

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the Whole counsel of God

Definite

SIGN POSTS

Of The End

Paul N. Smith (This is a reprint from 1997 with small changes)

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present age; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:11-13)

"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness ... But, let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9)

We are quickly approaching the end of 2007, and many of us had hoped that we would be in heaven at this time, but evidently the Lord has other plans. Our work on this earth is not finished, nor is His work in our lives perfected yet. No one wants the rapture to begin more than our Lord Jesus Christ, but there is God's great overall purpose to be considered, and we must wait and be patient until all the loose ends are tied and God is satisfied that all things have been fulfilled.

The problems that plagued the world are still here; none seem to have been solved. This year has not turned out to be like it was envisioned. So, it is not wise to presume to know what the future holds; no one does, but as the song goes, we surely do know Who holds the future in His strong capable hands. Humanity is still beset by war, crime, disease, natural disasters, immorality and economic instability. Our country is so far in debt, that there is no realistic hope of bailing out. It seems that all these problems are impossible to solve.

BUT THERE IS HOPE IN GOD AND HIS WORD. The hope described in the Scriptures does not originate in the heart of natural man, but is born as a result of faith in God's Word. God's great unfathomable love was manifested toward lost humanity when He sent His beloved Son into the world to die on the Cross of Calvary. What grace! "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The Grace of God did what the law of Moses could not do, and that was to reach down to fallen man and lift him from the mire of sin and corruption. The law could only condemn mankind, not make him righteous. The law stood between God and man --

a great gulf -- and only the holy, righteous Son of God could bridge that gap, by fulfilling the law in Himself and then redeeming humanity by His death and resurrection. If the law of commandments were still in effect, no one could approach God, nor enjoy the fellowship of Father and Son.

The Grace of God that brought Jesus, appeared for all men. None is excluded. All men have been covered by this provision of redemption. There are no restrictions as to race, education, good works, background, age, sex, or manner of life. This Salvation appeared to all men as a little baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. The Gift of Life gave up His life on the Cross. His death and resurrection opened Heaven to us, and provided salvation to all who believe.

The Grace of God is a miracle worker. Nothing reaches a cold, hard heart as does the tender, loving grace of God. A stubborn spirit melts under the warmth of the grace of God. The cold, un-relentless winds of the stern law caused men to wrap their coats of self-righteousness more tightly around them. But when the sun of God's grace began to shine, off came the human righteousness and man was clothed in Christ's own righteousness, basking in the warmth of His love. There have been many, many miracles performed, but the greatest miracle of all is the change that comes in the heart of man when he is born again. And that is only the beginning of miracles which God performs in our lives until His work in us is completed.

GOD HAS A WORK TO DO IN THIS WORLD. THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE PROMISES SOME IMPORTANT CHANGES. The times and seasons that predict the soon-coming of the Lord are easily seen. It is almost night time for the world, when the real "sorrows" of the tribulation will begin. We have been experiencing the prelude to the Tribulation Period in the wars, earthquakes, pestilence, etc. It is about time for the "Real Thing" to begin. It is an exciting time for the Christian who is watching and waiting for the Lord to return. All the signs of turmoil and chaos give us cause to hope even more for Jesus to return. We have the great assurance of our Lord, who said: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of tribulation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." We are not of that night-time period; we are children of the day, children of light.

THE NATIONS WILL SOON BE SAYING, "WE HAVE PEACE AND SAFETY." The push is on for all nations to become a part of the one-world government. Nuclear weapons are to be diffused, governments joining hands in pledging that war will be no more. These little skirmishes around the world will have to be dealt with, but they will dispatch a few forces here and there to insure that peace will be kept. We cannot be deluded into believing that this will actually happen, not for very long, anyway. For just when they declare that peace and safety has been achieved, then sudden destruction will occur. And out of this outbreak of hostilities, a strong man will emerge and will assume total authority over the one-world empire.

THE GREATEST ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS. It is amazing that such a little country as Israel can be the cause of such tension and terror. There are other conflicts, which have been deadly in the loss of lives and property, but a possible all-out war in the Middle East causes many knees to shake. Why is this? Surely the combined forces of the "big" powers can

keep those small nations in the middle of the earth under control. It can't be just the oil that flows beneath the soil; and it isn't.

God's purposes are dependent upon the people of Israel returning to the God of their fathers and accepting His Son, Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Until this problem is solved, there will be no peace in Israel or -in the entire region. There will be no lasting peace in the world until an agreement is reached in that region. The Middle East is like an upset stomach, or an ulcer, that upsets the whole body. Taking a pill only treats the symptoms, but doesn't cure the trouble. The nations have been dealing out "aspirins" to Israel and the other Arab nations, but they cannot eradicate the centuries-old disease of hate and animosity from these nations. They will need to consult the Great Physician who knows just what treatment and surgery are necessary.

THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS DISTURBANCES BETWEEN JEWS AND MOSLEMS, AND THERE IS NO END IN SIGHT. The terrorist bombing goes on as radical groups continue to reign bombs and terror on the Jewish people. Israel retaliates, and the whole process continues. These are painful, and sometimes deadly attacks, but one of these days it is highly likely that it will get out of hand and a full-scale war will erupt. More tension, amid more talks between the two sides. Nothing is ever settled. Another reason to look forward to a real peace treaty.

AS IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH, A RIFT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR JEWS. Someone once suggested that the land be divided so that each group may have its own state. This hasn't gained much enthusiasm, but it points up the widening gap between the orthodox Jew and the reform Jew. The religious camp in Israel is looking for their Messiah and are actively preparing for His appearance. Of course, they do not believe that Jesus was their Messiah, but they hold to the fact that they are God's chosen people and that they have prior right to the land of Israel. These people will no doubt be among those who will be converted during the first part of the Tribulation and become the remnant who will be waiting for Christ when He is revealed from Heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords.

GOD'S CLOCK MAY BE TICKING EVER SO SLOWLY, BUT IT IS STEADILY MOVING TOWARD THE DAY OF THE LORD. We do not know the day nor the hour of His appearing, even as those in the beginning of this age when He was born. They were not disappointed and neither will we be, as we daily walk in His presence. One day, we will see Him face to face, even as Simeon gazed upon the face of the baby Jesus. We cannot hold Him in our arms as he did; instead He holds us. We believe that He will come in our day; perhaps not today, but one of these mornings when we open our eyes, the Holy Spirit will whisper, "You can expect Him today." It is impossible to describe what joy will fill our hearts when we meet our Savior! We have not experienced such a meeting yet, but we know it will be "awesome"!

GOD'S DESIRE

The universe belongs to Him;
He made it with His hand –
Worlds, galaxies to man unknown
And every grain of sand.

Contain Him? All of space would fail!
In heaven, He dwells apart –
Yet passionately, He pleads to be
Locked in a human heart.

ARTIFICIAL PREACHERS

A. W. Tozer

When I was a young lad and first beginning to observe the human scene, one thing that struck me forcibly was the artificiality of preachers. The world they inhabited was, it seemed to me, always once removed from reality.

They were men, obviously, but they lacked completely the candor and downrightness I knew so well in other men. The bold, man-to-man approach was missing. They seemed to be afraid of something, though I could not tell what, for certainly the tame, patient, almost indifferent persons who listened to them were harmless enough.

No one paid much attention to what they said anyway. I am sure that if one of them had slyly interspersed into his sermon stray bits of the Gettysburg Address repeated backwards, few of those present would have noticed or cared. Yet they spoke so gingerly and apologetically that one got the impression they would rather remain silent forever than to offend anyone!

After listening to some of them now and again, I knew the meaning of the French saying (though I did not hear it till many years later), "There are three sexes: men, women, and preachers."

Now I am all for preachers, and I do not expect them to be perfect, but I am all for downrightness too. I think it highly improbable that anyone who speaks cautiously can speak effectively. It is true that the Church has suffered from pugnacious men who would rather fight than pray, but she has suffered more from timid preachers who would rather be nice than be right. The latter have done more harm, if for no other reason than that there are so many more of them.

Every man who stands to proclaim the Word should speak with something of the bold authority of the Word itself. The Bible is the Book of supreme love, but it is at the same time altogether frank. Its writers are never rude or unkind, but they are invariably honest and entirely sincere. A great sense of urgency is upon them.

To escape the snare of artificiality, it is necessary that a man enjoy a satisfying personal experience with God. He must be totally committed to Christ and deeply anointed with the Holy Spirit. Further, he must be delivered from the fear of man. The focus of his attention must be God and not men.

He must let everything dear to him ride out on each sermon. He must so preach as to jeopardize his future, his ministry, even his life itself. He must make God responsible for the consequences and speak as one who will not have long to speak before he is called to judgment. Then the people will know they are hearing a voice instead of a mere echo. (Reprint)

HOW LONG SHALL I GIVE?

*"Go break to the needy sweet charity's bread,
For giving is living, " the angel said.
"And must I be giving again and again?"
My peevish and pitiless answer ran.
"Oh no," said the angel, piercing me through,
"Just give till the Master stops giving to you. "
--Author unknown*

SAD IS THE DAY for any man when he becomes absolutely satisfied with the life he is living, the thoughts that he is thinking, and the deeds that he is doing; when there ceases to be forever beating at the doors of his soul a desire to do something larger which he feels and knows he was meant and intended to do.

WISHING YOU A DAY FILLED *WITH PRAISE*

A lthough things are not perfect
B ecause of trial or pain,
C ontinue in thanksgiving,
D o not begin to blame.
E ven when the times are hard,
F ierce winds are bound to blow,
G od is forever able,
H old on to what you know.
I magine life without His love
J oy would cease to be;
K eep thanking Him for all the things His
L ove imparts to thee --.
M ove out of "Camp Complaining."
N o weapon that is known
O n earth can yield the power
P raise can do alone.
Q uit looking at the future
R edeem the time at hand.
S tart every day with worship,
T o thank is a command
U ntil we see Him coming
V ictorious in the sky.
W e'll run the race with gratitude,
X alting God, Most High.
Y es, there'll be good times and some will be bad, but
Z ion waits in glory, where none are ever sad!
-- Sent in

- * I am too blessed to be stressed! Too anointed to be disappointed!
- * The shortest distance between a problem and a solution is the distance between your knees and the floor.
- * The one who kneels to the Lord can stand up and face anything

Saved To the Uttermost

Gene Hawkins

"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:24,25.

What is the meaning of being saved to the uttermost as quoted in the verse above? We would first contrast "uttermost" salvation with the "common" salvation as related by Jude, V. 3. We often call this initial salvation and it means that the moment a person believes, his eternal destiny has been sealed. The repentant thief who hung on a cross beside that of Jesus experienced this salvation as he heard the words, "today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Both these references to salvation are brought together in the words of John the Baptist. "and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for (upon, one after the other) grace." John 1:16 We learn here that men do not receive all the fullness of Christ the moment they believe. We just receive "of" his fullness and then the rest of our lives are to be built upon one grace after another.

Likewise Jesus expressed this same truth in John 10:10 as He said : "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." Eternal "life" is freely imparted to every believer the moment he accepts Christ as experienced by the repentant thief, but abundant life conveys the same experience as being saved to the uttermost.

The word "save" in the above text means to "deliver, protect, heal, preserve or make whole." Salvation, God's deliverance because of redemption, is always two fold, namely out of and into.

When God delivered Israel from the bondage of the Egyptian taskmasters, His promise was not just that I will bring you out from under their dominance, but that I will deliver you "unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Exodus 3:8. Many today also experience being delivered out from under the severe bondage of drugs, alcohol, and a host of other vices of the flesh, but they like Israel, never go on to experience the uttermost provisions of salvation found in the land of promise. Unbelief keeps them wandering in the wilderness.

Lot was another who knew the euphoria of being miraculously delivered from Sodom, but he too refused God's offer of uttermost salvation. God's choice was for him to "go to the mountain" an expression of life above all the trappings of this world, living in it but not of it. Esau also describes Christians of today who have an invaluable birthright by virtue of the new birth. This man had the golden key to possessing all the choicest blessings of God and he sold it for a mere bowl of pottage. How many Christians today have that same birthright but are willing to relinquish it for a mere moment of instant gratification? They will not lose the eternal

life provided in the common salvation, but they will lose the inheritance which could have been bestowed had they experienced uttermost salvation.

This same truth is seen in John 6 after Jesus gave His marvelous discourse on the fact that He was and is the true bread from heaven. Many were offended because He said "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." V. 53 We read later "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." V. 66. Many interpret these words to mean that these disciples were no longer saved but that is not what is said. Scripture tells us exactly what happened: "they walked no more with him", meaning that they were no longer in fellowship with Him and did not hear the wonders of His Word as they had before. "Can two walk together (in fellowship) except they be agreed? Amos 3:3 So today, if men refuse to hear the depths of this uttermost salvation, they can in no wise lay hold of the inheritance it promises.

The word uttermost in the our opening text is defined as "full ended, entire, complete", and is expressed in various ways. II Cor. 9:8 declares that "...God is able to make all grace abound toward you that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to do every good work:...." Note the uttermost of the entirety couched in this verse. Heb. 13:20,21 gives forth the same glorious message as we read "Now the God of peace Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Colossians 2:10 describes it thus: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" while Hebrews 5:14 proclaims "strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

There are a great many verses in scripture that portray the glorious fullness of redemption but this truth is beautifully summed up in Eph. 3:19 as Paul tells us of the completeness found in divine love. " And (even) to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." The path to uttermost salvation, the fullness of God, is found through the experience of love, but there is a definite and sometimes rather arduous path to obtaining it. Verse 17 declares plainly that love comes only through Christ. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;....". Verse 18 outlines such love as a giant cube and each side of that cube presents a different facet of love that we must learn by experience. The "breadth" of love is a reference to true prosperity. David said, "He brought me forth also into a large place: (breadth, large place) he delivered me, because he delighted in me. II Sam. 22:20. This side of love is glorious and we, as David, delight greatly in such provisions, both natural and spiritual. But love has an opposite experience.

The word "length" comes from a word that refers to both time and distance and describes both the duration of a certain difficulty as well as the intensity of it, which often brings us to "length" or end of our own resources. It is such an experience wherein we discover the power of love which goes even beyond measure.

The depth of love is like unto it, for it presents a description of the valley experience through which all of us must pass. We do not enjoy going through the "valley of the shadow of death", but such is the place wherein we learn the depth of divine love.

Finally we see here the height of love, which in direct contrast to the valley, tells us of the euphoria enjoyed on the mountain top. This is where we love to be and where some believe we must dwell continually, else there is no victory.

However, without ALL these other expressions of love, there is no way we will ever be able to know the love which passes knowledge and be filled with ALL the fullness of God.

Chapter 4:15 of this book likewise defines uttermost salvation. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:...". Some have looked upon this verse as meaning that if the preacher does not speak in love, his audience need not heed what he says. That however is not the truth. We are responsible for God's Word no matter from whence or from whom we hear it. The burden of this verse is that the "speaker" who speaks in love will grow "up into Him in all things." It is incumbent on every Christian to speak truth in his own life, and this goes far beyond lip service. Our actions must loudly proclaim the Truth of Jesus and when we do, it is we who shall experience full growth in "all things," even salvation to the uttermost.

Hebrews 7:25 declares the basis for this great salvation. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The Eternal Priest makes this fullness of salvation possible directly because of His intercession in our behalf. Peter had a rather heart rending experience that depicts this glorious truth. This very demonstrative and sometimes impetuous fisherman had boldly declared that though everyone else should forsake Jesus in His hour of need, surely he would not. Jesus then informed him " Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:...." Peter was about to experience the depths of his own weakness and Satan would be the tool God would use. However, Peter is not alone, for Jesus further stated, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31,32. Jesus prophesied in Mark 14:30: ".... this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." This prophecy was fulfilled and we might wonder after the cock crowed once, why did not Peter get the "signal" and stop his downward trek. It makes us wonder how many times we too may "run through the stop signs" in front of us. Some might think because Peter did ultimately deny Jesus as He had predicted, that the intercession of the Master was not effective. However such is not the case for we read that Peter went out and wept bitterly after that failure. This is only the beginning of the path to uttermost salvation. After His resurrection, Jesus said to Peter; "feed my sheep". This guilt ridden disciple gave no indication of affirmation to that request at the time, but after the Day of Pentecost, when Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost, He did indeed strengthen his brethren and became a tremendous publisher of the message, being willing to suffer many atrocities for it. Surely Jesus intercession was effectual, and Peter's faith did not fail.

Likewise, this same intercession will be most effective in our lives today because of His work on the cross, and we would note that such intercession is not simply to get us beyond or through a certain crisis, but rather that we might be "saved to the uttermost."

"For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28 This is a glorious verse on which many have depended over the years, especially in time of crisis.

However, there is a reason as to why it is so very true. Verses 26,27 tell us that The Holy Ghost is working in harmony with God to produce the desired results. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Then follows verse 28 with "all things work together for good...." All things do indeed combine for our good, directly because of such intercession. Whereas we would pray out of our own human emotion, not knowing what "to pray for as we ought," the Spirit intercedes for us according to the will of God. He knows what is the will of God and therefore His prayer makes all things work for our good. Not only so, but we read in verse 34 that Jesus Himself makes intercession for us, and that once again, because of His work of redemption. "Who is he that condemneth? 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."

Finally, Jude addresses this subject of uttermost salvation. "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." V. 24,25. Only God can produce this uttermost salvation, and thus only God will receive the fullness of glory for it.

MY BELOVED LORD

*Down in the valley, among the sweet lilies,
Walks my Beloved - His footprints I see;
Haste I to follow Thee, Savior and Lover,
How the winds whisper Thy dear Name to me.*

*Know'st Thou / seek Thee, oh, haste to discover,
Where is the place of Thy fragrant retreat?
Where thou dost rest with Thy flocks at the noontide,
Sheltered near fountains, unsearched by the heat.*

*Now I approach Thee, O fairest Redeemer,
Lured by Thy beauty to dwell in Thy love;
Hide not Thy face from the heart that adores Thee;
Hast Thou not sought me, and called me Thy dove?*

*Gentler Thy voice than the whispers of angels;
Brighter Thy smile than the sun in the sky;
Gather me tenderly, close to Thy bosom;
Filled with Thy loveliness I'll never die."*

- Mary W. Bodie

EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS:

"Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

-Reprint-

How many times have you heard the phrase, "Have a Great Day" lately? Quite a few, I know. We hope we all have a good day, year, but if we don't, that won't necessarily destroy the joy of the Lord that we have in our hearts. Happiness comes as a result of what happens to us. If we awaken in the morning, rested and refreshed, looking forward to the tasks of the day, we can safely say we feel happy. If our mate looks at us with loving eyes, we are happy. If the dog doesn't maul and bite us, and the traffic is light and courteous; we are happy. If the boss greets us at the door with a bright warm smile and remarks, "Smith, I'm really pleased with the job you're doing; I'm giving you a raise", then we are happy!

But, reverse all the above, will we feel happy? No. I'm sure we won't. So, we don't want to depend on good things to make us feel happy, because we all know that 99 days out of a hundred will not be as smooth as the one I described. There are days when it seems that everything is either in slow motion, or no motion at all; we're constantly pushing and straining to get anything accomplished. That doesn't make for happiness. We may not be happy in our job, nor in our marriage, nor with ourselves, but that doesn't need, to destroy the joy of the Lord. Many sales clerks order us to "have a happy day," but those words aren't magical. They don't turn gloom to brightness; the clouds don't mysteriously disappear. There is an old song that goes, "I want to be happy . . ." which is everybody's wish, but realistically, we won't always be happy.

Now, to get down to the meat of this article, let's not seek happiness, but rather seek the joy of the Lord. Read Verse 10 again, slowly and thoughtfully. The way to have the joy of the Lord is to follow the instructions found there. Eat the fat of the Word, drink deeply of His sweet love. Reach out to others who have no hope, with the Message of Grace. Prepare portions from God's Word for the one who is downhearted and unhappy. When we awaken in the morning, we should remind ourselves that this is the day which the Lord has made for us. He has everything already prepared; every situation we will go through that day has already been screened and okayed by the Lord Himself. Instead of being downhearted because everything did not go right, let us meditate on the fact that all things are in God's hands. Praise God for the unhappy things of the day; they're our servants to bring us closer to the Lord. Then we will begin to sense the joy of the Lord in our hearts and our strength will miraculously return in full vigor. It works.

Jesus said: "And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you . . . Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full ... These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:22-33).

Paul said: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be

made known unto God" (Philippians 4:4-6). "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13). Amen!

--(September 2007)

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

(The following article is a reprint from the January 1915 issue of Grace & Glory. The Truth is always up-to-date)

More Than Conquerors!

A.S. Copley

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 8:35-37).

Observe carefully this phrase, "more than conquerors." It is a very significant expression and is used only once in the Scriptures. Who is this one who is more than a conqueror?

He is the one who gets victory, not out of conquest, but out of defeat.; one who not only vanquishes his foes but uses these very foes as his allies and is enriched by them; one who is not only a victor in conflict, but who conquers without fighting; one who has no fear of his enemies but whose hope and faith are victors in advance of the battle. Every child of God is in every sense more than a conqueror, because he is born from above. But alas, so very few are aware of the victory that belongs to them. When God is with us, none can be against us and succeed. He organizes victory out of every defeat. Just as Christ died in weakness and defeat, yet in this very dying, He brought deliverance from death, so the victorious child of God dies to live, and lives to die, and in this very dying triumphs over death. "For Thy sake we are killed all the day longAs dying and behold we live" -- a daily dying, not to get victory over sin but over every circumstance.

To this agree the words of Jesus: "He that loveth his life shall lose it and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Also, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Christ is the fullest expression of these verses. He could have saved His life in this world, but He could not thus have redeemed humanity. As was truly said of Him, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save" (Mark 15:31). He laid down His life and was buried, but a harvest came up from His grave -- a new creation. If we would truly follow Jesus we must lay our lives down, not to make atonement, but to serve those for whom atonement has been made. The new creation is built upon sacrifice. The death of Christ is the foundation, and nothing adds to its structure, neither builds upon it, nor beautifies it, but sacrifice.

"Death worketh in us, but life in you" (II Corinthians 4:12). This is not dying unto sin of the old man. The latter never brings forth any good fruit. His works are

manifestly evil and only evil. He was put to death by Christ upon the cross. "I have been crucified with Christ" (this is the old man), nevertheless I live (the new man), yet not I but Christ (identification of the new man with his source, Christ)." The old man is always identified with his head Adam; so the new man is identified with his Head, Christ.

It is this new man who dies to bring forth much fruit. He turns his very enemies into his friends. The trials, the "tribulations, distresses, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword" which beset him on every hand and threaten to disturb his peace and rob him of his power are the means of promoting them. He makes these very things serve him. He reigns over them and thus is "more than conqueror." All things work together for his blessing and final perfection. When the devil sends around a messenger to slap him in the face, he finds this the very means of getting a further revelation of the infinite strength which is at his disposal, but which is only made perfect through weakness. Satan designed to hinder Paul with his messenger, but the Lord overruled and made the "thorn in the flesh" a blessing.

A conqueror wins through great ability or strength of arm, but the "more than" conqueror wins through weakness and defeat. He conquers without fighting -stands still to see the salvation of the Lord. He abandons all effort in the conflict by yielding to every providence and trial as from the Father. He rests in the Lord and His enabling. And in the greatest trial he is so confident of the final result, that he gives thanks in advance. For every battle, with its consequent victory, enriches him in faith, in courage, in hope and in love to God. A conqueror may be enriched by the spoil of his defeated foe, yet he too, loses heavily in the battle. But the "more than" conqueror loses nothing in the fray, for "all things work together for good" to him.

What about poverty? This cannot hinder him for he is making many rich by rejoicing in his circumstances; for he has nothing, yet in Christ "he possesses all things." Is he unknown and unnoticed, creating no stir any where? Well, like Brother Paul, he takes comfort in the fact that he is well known unto God. Is he chastened? Then he thanks the Lord he is not killed. Is he killed? Behold, he lives! There is no defeat anywhere nor in anything. Every purpose and plan of the enemy is turned to good account. And while he may be perplexed, yet he is not in despair, and though sorrowful at times, yet his rejoicing is continual. He is some times cast down but never destroyed nor forsaken of God, though persecuted by man. He knows that "we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." He takes "pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake," for when he is weak then is he strong.

This is the overcomer! This is the "more than" conqueror! No one can harm him and nothing can defeat him.

THE REMNANT PRINCIPLE

Albert C. Astle

"For who has despised the day of small things?" --Zechariah 4:10

What prompted God to ask this question of Israel? The prophet Haggai tells us: "Who is left among you who saw this house in her first glory? How do you see it now, is it not in your eyes by comparison as nothing?" (Chapter 2:3). God is drawing a comparison between Solomon's Temple and Zerubbabel's Temple. God planned Solomon's Temple to appeal to men's eyes for a reason. He planned it to be beautiful, sensational, and spectacular. People came from all over the world to behold its beauty.

Zerubbabel's Temple was just the opposite. It looked like a barn, even though they called it a tabernacle. It was made out of cedar clapboard. Clapboard is the trimming off of logs before they are cut into lumber. In Zerubbabel's day the builders took these clapboards, the cheapest kind of lumber, and built the tabernacle. So, in Haggai, God is asking Israel how they compared the two temples. He knew how they felt because He said, "Is it not in your eyes by comparison of it as nothing?" Thus the question, "Who has despised the day of small things?"

Let's call this day of small things, "GOD'S REMNANT PRINCIPLE." Even though Zerubbabel's Temple was small, according to God's remnant principle, there was something about it which made it uniquely greater than Solomon's Temple. We find that uniqueness in Haggai 2:7: ". . . I will shake all nations, and THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS (JESUS) SHALL COME: and I will fill this house WITH MY GLORY, saith the Lord of hosts." Also in Verse 9, Haggai says, "The glory of this latter house SHALL BE GREATER than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." Solomon's Temple was not built according to God's Remnant Principle, but Zerubbabel's was.

None of us is excluded from the question asked in Zechariah 4:10. Humans measure only by what their eyes can see and their ears can hear, and thus they were affected by Solomon's Temple. We all must overcome this! Israel could not see the divine remnant principle at work in that little clapboard barn. However, the remnant principle was at work! I believe that almost all Christians do despise the day of small things. We're influenced by largeness, material grandeur, by personalities, by great oratory, and even by the tears and great dramatic skill of singers and performers. One fact establishes the remnant principle in Haggai and Zechariah, and this is the way God values spiritual success in each of our lives! This fact is in Haggai 2:7, "I WILL FILL THIS HOUSE WITH GLORY, saith the Lord of hosts." It is not the splendor which attracts the natural, but the PRESENCE OF THE LORD which makes the difference. I have no argument against great crowds if only the leaders of these great crowds would follow God's remnant principle; that is, to call the attention of Christians to our one and only Head, our Lord Jesus Christ! To the one power, the omnipotent power of God! To glorify God rather than the denomination, or the temple.

God's remnant principle has been in operation in nature since He created the earth. Visualize the remnant principle at work in the mighty oak tree. As great as the oak is, God established His remnant principle to make another oak. He does not use

the entire tree to make another, He uses a LITTLE SEED from that great tree to make another.

One of the greatest examples of God's remnant principle at work among men can be seen in Abraham. Before he came on the scene, all mankind was one great sea of humanity. God separated Abraham from the main stream of humanity and formed one nation, Israel. When God institutes His remnant principle, He does His greatest work. Man's BIG THINGS hinder Him. Out of Abraham's "own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old ... the deadness of Sarah's womb," God worked His remnant principle. He called out Isaac, through whom He began to accomplish His great Covenant of Promise. This Covenant is for anyone who accepts Jesus as His Savior. Again God's remnant principle went to work and narrowed even Isaac to Jesse and David--and then who did we get?--Jesus Christ our Savior! Oh, behold the beauty and simplicity of the remnant principle! It opens up such a great challenge to us.

The remnant principle is at work in Acts 15:14: "Simeon has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles (these are all nations besides Israel)--"TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME." These people are what we call "The Church."

God has done some of His greatest works through this Body of believers. God always works through remnants. Remnants are people He takes from the mainstream of humanity to accomplish His great purposes. The greatest measure of service a human can be to God is through this principle. It has always been that way. MINOR NUMBERS MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE. We cannot gauge the spiritual success of any religious group by its numbers, by what we see with our eyes, or hear with our ears. Whether it is to all nations, to Israel, or to all life on this planet, God has used this principle for His great purpose.

LOOK AT GOD'S REMNANT PRINCIPLE AT WORK IN THE CHURCH! Listen to Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." In spite of the thousands upon thousands who know the Lord Jesus Christ, yet when it comes to God's really working in our midst, He always uses the remnant principle. He does His greatest work through the two or the three. There aren't many groups in the religious world today who would even allow a group of two or three to exist, let alone call it a church. There are not many Christians who will ever take this chance. They accuse the small groups of not succeeding and never accomplishing anything, and that they might as well give up entirely.

According to Psalm 119:141, David was experiencing God's remnant principle at work in his personal life, and this is the reason for his wonderful words. Here is a paraphrased version: "I am small and despised, yet do not I forget Thy precepts." That is, "I am a remnant, I am small, I don't amount to much, and I'm despised because of this, yet do not I forget Thy Word." Do you see another ingredient which God works into the lives of those who are a part of His remnant principle? IT IS HIS WORD! First of all, the glory of the Lord is present, and now also His Word is at work. God always does His greatest work in the individual life by way of these two ingredients. Many times before God can get our attention, He singles us out from the masses. There is no telling what way He may choose to single you out to get you to the place where you will call on God for yourself. Even though all others may

despise you, don't forsake the presence of God and His Word working in your life. Let God's Word be your greatest mainstay.

In God's remnant principle He uses, what I like to call, "The weeding-out process." He doesn't only weed out people, He also weeds out things from our lives. Those who will let Him weed things out of their lives become a part of His great work in this world. In Zechariah 4:6 we discover the Spirit of the remnant principle in this weeding-out process. "Then He answered and spoke unto me, saying, "Thus saith the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts."

If you want to be a part of God's remnant principle, you must know that it's by the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way! We must be empowered and supernaturally quickened by the Holy Spirit. The majority of Christians take the exact opposite to the spirit of the remnant principle. They bring in all their "big guns." They marshall all their natural talents, their big names and "allow" God to use them. This is never God's way! He weeds out all the "self"and "I" from whatever He does. He desires to bring us to the place where it is all God, and where it is all His Grace.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 declares: "I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill." God weeds out all these natural talents. There is nothing wrong when a person possesses any of the natural abilities named in this verse, if one realizes that these THINGS are not what really make us who we are in Christ. All natural abilities are fine but must be brought into subjection to God and given to Him for His glory alone. Never forget--the glory of the Lord is in the remnant principle. Even if it's only a clapboard barn, yet that barn in God's eyes is far greater than Solomon's Temple because the presence of the Lord is there, the power of the Holy Spirit is working, and God's Word is working. Yes, we can run races and fight battles because we're strong in the Lord.

God never requires natural skills. He will give spiritual skills. He will use natural skills only as we yield ourselves to Him and submit to Him. BUT HE DOES NOT REQUIRE, NOR NEED THEM! Why? Because God is sufficient for all things, for all battles, for all races. God is the Triumphant One! Oh God, teach us all the great lessons of your remnant principle!

Notice Judges 7:2-4. The Midianites had begun attacking Israel, and Israel had impossible odds against them. They called upon God to deliver them. Guess how He worked? Yes. THROUGH HIS REMNANT PRINCIPLE! Behold your God as He works triumph and victory, the only victory possible, through His remnant principle. "And the Lord said unto Gideon, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE WITH THEE ARE TOO MANY for me to give the Midianites into their hands." Notice the key word here, "The people who are with you are too many for ME"! This is one of the glorious secrets of the remnant principle, IT HAS TO BE GOD! It must be His strength. HE must use you. He wants to motivate and guide. There must never be anyone else or any other thing than God and His Omnipotence. Notice the reason why, "Lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, My own hands have saved me." Any time you think there's safety in numbers, where the remnant principle is concerned, you're greatly mistaken. GOD SINGLED THEM ALL OUT.

"Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ear of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead, and there

returned from the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand." Even 10,000 were too many! "And the Lord said unto Giden, **THE PEOPLE ARE YET TOO MANY.**" God does not need great crowds or armies for His great work. He narrows all His great works to the one who will depend upon Him and who will trust his life into His hand. Wherever you go and are enticed by great crowds and great names, **BEWARE!** Look for the presence of God, for the power of the Holy Spirit, and for God's Word of Truth taught ... and LIVED ... **LOOK FOR THE GLORY OF GOD!**

Consider this beautiful word "Remnant." It means small, and that is not all, it also means, "that which is left." After God gets through with His weeding out, He will use only that which is left. God may strip us of anything which could hinder our usefulness to Him. He wants to bring us to where we will say, "God, I need you." It's your glory and your triumph I really want!"

Even though two or three of us are meeting in the Name of the Lord, there is no hindrance to God.

Even in the Church the remnant principle is at work. The effect of this is **THE BRIDE!** Some wonder why we're small. It's because God's great purpose of an out-resurrection and out-translation is at work. Undoubtedly, this is why so many people leave us alone. We've really searched our hearts for the apparent smallness of our meeting. It is most certainly not any lack of success. Simply because the majority of Christians measure success by money, crowds, and material showiness, is no indication of God's estimate of success. **GOD MEASURES SUCCESS ACCORDING TO HIS REMNANT PRINCIPLE.** How much are we going to let God work in our lives? How much do we desire to really glorify God in our lives? When we're talking about the Bride of Christ, we're talking about the epitome of the remnant principle. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus says, "Many are called, but few are chosen." There's the remnant principle stretching out before us like a race course. In Matthew 22:2-14, we see God's weeding-out process at work.

The Bride Company is the result of the remnant principle. In I Corinthians 9:24, we discover the remnant principle: "Know ye not that they who run in a race run all, but one (a remnant) receiveth the Prize?" We call this remnant, "The Bride of Christ." What is the lesson? They give all glory to God. They know it's not by might, neither by power, but it's by the Spirit of the Lord. They know this race is not to the swift. Many of us may have to limp all the way to the finish line; however, the Holy Spirit enables us to win the Prize. We're not in competition against each other, but we're running against the obstacles which the world, the flesh, and the devil throw at us.

Now for the finale! In Song of Solomon 2:2, the remnant principle is at work. "As the lily **AMONG THORNS**, so is My Love **AMONG THE DAUGHTERS.**" The Bride is the lily among thorns. What is the secret of the lily? Like the lily, the Bride neither labors nor toils, but seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all these natural things are added unto them. Is it cruel to liken any Christian to a thorn? No! There are far too many Christians living according to the flesh and produce nothing but thorns. The cruelty is to Jesus who saved them from sin. The remnant principle is woven into the entire fabric of the wonderful portrait of Christ and His Bride in the Song of Solomon.

Oh, let God prepare our hearts! Revelation Two proclaims, "He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith." The Holy Spirit is literally shouting throughout

God's Word to give God all the glory in our lives. The bottom line for us is found in John 3:30: "HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE." To borrow a thought from a wonderful song is such a fitting closing word, "Little is much when God is in it."

LORD JESUS, COME

"Thy Kingdom come, O Lord," we cry.
"Make bare Thy arm and rend the sky.
Come forth, Thou Lion of Judah bold,
Jehovah's counsels now unfold.
Gird on Thy thigh, Thy sword so bright,
And cause the world to know its might.
On speeding wings of wind take sail,
And over anti-Christ prevail.

"Come quickly, Lord. Do not delay;
For error stalks upon its way,
While Truth is crushed and sits apart,
And justice weeps with broken heart.
Lord, cause the world to hear Thy voice,
Bring peace on earth; make men rejoice.
Take to Thyself Thy royal throne
And make the kingdoms now Thine own!"
--Mary M. Bodie

TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS

Margaret Clark

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." II Corinthians 4:7

We sometimes tend to forget one or the other of the two truths that are presented here. Even though we have been born again, through faith in Christ, we still have this same physical body.

II Corinthians 5:1 speaks of our "earthly house" which we are earnestly desiring to be replaced with "that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." But, as long as we live here on this earth we will be encased in these earthly vessels. We live our lives in the flesh, that is flesh and bones - a human being.

These earthly vessels are frail, vulnerable and inadequate; originally fashioned from dust. So actually we are nothing more than "clay pots" and we should always keep in mind that we are nothing more than a lump of clay. It is humbling to realize that we are just vessels of clay, but it is also liberating. God does not expect us to be anything more than that. He does not expect us to beautify ourselves in any way whatsoever. We are, in fact, helpless to do anything in our own power. Psalm

103:14 says “He knows our frame: He remembers that we are dust.” He does not want us to be anything different than what we were created to be, and that is a container for an intended purpose.

There are all kinds of vessels, made to be used in various and specific ways. Not all are suitable for certain things, they have specific uses.

God created our vessel for a specific use. The intended content of our vessel is named in verse 7. It is a treasure! And Oh, what a marvelous treasure it is. Verse 11 tells us about it. “That the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” The very life of our Lord Jesus Christ dwells within us. In our clay pots. What joy, what honor, what love, to be used in this way. But all the glory goes to God. The focus is to be on Jesus Christ, not the container. “that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”

I am reminded of going to visit someone who grew orchids and was so impressed that all the containers were simple red clay pots. This was done purposely so that the containers would not be more noticeable than the orchids.

Christ is to be the excellent power in our lives. He is the one in whom we are to trust as our strength for daily living. Psalm 18:39 says “you have armed me with strength for the battle.” What battle? The one we read of in Ephesians 6:12, The battle “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Any thing that is not of Christ is something we have to battle against. Matthew 6:24 tells us that no one can serve two masters so we must make a choice as to which master we are going to serve. When our choice is to serve the Lord He gives us strength for these battles. Colossians 1:11 tells us we are strengthened “with all might according to his glorious power.”

When you need strength - Trust the Lord! David said in Psalm 73:26 “My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” and in 28:7 “The Lord is my strength and my shield.....therefore my heart greatly rejoices and with my song will I praise Him.”

We can rejoice along with David in the knowledge that our strength comes from God. He has not nor will He ever change.

Verses 8 & 9 go on to tell us “We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”

This plan of God that calls for the treasure (Jesus) not the vessels (you and me) to be the object of our trust and the recipient of all the glory, also arranges a process that MAGNIFIES the treasure.

This involves every day life pressures - hard pressed, but not crushed. An empty clay pot is easily crushed, but a full one can withstand a lot of pressure without damage. Even so, Christ in us is able to keep us from being crushed by the pressures of life. It is not our strength that stands but the strength of Christ within.

We face difficult decisions and issues throughout our life, and though we are perplexed, we are not in despair. Our faithful counselor, Christ Jesus, protects us from hopelessness. In Him are hidden all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:3. We don't have to rely on natural wisdom or our own knowledge. Why would we attempt to solve our own problems or rely on our own resources when we have at our disposal the infinite wisdom of God.

“Persecuted, but not forsaken” people accuse us, misunderstand us, lie about us, cheat us, use us and otherwise abuse us but we still know that we are not abandoned. Our Lord lives within us and has promised, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5 Furthermore we know “that ALL things work together for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to His purpose.” that Christ may be glorified in us.

Calamities may strike us down, but we are not destroyed. The Lord stabilizes us so we don't fall under the weight of things. Psalm 18:18 says “the Lord was my support.” So we can plainly see that “He who is in you is greater than he that is in the world.” I John 4:4.

Galatians 2:20Paul tells us “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” It behooves us to do likewise, trusting in the treasure, our Lord Jesus Christ who dwells within us, giving to Him all glory and honor as He sustains and protects us day by day. In this way we magnify the treasure so the world sees Him instead of this worthless old clay pot. “That the life of Jesus might be made manifest.”

Love Is...

Love is the filling from one's own,
Another's cup.
Love is a daily laying down,
And taking up –
A choosing of the stony path
Thru each new day,
That other feet may tread with ease,
A smoother way.

Love is not blind, but looks abroad
Thru other eyes,
And asks not "Must I give?" but
"May I sacrifice?"
Love hides its grief that other hearts
May joyful sing,
And burdened walks that other lives
May upward wing.

And it shall be that
whoever calls on the name
of the Lord shall be saved.