for everything in Christ who strengthens me" (Magiera from the Aramaic translation).

Philippians is a letter to the church there from Paul, probably as he is in Rome in prison. Epaphroditus brings a gift of money from the church there to Paul at Rome, and the letter is really a "thank you" letter to them for the way that they worked in the body of Christ to meet needs. The whole section gives the perspective to the process that Paul was emphasizing to the church there, as well as gratitude for their love.

Philippians 4:13-20 (NKJV) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. ("I find strength for everything in Christ who strengthens me") 14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

When we expand our reading, we see that the verses 4:13 and 4:19 stand in the midst of a section of the letter which deals with giving and the effects of the giving and the gift. When we give, both financially and physically, we are able to "open the windows of heaven" to be ready for any eventuality that we are faced with. This is a "We-

centric" way of acting and believing. God has not called us to be the "superman" of faith, but we as the body of Christ to be Christ to the world together as this wonderful body which we are all called to be part of.

Ephesians 3:14-20 (NKJV) For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

As we look at our calling in the body we see examples all through the word of the different ministers of Christ. Those that are apostles, that are encouragers, that are teachers, those that do good works. Some minister healing of body and heart to others, some are administrators or do the physical tasks and projects that are needed. But each has a calling to a certain place in this wonderful body of Christ.

The sections of scripture that really stand out in this study bring two main perspectives: Our strength and power is in the body of Christ as members together. And that we energize that strength with the giving that puts God first, opening the door to His help in our time of need.

With this idea in mind North Kent Bible Church made a goal and challenge to go past our own concerns of our health, prosperity and money to look outward as a church body. The question asked was what would help us to gain God's perspective in this situation? Even in the midst of the pandemic, our fellowship has actually been able to give more financially to the church, and has experienced a greater prosperity because of this.

So the challenge was to use this "We-centric" power for good in the body of Christ. The financial problems of the country and world will not be solved by more printing of money or borrowing in order to give ever bigger subsidy payments to us or others. We cannot borrow our way to prosperity and health. This goes against all the principles of God's instruction and scriptural knowledge. Giving to others in their time of need, and to the growth of the ministry will give God's blessing to our lives and hearts. This is not a governmental obligation, but a ministry that God has called the body to do.

The challenge that we have started is to first put together enough money to materially help a specific church, or churches, in Africa. The pandemic and worldwide financial woes are much greater there than here, and real fam-

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We Are Members In Particular (cont.)

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ine there is a great challenge. But the greater challenge is the famine that comes from not having access to God's Word and fellowship. This is the true famine which we need to overcome. We gathered the money over a period of weeks, and put together over \$4000 for African missions. This will be used with the Martins' help to give some building money and ministry money to help the works in Kenya and Malawi.

The other goal that NKBC has is to bring an awareness and fellowship with the churches there by specifically ministering and praying for one or two churches. We want to connect their hearts and lives to our hearts and lives as brothers and sisters in Christ. We believe that God has called us to do this, and we need to prove that His care and blessing of us here has the purpose of sharing to others the help and love that God has given us. By focusing our hearts together we are able to make this fellowship become more alive in the body of believers at North Kent Bible, and to give the African believers a point of fellowship with our church. Perhaps this could become a ministry that other fellowships could follow to connect the work here to the vibrant works of God on the other side of the earth.

The ministry of the Word here in the USA is important as well, and maybe the challenge for your church has a different focus to develop.

The other principle of giving we need to develop is that of the multiplication of seed sown. The principles of seed and sowing for grain were an integral part of the lives of the people in the first-century church. Today it is not so much a part of our thinking.

2 Corinthians 9:10-11 (ASV) 10 And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: 11 ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God.

God supplies the seed to be sown, and as we harvest the grain, we have our seed multiplied in order to sow more the next time. Prosperity is not a zero sum process where in order for me to prosper, then someone else must have less. God's prosperity that he gives to all the earth is based on this growth of seed sown. When we have a greater harvest, do not put it away in our barns for our prosperity. But rather plant it to grow more grain for all the church and the earth to share.

Where in the body of Christ has the holy spirit led you to serve? What is the fellowship that we need to develop to bring God's love and care to all His people?

We can do all things in Christ as we are strengthened by him. Phil 4:13. We have all our needs supplied from His riches as we do His Word and will. Phil 4:19. God has given us all the precious promise of life here and life eternal. Our lives need to become the ministry and blessing in the

body as God has called you to be. Eph 3:20.

What has God equipped you to do for the body of Christ? What fellowship do you bring?

1 Corinthians 12:27 (KJV) Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

We are all members in our place, the place that God has put us! Be blessed and bless others in all we are able to do as the body of Christ according to the grace of God.

Glory Be to God's Messiah (cont.)

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desire to worship and give glory to God motivate us to glorify His Son. Jesus said it best shortly before his crucifixion: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once" (John 13:31,32). In a wonderful, poetic sense, Jesus was glorified through the humiliating crucifixion. The early church father, Origen termed it as a "humble glory". That same "humble glory" also brought glory to God, as the world would soon find out that Jesus truly was the Son of God.

What does all of this evidence suggest? We can see that giving glory to Jesus is something that occurred throughout the New Testament. However, never did anyone try to glorify Jesus as God. It always occurred in the proper context. He is given glory as the Son of God. It's my hope and prayer that all of these examples can help us find the proper balance of how much glory to give to Jesus.

One last passage that we should all consider when giving Jesus glory is Revelation 5:9-14. It consists of a vision that John has of the heavenly host proclaiming praise and glory to both God and His Messiah. What a marvelous vision that must have been to witness! In the midst of this beautiful vision, the heavenly host proclaim, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13). I long for the day, where we will be shouting of the glory and might of God and His Messiah.

CHURCH OF GOD ARCHIVES PROJECT

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Glory Be to God's Messiah

By Kyle McClain (OH)

Imagine a time and place where man has a perfect relationship with God, and they are able to fellowship with God face to face. What a glorious occasion that would be! The truth of the matter is that before sin entered this world, this was a reality, as man had a perfect relationship with God. However, sin eventually entered into the picture, and gone was man's perfect relationship with God. All hope is not lost though. From the beginning of time, God had a special plan to reconcile humanity back to Himself. This plan would be fulfilled through his Messiah – the anointed one. Today, we recognize this man as Jesus of Nazareth – the Son of God and Savior of the world.

It is our responsibility to give Jesus the proper glory that he deserves, as he is the focal point of God's plan to redeem and reconcile mankind. He is the only way that makes it possible for us to be reconciled to God. When considering all of this, we should shy away from giving Jesus too much glory, and at the same time we need to shy away from giving him not enough glory. There is a balance that we all have to find. To help us find that balance, I would like to take a look at three examples found in the Bible that demonstrate Jesus receiving glory.

The first example of Jesus receiving glory that we will take a look at is located in Matthew 14:22-33. On this occasion, Jesus had just finished feeding the five thousand. After this great miracle, the disciples leave the scene on a boat, and Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. After he got done praying, Jesus reconvened with his disciples. However, he had to walk on water to catch up with them. It was quite a miraculous sight that caught the disciples' attention. You don't see people walking on water every day.

How did the disciples respond to such a miracle? We can see their response in verse 33: "And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God,'" (Matt. 14:33 ESV). They responded by worshiping Jesus. It was an "aha moment." The lightbulb went off! They finally realized that Jesus truly was the Son of God! Their initial instinct once they came to this realization was to worship Jesus. I can only imagine the joy and excitement in their hearts at this time.

We must take note that the disciples weren't worshiping or glorifying Jesus as the God of all. Rather, they were giving him glory as the SON of God. They placed their glory and worship into proper perspective.

The second example of Jesus receiving glory that we will look at is found in John 9. There was a man who was born blind, and Jesus healed this man from his blindness. It was quite the interesting procedure, as Jesus spit on the ground to make mud and wiped the blind man's eyes with the mud. This is another miracle that you don't see every day!

Jesus later confronted the once-blind man after the blind man was cast out for witnessing about this miracle. Jesus asked the man point blank, "Do you believe in the Son

of Man?" (John 9:35). The blind man then asked Jesus who the Son of Man was, and Jesus replied, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you," (John 9:37). What a shocking revelation this must have been for the once-blind man! He was talking to the Son of Man himself!

How did the blind man respond to this revelation? We see his response in verse 38: "He said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him" (John 9:38). Once the man found out and believed that Jesus was the Son of Man, he worshiped Jesus! Again, someone comes across this revelation that Jesus is the Messiah, and again, Jesus is worshiped. We are starting to see a trend here.

The third example that we are going to take a look at is found in Matthew 28, as it revolves around the resurrection of Jesus. After Jesus was resurrected from the grave, he appeared to a number of different people, and Mary Magdalene and the "other" Mary were two of the lucky winners who witnessed the resurrected Jesus. After their encounter with the angel, they found Jesus, "And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him" (Matthew 28:9). They were so happy to see Jesus that they literally fell to the ground and worshipped the resurrected Messiah.

The resurrection was the clinching piece of evidence that anybody would need to know for certain that Jesus truly is the Messiah. When both of the Marys witnessed Jesus in his resurrected state, they worshiped him, as they would have known that he was the Messiah – the Chosen One of God!

In all three examples of the disciples, the blind man, and the two Marys, they all responded to the revelation that Jesus was the Messiah by worshiping him. In all three instances when it mentions the worship of Jesus, the Greek word "proskyneo" is used, and it simply means to bow down or worship. In none of the above examples is Jesus worshiped as the God of all, but he is worshiped in the proper context as the resurrected Son of God. These three instances serve as good examples of finding that suitable balance of giving Jesus glory.

Growing up, I shied away from giving Jesus much of any glory because I was afraid of assigning him glory that belonged to God. It's a valid thought process to have, but in general, when fear is our main motivator, that can cause us to make irrational decisions. This was no different. When I stayed away from giving Jesus glory, I was in turn restraining from giving God all the glory that he deserves, as God is the Father of Jesus.

In the past two years, I have recently had the pleasure of becoming a father. Anytime that someone compliments my son, I am an indirect recipient of that compliment. That is because he is MY son, and I helped form him into the adorable little mess he is today. In the same sense, when we give glory to Jesus, God is an indirect recipient of the glory given to His Son. Therefore, I would let our

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Fear of the Lord

By Jacob Rohrer (NE)

One of the highlights for me in 2020 was completing a Bible reading plan. Surprisingly, I had never completed (or, I think, attempted) one before. My experience was wonderful, and I intend to complete a plan, Lord willing, for the rest of my life, and I encourage you to do so too if you haven't. The benefits I received were rich and bountiful and one of the treasures I discovered is what I would like to share with you in this article. As I read through the Bible in a year, I noticed a particular doctrine woven through nearly every book of the Bible – the fear of the LORD.

A Definition of the Fear of the LORD

The fear of the Lord is a multi-dimensional doctrine that can't be boiled down to one specific action or belief. Here is my personal working definition of the fear of the Lord from how the Bible presents it:

The fear of the Lord begins as a heart condition, a heart condition that recognizes God is God, and we are not. The fear of God in a heart results in reverence and awe towards God and his mighty existence and produces humility within the person who fears God. From this heart condition the fear of the Lord presents itself tangibly in the life of the believer by pursuing a righteous life, rejecting evil and sin, and confidently living the truth of God. The fear of the Lord is overwhelmingly positive and is presented as something valuable and desirable to obtain. In the Old Testament, the fear of the Lord refers to God the Father and in the New Testament, the fear of the Lord includes the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Fear of the LORD in the Old Testament

The fear of the Lord is used in the Hebrew scriptures in a variety of ways:

"He said do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now, I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." - Gen. 22.12

"Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." - Ex. 20.20

"You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD." - Lev. 19.14

"You shall rise up before the gray-headed and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD." - Lev. 19.32

"Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life,

that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes." - Deut. 17.18-19

"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing in the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever." - Ps. 19.7-9

"Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him." - Ps. 33.8

"Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD." - Ps. 34.11

"Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes." - Ps. 36.1

"Who understands the power of your anger and your fury, according to the fear that is due you?" - Ps. 90.11

"My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgements." - Ps. 119.120

"But there is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared." - Ps. 130.4

"Declare this in the house of Jacob and proclaim it in Judah, saying, "Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see; who have ears but do not hear. Do you not fear me? declares the LORD. Do you not tremble in my presence?" - Jer. 5.20-22

Conclusion: According to the Old Testament the fear of the Lord is repeatedly connected with the law of God. It can be taught and learned. To fear God means to treat your neighbor with dignity and respect. The fear of God also means to marvel at his existence and works and his ability to forgive sins in addition to experiencing terror at his judgements.

The Fear of the Lord in the New Testament

The phrase "the fear of the Lord" is less common in the New Testament, but I want to highlight two important texts:

"I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear; fear the One who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell, yes, I tell you, fear him!" - Lk. 12.4-5

"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done whether good or bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men." - II Cor. 5.10-11

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Fear of the Lord (cont.)

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Conclusion: Jesus teaches that the fear of God must reside in every believer's life and Paul teaches that one day every believer will give an account of their life to Jesus and because of that future reality, we should conduct our lives in the fear of Jesus in the present, making the most of the opportunities, talents, and life that have been given to us.

Illustrations of the Fear of the Lord

God presents the fear of the Lord not only in instructional teaching, but he demonstrates it through the lives of people in the Bible. The scriptures contain many accounts of people who do and do not fear the Lord. I'll summarize four accounts, but I encourage you to read them in full for yourselves.

The Hebrew mid-wives - Exodus 1.15-23

The Hebrew mid-wives were faced with a choice; either kill all the Hebrew boys that were born and transgress against God, or save the boys and face possibly being killed by the king of Egypt. The midwives feared God more than they feared the king and chose to save the baby boys. Because of the mid-wives' obedience, God blessed them.

Nadab and Abihu - Leviticus 10.1-3

Up to this point in Leviticus 10, God has been painstakingly clear on how he desires sacrifices to be given, including the preceding chapter 9. In chapter 10 Nadab and Abihu, the eldest sons of Aaron the high priest, who are priests themselves, offer sacrifices to God in a manner he did not prescribe—they offered "strange fire". God then strikes them both dead for their irreverent worship and failure to treat him as holy. Nadab and Abihu failed to fear the Lord.

King Saul - I Samuel 15

At this point in Saul's turbulent reign as king of Israel he has repeatedly disobeyed God. The prophet Samuel gives a message to Saul on behalf of God, telling him to utterly annihilate the Amalekites and everything they own. However, Saul spares the best livestock. When Samuel confronts Saul, Saul says he spared the livestock to sacrifice them as offerings to the Lord. When Samuel announces that God has removed Saul as king for his disobedience, Saul reveals the reason he spared the live stock was because he feared the people. Saul feared man over God and resulted in disobeying God.

King Hezekiah - II Kings 18.13-19.14

Faithful king Hezekiah receives a letter from the king of Assyria persuading him to surrender his kingdom. Included in this letter the king of Assyria urges Hezekiah to forsake his God because he cannot save Hezekiah or Israel. When Hezekiah receives this letter, he takes it to the temple spreads it out before God and offers a beautiful prayer of petition for deliverance. Hezekiah feared God more than the threat of invasion from a foreign king.

The Inherit Goodness of the Fear of the Lord

I want to shine light on the overwhelmingly positive nature of the fear of the Lord. We shouldn't shy away from the fear of the Lord or view it as a primitive way to interact with God. If you want the blessing and favor of God on your life, then you must fear him and our Lord Jesus. Here is how the scriptures testify to the benefits of the fear of the Lord.

"Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." - Ex. 20.20

"The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened." - Prov. 10.27

"In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence...the fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death." - Prov. 14.26-27

"The fear of the LORD leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil." - Prov. 19.23

"How blessed is the man who fears always, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity." - Prov. 28.14

"Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments." - Ps. 112.1

"He [God] will bless those who fear the LORD, the small together with the great." - Ps. 115.13

"How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways...behold, for this shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD." - Ps. 128.1,4

"He will fulfill the desire of those who fear him; he will also hear their cry and save them." - Ps. 145.19

Conclusion

The theme of the fear of the Lord permeates the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures. To fear God means to obey him, honor him, revere him, be in awe of him, and be in terror of his judgements. The fear of God and Jesus is thoroughly positive and invites the favor and blessing of God. In addition, the fear of God quenches sin and disobedience. Are you a man or woman who fears the Lord? How strongly is the heartbeat of the fear of God in your life? God's will for your life and mine is to revere and honor him and his son Jesus. In fearing the Lord, we live and experience the life God desires us to live in Jesus.

THEY STILL SPEAK

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead." Hebrews 11:4

The Children's Page By Madge Savage (MN)

Kinds of Crosses

As the Easter month is here and the trials and sufferings of Christ are brought again to our minds, let us study a bit about crosses. According to the dictionary, a cross is sometimes the emblem of Christianity, or the symbol of the cross on which Christ died.

The word cross has other meanings than its connection with the crucifixion of Christ. It sometimes means the ancient instrument on which criminals were fastened and on which they hung until they died of exhaustion. Sometimes a cross is merely two lines, "X," used by those who are unable to write. They use the "X" as their signature. Sometimes a cross is a mixture of varieties of breeds of animals or strains of vegetable or fruit. A cross in electricity is when two wires connect, and a current from one flows to the other.

In a spiritual sense many look upon the cross as something to be endured for Jesus' sake as a suffering or trial. While some think an illness or affliction is their cross. If one studies the illness, he is likely to find it not unusual. God has never promised His own that His people will escape the ills or afflictions of the earth. He has promised us strength. Christ became perfect through suffering. Then how can we think we will become strong if God keeps all the hardships of life from us? Let us do as did Paul and prove by our living that we will let nothing separate us from God's love.

My Cross

Before you can bear your cross, or me bear mine, for Christ, we look to see the first step. Jesus says our "self-denial" comes first. "Less of self and more of Christ" is our aim. You and I must search our lives to find out what we are doing for Christ and for ourselves. Second, let us list the things into two groups. Our activities are either for "me" or for "Christ." The next thing is to cross off the things that are not right, pure, lawful. Then the questionable things should be gotten rid of as far as we are able to do so. As we follow Him, other things will be easy to do without because of the more joyful activities we undertake for Him.

Finding Our Cross

As we talk about the many kinds of crosses in the world, we might compare them to many kinds of work. Your father has different work for his living than does your friend's father. The cross or the work that really counts is what is done for Christ. We are told to labor not to be rich, but rather that we may give to those in need.

If we are too ambitious for our own selfish interests, we may discover we are so "tied down" to meet the burdens we put upon ourselves that there is not much time or money for Christ. Place Christ first. Then the other things will take their proper places.

Our responsibilities, our work of love, we find we are able to do for Christ, are real. There is a work, a cross, for everyone. Have you found yours? "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

Unless we curb our natural desires to be able to carry our crosses for Christ, we cannot follow Him! The size of the cross we carry for Christ is just our size! He knows what we can do. Did you ever look at another's cross and decide it would be too heavy for you? Or, too light? Some break under a cross another carries with joy.

Think seriously about your cross. At this time of year, we remember Christ "did the will of his father in heaven." He willingly carried His cross long before He carried the one of wood that was forced upon Him. Perhaps He began to carry His cross when at the age of twelve He realized He must be about his "father's business" as He talked to the doctors in the temple.

Begin now to find a cross to carry for Christ that you may follow Him! What kind of follower are you if Jesus sees you walking along without a cross—without any denial of self?

I pray you boys and girls will be wise in your life and that you will not, of your own carelessness, burden yourselves with crosses that will hinder you in carrying a cross for Christ.

THE RESTITUTION HERALD. *The Children's Page* (Vol 37 No 21, pg, 12) and (Vol 37 No 22, pg 12).

“Why Weepest Thou?”

By Syd Magaw (former editor RH)

Following Jesus’ burial, the chief priests and Pharisees appealed unto Pilate, saying, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, ‘After three days I will rise again’. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first” (Matt. 27:63, 64). Pilate replied, “Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.” Thereupon, the Jews “made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”

Thus, disbelieving Jews feared the disciples would steal Jesus from His tomb, that the disciples might declare Him resurrected. Jesus’ disciples, however, so thoroughly forgot His promise of rising from the tomb, that they not only had no thought of stealing Him for the purpose of making it appear He was resurrected, but some of them, finding the tomb empty, believed somebody *else* had stolen Him. Jesus’ enemies came a little closer to believing in the resurrection than did the disciples, for they remembered Jesus’ promise to rise on the third day.

Mary Magdalene, close friend of the Christ, was one of the disciples whose faith utterly withered. Coming early to the tomb on that third morning, while it was yet dark, and intending only to anoint Jesus’ body, Mary suddenly feared and burst into sorrow. Running to other disciples, she cried, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him” (John 20:2). Apparently, no thought of resurrection possibility entered Mary’s mind. Somebody, she thought, had stolen Jesus. The empty tomb excited no joy in Mary! Inspired no faith! O! Blind blindness!

When Peter and John heard Mary’s report, they ran to the opened sepulcher, fearing, apparently, that Mary was correct—that Jesus had indeed been stolen. Possibly, they could find the thieves! “Stooping down, and looking in,” John saw the “linen clothes lying.” Why had not the thieves stolen His clothing, also? When Peter arrived a few minutes later, both, entering the sepulcher, saw the napkin that had been about

Jesus’ head: and it was neatly folded and laid to one side by itself. Suddenly, their fears changed to amazement—they *knew!* They *believed!* No disorderly thievery had occurred. Their Saviour was *risen! Alive from the dead!*

Outside the tomb, though, still in the garden, Mary continued weeping. After Peter and John left, probably not noticing Mary as they went, she, still weeping, returned to look into the sepulcher. The Christ was not there, but her fear and sorrow suddenly changed into amazement. Two angels were in the tomb, “one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.” They began speaking to her, saying, “Woman, why weepest thou?”

Mary replied, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” Then, as if even a *memory* of her Lord were more precious than beholding angels, where she would like to have seen Jesus, she turned away from the angels and faced out into the garden, not expecting to see anyone, but to weep the more easily with none seeing her tears. Surprised, she *did* see someone there in the garden—and supposed it was the gardener. It was *the* Gardener!

“Woman, why weepest thou?” Almost accusing Jesus of having stolen Himself, Mary replied, “Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him.”

“Mary”!

“Rabboni”!

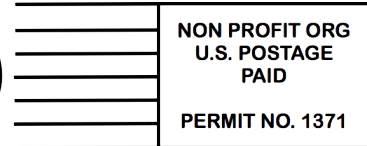
“Why weepest *thou?*” Risen from the dead, *the* Gardener calls you and me. He knows our names!

“Rabboni”!

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates:

- the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6);
- the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8);
- Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5);
- the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16);
- the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4);
- the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through Him (Col. 3:3);
- the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28);
- the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53-54);
- the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8);
- the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32);
- the church to be joint heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3);
- the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.