

"And I, brethren...came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you...

THE TESTIMONY

...of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ..." I Cor. 2:1-2

VERSE OF THE MONTH

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Ps. 90:10

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MORTALITY

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud? Like a swift-fleeing meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave, Man passes from life to his rest in the grave.
The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade, Be scattered around and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high, Shall molder to dust and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved, The mother, that infant's affection who proved,
The husband, that mother and infant who blessed, Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.
The maid, on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye, Shone beauty and pleasure—her triumphs are by;
And the memories of those who have loved her and praised Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that the scepter hath borne, The brow of the priest that the mitre hath worn,
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave, Are hidden and lost in the depth of the grave.
The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap, The herdsman, who climbed with his goats up the steep;
The beggar, who wandered in search of his bread, Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoyed the communion of Heaven, The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just, Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.
So the multitude goes, like the flower or the weed, That withers away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold, To repeat every tale that has often been told.

For we are the same that our fathers have been; We see the same sights that our fathers have seen,
We drink the same stream, and we view the same sun, And run the same course that our fathers have run.
The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think; From the death we are shrinking our fathers would shrink;
To the life we are clinging they also would cling; But it speeds for us all, like a bird on the wing.

They loved, but the story we can not unfold; They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is cold;
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers will come; They joyed, but the tongue of their gladness is dumb.
They died, ay! they died: and the things that are now, Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
Who make in their dwelling a transient abode, Meet the things that they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea! hope and despondency, pleasure and pain, We mingle together in sunshine and rain;
And the smiles and the tears, the song and the dirge, Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.
'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath, From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud—Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

William Knox (1789-1825)

THE TESTIMONY

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EDITORIAL

HE IS LORD OF ALL GOD OF THE NATIONS

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords..." (1 Tim. 6:13–15).

With what power and authority our God reigns! The kings of the earth must bow before His rule, and they will be judged by Him.

With great pomp the rulers of earthly kingdoms present themselves to their people. With great pride they rule! But they shall at last recognize their place as subjects of The Most High.

Notice this glorious scene toward the last of the Revelation.

"And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine

linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11–16).

GOD OF THE CHURCH

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Potentate. He is above all. When man rises up and becomes great, and devises his own way, (in secular affairs, or in Christianity) he must know that in the end he will bow to the judgment of God, and yield to His will. Men are not the ones who determine what is acceptable to God. Our God alone is the One who determines if willful disobedience to His will is also a departure from saving faith. And He declares it with clarity. We must fear God.

We shudder as we behold the various ways of life and conduct that man has devised and made acceptable to himself. All of these doctrines will come under the scrutiny of the Most High and will be judged according to the righteous judgment of the High King of Heaven. There will be none exempt.

After Nebuchadnezzar's humiliating downfall (Dan. 4:35) he made a glorious declaration about the God who had brought judg-

ment upon his pride: "...all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Then he declared further, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

For Christianity today, this lesson must be learned quickly, lest the church in the world also come under the judgment of the Most High. It is not our privilege to create our own Christianity. We must yield to the New Testament commands and instructions that come from our Head. These words in 1 Timothy come to us so strongly that it should get the attention of all. After giving the young minister Timothy some instructions regarding contentment, and danger of the love of money, the Apostle says this: ***"I give thee charge in the sight of God...That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ..."*** These are strong words, given as from a Sovereign, or Potentate. They carry the weight, not just of gentle instruction, but of a Divine requirement.

May God have mercy on the kings of the earth, and on the church today. We all have an inclination to be careless and apathetic. But the Word of the Lord is

clear regarding willful sin, and gives strong warnings concerning disobedience to the Word of the Lord. God is full of mercy and grace, to be sure. But notice the references to **the fear of God**, as the apostles give commandment to the New Testament Church.

Four examples of Scriptures that emphasize believers remaining obedient, and fearing God:

1. *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).*

2. *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21).*

3. (Paul warning the church against returning to a life of careless sin) *"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).*

4. *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23).*

Our God is the God of the nations. And He is the God of the church. In the Day of Judgment His Word will stand, and all will keep silence.

Lowell Miller

GENERAL

**JESUS THE LAMB, OUR
KINSMAN REDEEMER****Part 2 of 3**

Revelation 5:2–4 continues our look at Jesus as our Kinsman Redeemer, and the apostle John continues his account by telling us that “I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.”

The Big Question: “Who is worthy to open the book?” The question was not, “who is willing,” but rather, “who is morally fit to read the scroll and to redeem the earth?” Men throughout the ages have been willing but not able, and many rulers thought they would have dominion over the earth; Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, Charlemagne, Adolph Hitler, and many more thought they might rule over all, and yet none of them were worthy! Soon the world will see the rise of a demonically influenced individual referred to as “the antichrist,” a man referenced in Daniel 11 and Revelation 13; while this one will come closer to ruling the world than any other mortal man to ruling the world,

yet in the end, he will merely ruin it, for he, too, is unworthy to possess the title deed to this planet and to rule over all.

And yet still the question continues to resound: “Who is worthy to take the book and to open the seals?” Who is fit, willing, and worthy? Indeed, the question reverberates down the very halls of heaven itself, only to be met with the awful answer of silence, for Romans 3:10 reminds us that “there is none good, no, not one!” The first Adam failed in the garden, and as his children, we are similarly unable to fulfill that perfect, holy law of God’s righteousness! John saw that no man or woman was found worthy, and if none are worthy, how were the promises of God to be fulfilled? There could be no final salvation, no justice for the saints, no restoration for the creation of God, and this is where John tells us he burst into tears, for no saint in Heaven, no sinless angel, not even faithful Abraham, nor Moses, David, Paul, nor even Gabriel or Michael were found worthy!

John was overcome with a sense of despair, of sadness, of hopelessness! Have you ever felt hopeless? Have you ever thought all was lost, even briefly? John did, because he knew what the scroll represented; he knew that if no one could open the book, the show was over and creation would be doomed to feel the effects of sin for

eternity! We dare not underestimate what this meant, for if there was no one worthy to redeem the world, then there was nobody who could right the wrongs we see, nothing to prevent Satan from assuming full control over creation, and no one to break the cycle of sin and misery that marks a fallen world! And the question continued to echo throughout the courts of Heaven: “Who is worthy to take the book and to open the seals?”

The reply is found in the words of the Psalmist, who wrote in Psalm 30:5 that “weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning”! After John kneels in despair, Revelation 5:5 lifts him once again with glorious hope, and he tells us that “One of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof”! See this elder walking over to John, who kneels sobbing in despair; see as he kneels beside him and gently shakes his shoulder, and says “Wait! John, look up! John, there is One who is worthy!” And there IS! The very One who was promised in types and shadows, the One for whom men had been waiting from that very first sin of Eden when the first Adam was driven from the Garden and humanity with him! There is indeed One, and He has overcome!

And as John lifts his tear-stained eyes, the elder cries out with joy: “Weep not! Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah” It is a

reference to the promised Messiah! And when we are familiar with the rest of the Book, how true it is that so much of what we read begins to make sense, and to take shape beyond random, fantastic prophecies that we can hardly wrap our minds around!

“Who is worthy?” Genesis 49:8–10 promised that a ruler would come from Judah like a lion, strong and majestic and a mighty conqueror; and that He would be the “Root of David,” a reference to the humanity and the deity of the Messiah, the biological descendant of David who would restore the withered branch of his kingly line, and yet be the Creator from ages past, the very Root from which David himself sprang! “Weep not! Behold!” Remember, the Jews were looking for a “lion” Messiah, and this was a king and the King of Kings! They were expecting one who could bring military victory over their enemies, one who would establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, not so different from much of the world and even professing Christianity today, with their attempts to reform nations and governments by law and by force!

And yet, we know that Jesus, with whom John had walked, went around healing, preaching and performing miracles instead; as a result, “He came unto his own and his own received him not,” and they crucified this “Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David.” John wept in the misplaced expectations of his people, but 2000 years later, we can cry out

with the elder today, “Weep not! Behold!” For we know that the true power of this One lay in His identity as a “lamb” Messiah: our Kinsman Redeemer was and is the Lamb of God!

John continues in verse 6, “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” In spite of his expectations, John sees a lamb as it had been slain: no roaring lion here, just a gentle, wounded lamb, bearing seven horns and the Spirit of God upon Him. Again, “seven horns” are suggestive of complete power—a power that lay in the sacrifice of love, and we see much symbolism here, with a reminder of the Passover lamb. Exodus 12 speaks of lambs lovingly raised, and yet killed and sacrificed each year for sins, just as Jesus (the perfect Lamb) was slain on Calvary to redeem us from our own sins, though His perfect sacrifice required but one death! What a picture we see in those thousands of little dead lambs, slain year after year, speaking of that which the Redeemer would ultimately accomplish once and for all! And how it must have broken the Father’s heart as the Son hung upon the cross, slain for the sins of the world .

But in those little dead lambs, what a picture we behold of what Jesus the Redeemer was going to accomplish. Year after year, families would lovingly raise their

lambs, only to bring them to the place of sacrifice, and just as they brought and gave what was dear to them, so the Father sent His own Son to the cross—for you, and me, and all of Creation. Consider the cost; behold the love; and see how it must have broken His heart! Surely it is with awe that we sing: *O Lamb of God, was ever pain, was ever love like Thine?*

And yet the story does not end in sorrow, for the Lamb of God, our Redeemer, has risen and overcome! On the cross, the Lion gave His life and won the greatest victory in all of time and eternity; and rising from the grave, the Lamb arose again in power and triumph to redeem. When John tells us that He “prevailed” in verse 5, it means that He “carried off” the victory completely—He took it fully and completely!

Let us never mistake gentleness for weakness! Just because Jesus is the Lamb does not mean He is powerless! What Satan thought was his greatest victory became his greatest defeat, for Jesus carried off the victory on the Mount of Temptation (Matt. 4:1–11), He carried off the victory in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38–44), He carried off the victory on the cross (John 19:30), and He carried off the victory when He rose from the dead (Matt. 28:1–8)! There is hope! For the Lamb has prevailed!

To be continued...

Christian Filbrun

GOD AND HIS WORD ARE TRUE

Most of the world's people would likely consider the above title presumptuous. Bible-believing Christians might say, "I believe the God of the Bible is true." Would we, perhaps, draw the line before saying, "I *know* God and His Word are true"? To so declare would suggest that we have no doubt. Many of us, including this writer, would honestly admit that there have been times where we have had serious doubts. Job did. Calamity befell him, and God was silent. His friends were quick to suggest a cause and effect reason. They speculated that Job had sinned and he was being judged. Neither they, nor Job, had all the information. Nor do we! Yet, it is the will of our heavenly Father for us to grow in grace and the further knowledge of the truth. "To know" is to determine by investigation that the evidence is overwhelming. For some, this may also require divine revelation?

Now, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." Substance is much different from wishful thinking. It is verifiable. It is built on a rock that can't be moved. I can only relate my journey to knowing that God and His word are true. That journey began with parents and a grandmother with simple faith. The stories she read. The love for Jesus she showed to this

little tike informed my mind that God was a kind and watchful Father. Somehow, as I got older, I learned that some of my peers lacked such instruction. Doubts arose as some of these friends were apparently more Christ-like than I. Perhaps I only believed because of the way I was raised?

In school, I learned there were many alternative explanations for what I had been taught about the Bible. Who was right? Just to accept the truth of the Bible by faith seemed too simplistic. Still, I had a "measure of faith" and didn't want to be eternally lost. I yielded to the Spirit in baptism and committed my way to following Christ. I took this step by faith and asked Jesus to "...help my unbelief" Mark 9:23. Yet, even with this step, my sin-nature was still present. The difference was, I was more under conviction of sin and now had the Father to turn to in my failures (see 1 John 1:9). The battle between the flesh and Spirit was very real. At times I questioned if I was really a "new creature" as Paul described.

When I continued going to school after high school, I was increasingly presented with more sophisticated explanations of our evolutionary beginnings: 1) Of how religions evolved out of man's search for explanations of things science had not yet discovered. 2) Of other religions that had follow-

ers just as zealous as my brethren, and in some cases, seemingly even more so. This journey led me to read the writings of deep-thinking, God-fearing scientists, both from the past and present, that balanced this indoctrination. This helped, but many questions remained.

The “proofs” contradicting the Genesis account came from lack of knowing the complete picture. It is one thing to ascribe eons of time from rates of radioactive decay in the earth’s elements. It is another thing to trust radioactive dating for less than 10,000 years as the Bible seems to indicate was the timeframe from when the heavens and earth were created. Was it honest to believe one could determine what is by what was in the beginning? At what point did a universe “without form and void” have consistent decay indicators within its elements put in place by the great Designer?

The evidence from elaborate evolutionary trees of the animal kingdom may indicate common functions of creatures having similar needs. Reasonably, they do not prove progressive change; nor does the fossil record; nor do the other elaborate postulations. What these observations do indicate is the master stroke of an all-knowing Creator. Science’s attempts to speculate on origins without empirical evidence is akin to Job’s

friends describing the cause of Job’s suffering without knowing the One who was “in the beginning.” This observation is most helpful to those who accept by faith that “in the beginning God...” We easily fool ourselves when we think we know what hasn’t been revealed.

Along the way, I wanted to believe in the inerrancy of the Bible’s message because all of the alternatives I explored led to dead ends. Man trying to legislate morality has accelerated destruction of the family unit. Even the institution of marriage has been redefined as something other than a covenant before God between a man and woman. Solving societal problems by governmental intervention or war only provided temporary fixes, at best. Each “fix” simply opens a Pandora’s box to greater problems. World wars, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iran only brought temporary relief; then deeper hardships and increasingly more powerful weapons. The end goal seemingly is human annihilation of the enemy? Extreme polarization follows. With smart phones, AI and other technological advances, moral corruption, social isolation and a nihilistic hopelessness often increase. These destructive forces illustrate that “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

Our confidence in the Word of

God as a true message from our Lord to His people, arises from verifiable information. Hebrews 1:1 tells us how the Word of God was delivered to His human creation. God spoke to the fathers by the prophets; and through Moses the first five books of Scripture were recorded. Various other prophets and kings recorded most of the other Old Testament Scriptures. The New Testament Gospels were recorded by the apostles, Matthew and John, along with John Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark. He was most likely recording the narrative that he heard from the apostle Peter with whom he was associated. John Mark was also a traveling companion with Paul and Barnabas. Luke the physician, who wrote the gospel of Luke was a friend and also a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul who had an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Luke also wrote the book of Acts which records the birth of the church after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

The other books of the New Testament were written by the apostles, other eye-witnesses of Jesus' ministry or contemporaries of the eye-witnesses. Considerable verifiable evidence exists that the Scriptures we have today have been passed down to us in much of the same form as they were written by

these ancient faithful scribes. From 80–100 fragments of Greek papyrus text have been found and dated by carbon 14 methods to between 125 and 300 AD. These fragments contain much of the Gospels of Luke and John. Also, epistles written by Paul and Peter. Perhaps many of these were transcribed by scribes from the original texts by the authors. That these fragments exist today is truly amazing considering the extreme persecution of the church during this time bent on destroying the work of those “turning (their) world upside down” (see Acts 17:6). The extreme environmental conditions the papyrus fragments would have been exposed to over the centuries would be toxic to their survival—unless they were divinely preserved. (Some of the papyrus fragments can be viewed in The Museum of the Bible in Washington, D. C). Critics have suggested that early church fathers and apostates may have altered the wording to reflect their own bias. The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in 1947 puts this argument to rest. Some of these scrolls are dated to 200 BC including the one that contains most of the book of Isaiah and its many prophesies of Jesus recorded by the prophet some 700 years before His birth. This message of this ancient book agrees with the book of Isaiah we have today.

These are very clear prophetic utterances concerning the circumstances of Jesus' birth, His character, His incarnation and the manner and purpose of His death. A reasonable person could only conclude that the Scriptures were divinely inspired and divinely preserved.

God knew the heart of man from the beginning. He chose to reveal the waywardness of the human heart by exposing it in the wilderness wanderings of His chosen people. As they continued to follow their own choices influenced by their fleshly desires, their actions demonstrated that their fallen natures would prevail, unless God would radically change their hearts. He began to reveal through His prophets His plan of transplanting the human heart with one that could be indwelt by His Holy Spirit. This plan of redemption climaxed with the crucifixion and resurrection of His Son who was the incarnation of Himself. His apostles didn't get it until they were infilled with His Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Now they were equipped to receive, believe and die for His cause. Redemption was now available to all mankind! Not only was the Redeemer alive, but His Word was alive!

The disastrous endpoint of the evolutionary model leaves us with some hard questions. If our uni-

verse is billions of years old and human civilization 300,000 or so years old, why hasn't it self-destructed by now? If the manipulation of information from the common database which contains man's accumulated knowledge, who or what determines the common good for mankind that man can allegedly produce? Has our Creator given us a way out of the morass we find ourselves in? The answers to these questions are self-evident. There is a Creator. He is our Father and our God. His Word is true.

With meteorites streaking through our atmosphere; with pandemics beyond the control of our best minds and with seismic disturbances assaulting our universe, there can only be a designer God holding His creation together by His power. Man has boxed himself into a corner with human effort and advancing technology. Our heavenly Father is the way out. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Follow Him!

God and His Word are true, because the evidence shows "All other paths must lead astray, How fair so'er they seem" (Hymn 143).

That all might believe the greatest story ever told!

Stanley Boyd

THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH

It is my burden and prayer that each and everyone of us would allow the Spirit of almighty God to speak into our lives and to show us our blind spots in this subject. I believe that this applies to every one of us, wherever we find ourselves. Please do not look around and say, "Look at him or her," NO! But that we would look within and humbly come to God. "Search me, Oh God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24).

There once was a family of monkeys who lived in the big woods. There were three little monkeys, Albert, Peter, and Daisy, along with Mama and Papa monkey. They lived so happily in the security of the woods with big trees to swing through and take refuge in. The forest floor offered many delights such as berries and a little mushrooms. The sun beamed through the tree canopy and gave life to all, along with a refreshing rain shower here and there. Throughout the woods, there were many channels of rippling and bubbling water that provided refreshment and strength to the monkey family as well as to those who passed through. It was quite a peaceful place! Each and every day, the monkey family diligently kept the forest floor clean of the invasive. Daisy in question one day, ask her big brother Albert,

"Why do we always chop away these little plants?" Albert threw his arm around Daisy's shoulder and replied, "Papa says that they are an invasive plant called honeysuckle. Invasive means, if not kept at bay, they will take over the forest floor. But some time ago, I saw Papa leave a plant grow and saw him frolic through it and swing on it and even eat its sweet leaves. I'm not really sure how dangerous the plants are, doesn't seem worth all the work of clearing it away." So that fateful evening, Daisy brought up the subject, and the family talked about the honeysuckle and Papa thought it would be ok to let one bush grow.

Days passed on into weeks and weeks turned into months, and the monkey family was relishing in their wonderful abundance of honeysuckle. One honeysuckle plant had turned into many, and they hardly even seemed to notice. They would rest in the branches and nibble on the sweet leaves all the while being shaded from the sun, which they thought was really quite relieving. They began to totally forget about the berries and mushrooms, which once gave them life. Pretty soon even the bubbling water channels were hidden by the overtaking honeysuckle. One day, Albert, the oldest of the siblings, decided to climb up one of the old oak trees in the woods, and he began to watch his siblings and parents below frolicking about in the honeysuckle, and from this view he was quite disturbed. "Once the woods was a

safe and peaceful place,” he thought, “Now it seemed out of control and a bit chaotic.” Albert began to despise the honeysuckle, but none of the others seemed too concerned, as if it was just a rich blessing from God. By and by, late one night, a pack of wolves came into the woods to find the family of monkeys resting low in the branches of the honeysuckle. As



the wolves grew closer, Albert saw them and managed to grab Daisy and run with all his might to where he was sure the old water channel was. Just then there were loud cries and howls as the wolves attacked. “Whew!” Albert thought as he found the channel which then led him and Daisy to the safety of a cleft in a large rock outcropping. There they watched, hearts pounding out of their little

chests, in shock and despair, as the rest of the family were eaten for dinner by the ravenous wolves.

Sadly enough, the other brother, Peter, was also consumed by the enticing honeysuckle since Mama and Papa were. But by the providence and grace of God, Albert was plucked out of that, and saw the danger, and also helped Daisy see the danger, and they both fled.

Brothers and sisters, have we been blinded by the honeysuckle? In this story, the woods is the “home,” a part of God’s creation and a place that is meant to be a safe place for our family.

The monkeys are representative of us, as families. The big mature trees are the pillars of wisdom, godly character, principal, doctrine, and godly security. The sun shining through is the Spirit of God. The berries and mushrooms are representative of the Bible, the God inspired words of Truth. Albert bringing his sister with him to safety is a representation of the positive influence that siblings can have on each other. The water channels are other saints, who direct us to the Light. The cleft and the rock is Jesus Christ our Savior. The honeysuckle is the accumulation of wealth and prosperity, and the wolves are representative of the judgment that was received.

Oh that we would all see the seriousness of this matter! That we would not be blinded by the riches and pleasures of this world. The concern of this message is that perhaps we have turned a blind eye to accumulating things,

as if it is just a rich blessing from God. But is it? And my prayer is that the Holy Spirit's power would not be quenched by the distraction of gain and that we would each look within and humble ourselves before God and ask Him to guide us in this matter. Also, that we would be willing to talk about this subject together and keep each other accountable regarding gain.

Please don't think that since I've shared this that it means that I've got it all figured out. No, this pricks deeply at my heart, and that is why I feel to share it. Just like the honeysuckle quenched the sunshine from the monkeys, so prosperity can quench the Holy Spirit's work in my life. May we all run back to the Rock of our salvation that we may have opened eyes.

Now, you may ask, so now what? How do I keep wealth at bay? How does this look practically for me? The simple truth is that "Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life," but it is up to me to seek the Lord for this truth to become real to me. So we have to start somewhere. Prayer, sharing my heart with God and letting it all over to Him, and listening for His still small voice.

Quiet time with the Lord, reading the Bible and thinking on God's love for us. How can we expect to hear from God or be connected to the vine or feel His presence and peace if we hardly ever spend time with Him, and are constantly filling our mind with distractions?

Distractions, you name it: phone scrolling, social media, work, hobbies, accumulating wealth, and so on. We all have them. Perhaps these are not bad things until they become a higher priority over God. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!

Here are verses to dig into and prayerfully consider:

- ◆ Luke 12:15–21
- ◆ Luke 6:20–26
- ◆ Mark 8:34–38
- ◆ Matthew 6:19–34
- ◆ 1 Timothy 6:6–11

Questions to consider:

What is my focus in life?

Is prosperity invading?

Are riches quenching the Holy Spirit's power in my life?

Is "more and more gain" the driving force in my heart instead of "spreading the kingdom of God" being the driving force in my heart?

Am I making up excuses to justify my desire for more, more, more?

Am I so attached to my possessions that I wouldn't give them up for the sake of following Jesus Christ? Would I go away sorrowing like the rich young ruler?

"The accumulation of wealth and prosperity in the home, is like honeysuckle in the big woods."

Toby Shellabarger

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

Nathan L. Meyers

In November 1944, during World War II, thirty-six conscientious objectors participated in what would later be known as the Minnesota Starvation Experiment. For six months, scientists subjected these participants to semistarvation. The men lost more than a quarter of their body weight. They suffered physical effects, including extreme tiredness, protruding ribs, and sunken faces. They experienced mental and emotional effects, such as irritability and loss of motivation.

The purpose of the experiment was to study the effects of starvation and to determine the best method of rehabilitation for people severely deprived of food. Knowledge gained from the study was used to help those who had suffered during the war. The complete results of the experiment filled a 1385-page, 2-volume publication.

The participants said that during the experiment they became obsessed with eating. Greater than the physical discomfort was the mental torment of constantly thinking about food. Their starving bodies locked their attention on one need—food.

Jesus used hunger as a metaphor to describe the focused attention a person should have on another kind of need—a spiritual need. Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” To hunger and thirst for something means to have an urgent desire for it. Louis

Berkhof said, “When men really hunger and thirst spiritually, they feel that something is wanting, are conscious of the indispensable character of that which is lacking, and endeavor to obtain it.”

What does it mean to hunger after righteousness? Righteousness, as used by Jesus in the Gospels, refers to living a life that is in right relationship with God. Living in right relationship with God means having actual, practical righteousness, not just imputed righteousness. To hunger for that kind of righteousness means to pursue freedom from sin. It means to cultivate a life of purity. It means to become imitators of Christ.

Even more, to hunger and thirst after righteousness means to desire a relationship with God Himself. Those seeking God desire to know His Son, Jesus Christ. They seek Christ in His Word. They seek Him in prayer. They seek Him in fellowship with His people. Their hunger for God makes Him the focused priority in their lives. They hunger and thirst for God because He alone can satisfy the soul.

I. SPIRITUAL HUNGER AND THIRST

God designed our bodies to experience the sense of hunger or thirst when they become depleted in energy, nutrients, or water. Hunger and thirst serve an essential purpose. They remind us to stop what we are doing and take in the nourishment that is essential to life. Whenever the need for food or water goes unmet for a long time, the desire for those things reach the level of anguish.

This anguish is like an alarm system, alerting us to our need. Without food and water, we will eventually die.

What is true of our earthly bodies is also true of our spiritual lives. Adam Clarke wrote, “As the body depends for its nourishment, health, and strength upon the earth, so does the soul upon heaven.” Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness recognize that heaven holds out to us that which can satisfy the longing of our souls.

A. SPIRITUAL HUNGER CALLS US TO SEE OUR NEED FOR GOD.

In the parable Jesus told in Luke 15:11–32, the Prodigal Son ignored his spiritual needs while he indulged in the world. Eventually, his money was gone, and a famine struck, leaving him destitute. The rumblings in his belly awoke in him the realization of his spiritual needs. He began to hunger for righteousness.

The Prodigal Son illustrates the first four beatitudes.

- The Prodigal Son became **poor in spirit**. He humbly admitted, “[I] am no more worthy to be called thy son” (verse 19).

- He **mourned for his sin**. He confessed, “I have sinned” (verse 18).

- He became **meek**. He submitted to his father’s instruction. He no longer insisted that his father do for him what he wanted (verse 12—“give me”), but humbly asked his father to do with him whatever his father willed (verse 19—“make me as one of thy hired servants”).

- He **hungered** for a right relationship with his father (verse 18—“I will arise and go to my fa-

ther”).

Sinners who turn from their sin and seek God are like the Prodigal Son. They realize they are destitute apart from God, and the things of the world do not satisfy their souls. A spiritual hunger motivates them to arise and go to Christ. There they find that which satisfies.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness is not just for prodigal sons. It is a defining characteristic of true disciples. All Christians should long for a closer relationship with Christ (Php. 3:13–15).

Hungering and thirsting for God implies a degree of intensity. Those who are physically hungry and thirsty are eager for food and drink. The parched throat of the thirsty man and the hunger pangs of the starving man drive them to seek relief. Just so, those seeking God recognize that nothing else will meet the needs of their souls; indeed, all else has failed to meet those needs. And now, unless God Himself meets those needs, the soul will shrivel and die. Psalm 42:1–2 describes this type of intense longing for God: “As the hart [deer] panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

B. IGNORING HUNGER LEADS TO STARVATION.

If there is no food, eventually there will be no life. The ancient man was keenly aware of this. People relied on their crops to feed themselves. If drought, flood, insects, or war destroyed their crops, they went hungry. The historical

books of the Bible record at least ten famines, and many more famines have gone unrecorded. Millions of people have died because of famine and starvation.

The vivid descriptions of starvation in the Bible reveal the writers' acquaintance with it. The phrase "cleanness of teeth" described those who have nothing to eat (Amos 4:6). Jeremiah lamented, "Their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick. They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field" (Lam. 4:8-9).

Spiritual starvation is also a sad reality. How many people are starving spiritually? Why are they starving? Some are ignoring the pangs of hunger in their souls. Their souls are malnourished and emaciated, not because there is no food, but because they do not eat.

Has anyone ever died because he kept forgetting to eat? Yet many Christians are starving spiritually because they are not eating, when all the while the food is in front of them! Their Bibles remain unopened. Church goes unattended. Prayer is forgotten. Fellowship with God's people is neglected. They suffer from spiritual "cleanness of teeth."

C. HUNGER MOTIVATES US TO WORK.

Hunger is a marvelous motivator. It creates a drive within us to make sure that we will not find ourselves hungry with nothing to eat. Hunger has spurred many men to find a job and work hard to keep it. Hunger has robbed the

world of much laziness.

When Jesus pronounces the hungry blessed, He is saying that those who are motivated by spiritual hunger to get out of their easy chair and seek God will find refreshment and satisfaction that many others are missing. They will find refreshment for their weary souls, satisfaction to fill their empty hearts, and joy to lift up their downcast spirits.

Spiritual food is obtained by labor just like physical food is obtained by toil. Even in our age of processed food, food isn't free. Just ask the farmer or the cook! Likewise, satisfying a hunger for God and His righteousness requires effort. The Lord says, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). Jesus promises, "**Ask**, and it shall be given you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9). Those are action words.

It takes discipline to set aside time to feed our souls. It may mean getting out of bed earlier (so we have time to read the Bible), going to sleep sooner (so we can get up on time), putting the media away (so we can meditate on God's Word), and learning how to study (so we can rightly interpret the Bible).

II. SPIRITUAL JUNK FOOD

What hinders our hunger and thirst for God? Sin does. Bitterness, lust, and evil speaking will ruin our appetite for God. Sin in our hearts is like poison. It makes us spiritually sick and will eventually destroy us. One sin that is

poisoning many souls today is pornography (Matt. 5:28). Smartphones have made this vice universally available, streamed into any secret corner without anyone knowing—except God. This poison will ruin our appetite for God.

If sin is like poison, then many other seemingly good things are like junk food. Just like snacking on junk food can spoil our appetite for a nutritious meal, so time consumed with social media, sports, and long hours at work can dull our appetite for God.

The expository preacher D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “I suggest that if we are truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness we shall not only avoid things that we know to be bad and harmful; we shall even avoid things that tend to dull or take the edge off our spiritual appetites. There are so many things like that, things that are quite harmless in themselves and which are perfectly legitimate. Yet if you find that you are spending much of your time with them, and that you desire the things of God less, you must avoid them.”

A. TOO FULL

If we snack all day on chocolate bars and potato chips, we will have little appetite for fruits and vegetables. A person may have a full stomach and yet suffer from malnutrition because of an improper diet. Just so, Christians may fill their hearts and minds with “junk food” and, as a result, have no room for the “meat and potatoes” of God’s Word. Our lives may be so full of other pursuits that we have no room left to hunger after righteousness. Jesus warned, “Woe unto you that are

full! for ye shall hunger” (Luke 6:25). Those who are full of the things of this earth and have no room for the righteousness of God will someday find that they have neither the good things of earth nor the good things of Heaven.

The people of Israel tried to satisfy their spiritual needs with idolatry. In Jeremiah 2:13, the Lord compared Himself to a fountain of living water, and idols to a broken cistern. He said, “My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

A fountain of living waters is a spring out of which flows fresh, clear, bubbling water. It was the purest and most refreshing water available. In contrast, idols were like cisterns. Cisterns were underground reservoirs cut into the rock. Rainwater filled the cisterns during the rainy season, supplying people with water during the dry season. In the summer months, the water in the cistern became stagnant and scummy. It was grossly inferior to a fountain of living water.

The idols Israel worshipped were not only like cisterns, they were broken cisterns. The cisterns had cracks in the walls, allowing the water to leak out. The result was that partway through the dry season, the cistern went dry. There was no more water to quench their thirst. This analogy of a broken cistern illustrates Jesus’ woe to those who are full now. Are you quenching your thirst with things other than God? Eventually you will find your cistern has gone dry.

We may not be worshipping idols, but Jesus warned of being choked “with **cares** and **riches** and **pleasures** of this life” (Luke 8:14). When we are too full of these things, we have no room for Christ. When cares and riches and pleasures are no more, what then will you have?

B. TOO BUSY

Sometimes we may be too busy to hunger after Christ. Martha was too busy. She had too much to do and no time to sit at the Master’s feet and hear His word like her sister did. Finally, Martha took time out of her busy schedule to talk to Jesus. She said, “Lord, make my lazy sister come help me!” (author’s paraphrase). Jesus replied, “Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:38–42). Martha wanted to satisfy the hunger of her guests. She had not noticed that what they were hungering after was not in her kitchen.

If we don’t have time for God, we are busier than God ever intended us to be. Saying that we have no time for God is another way of saying that God is not all that important to us. There will be times in our lives when time alone with God is scarce. Motherhood especially can be straining when little ones constantly demand our care. But if we are truly thirsting, we will find time, even if it is only a few minutes.

One lesson we learn from Martha is that even good things, such as Christian ministry, can distract us from that which is even more

important. Often, important things go undone simply because we haven’t scheduled time for them. That is why it is best to set aside a specific time each day to spend with God in His Word, seeking “instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

Few people are malnourished because they are too busy to eat. Yet many Christians are spiritually underfed because they think themselves too busy to seek God.

C. TOO BORING

Perhaps you say, “Pursuing holiness is boring. Many other things are more exciting.” You may be right. But I do not wish to measure the Christian life by the standard of excitement. I prefer to measure it by the standard of satisfaction. Excitement is like a firecracker: it makes a bang and a flash, and then it is gone. Satisfaction is something that abides even after the bang and the flash are gone. It abides even if there is no bang or flash. Satisfaction in Christ abides forever.

People can spend hours watching movies, reading novels, perusing magazines, keeping up with their favorite sports teams, or chasing a little white ball around the golf course. But never a minute have they for God. According to statistics, Americans, on average, spend more than four hours a day on their smartphones. The beeps and the messages popping up keep us going back to the screen. Faintly in the background we have a gnawing spiritual hunger. If we put our phones down long enough, we may notice it.

D. TOO DIFFICULT

Some may say that hungering and thirsting after righteousness doesn't work because following Christ is too difficult. Jesus said there would be hard times and once reminded a young preacher that the Christian life is like a war (it takes everything we've got), a race (it's grueling), and farming (think of hard labor). Paul encouraged Timothy to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1-6). God will help us.

Hebrews 5:11-14 speaks to some believers who had stopped growing. There was much that they should have already learned about Christ, but they had grown "dull of hearing." That is, they did not exert the effort needed to understand what they were hearing. They were content to drink milk like infants rather than chew meat like adults. These believers had stopped pursuing righteousness.

Hungering for righteousness is a lifelong character trait of the disciple. We need to keep on learning to know Christ and overcoming sin. The Christian life is like climbing to the peak of a mountain. Along the trail are many little plateaus, and clustered on those plateaus are Christians who have stopped climbing. They are content with immature righteousness and with their sins that yet remain. Brother, sister, keep climbing!

III. SPIRITUAL SATISFACTION

Jesus promised that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled. That is, they will eat and be satisfied.

Jesus said, "I am that bread of life...This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die" (John 6:48-50). He also said, "Whosoever drinketh of this [earthly] water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14).

The things of earth do not satisfy soul-hunger. Isaiah made that clear when he said, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" (Isa. 55:2). But there is something, actually Someone, who satisfies. You can find satisfaction by surrendering your will to Christ, by believing that He died and rose from the dead, and by living for His kingdom.

Jesus is calling us to hunger and thirst after righteousness—to hunger for a life lived in right relationship with Him. He wants us to desire Him the same way that a starving man craves food.

Selected from the Bible Helps Booklet No. 478 by the Editor

TICKETS PLEASE!

J. M. Dosh

The train was going west. The time was evening. At a station, a little girl about eight years old came aboard, carrying a little package under her arm. She came into the car and deliberately took a seat. She then commenced an ea-

ger scrutiny of faces, but all were strangers to her. She appeared weary and, placing the package for a pillow, she prepared to try to secure a little sleep. Soon the conductor came along, collecting tickets and fare. Observing him, she asked if she might lie there. The gentlemanly conductor replied that she might, and then kindly asked her for her ticket. When she informed him that she had none, the following conversation ensued.

Asked the conductor, "Where are you going?"

She answered, "I am going to heaven."

He asked again, "Who pays your fare?"

She then asked, "Mister, does this railroad lead to heaven, and does Jesus travel on it?"

He answered, "I think not. Why did you think so?"

"Why, sir, before Ma, died, she used to sing to me of a heavenly railroad and you looked so nice and kind, I thought this was the road. My ma used to sing of Jesus and the heavenly railway, and that He paid the fare for everybody, and that the train stopped at every station to take people on board; but my ma doesn't sing to me anymore. Nobody sings to me now, and I thought I'd take the cars and go to Ma. Mister, do you sing to your little girl about the railroad that goes to heaven? You have a little girl, don't you?"

He replied, weeping, "No, my dear, I have no little girl now. I had one once but she died some time ago, and went to heaven."

Again she asked, "Did she go

over this railroad; and are you going to see her now?"

By this time, all the persons in the coach were on their feet, and most of them were weeping. An attempt to describe what I witnessed is almost futile. Some said, "God bless the little girl."

Hearing someone say that she was an angel, the little girl earnestly replied, "Yes, my ma used to say I would be an angel sometime."

Addressing herself once more to the conductor, she asked him, "Do you love Jesus? I do, and if you love Him, He will let you ride to heaven on His railroad. I am going there, and I wish you would go with me. I know Jesus will let me into Heaven when I get there, and He will let you in, too, and everybody that will ride on His railroad—yes, all these people. Would you like to see heaven, and Jesus, and your little girl?"

These words, so innocently and pathetically uttered, brought a great gush of tears from all eyes but most profusely from the eyes of the conductor. Some who were traveling on our heavenly railroad shouted aloud for joy.

She now asked the conductor, "Mister, may I lie here until we get to heaven?"

He answered, "Yes, dear, yes."

She then asked, "Will you wake me up then, so that I may see my ma, your little girl, and Jesus? I do so want to see them all."

The answer came in broken accents but in words very tenderly spoken, "Yes, dear angel, yes. God bless you!"

“Amen!” was sobbed by more than a score of voices.

Turning her eyes upon the conductor, she interrogated him, “What shall I tell your little girl when I see her? Shall I say to her that I saw her Pa on Jesus’ railroad? Shall I?”

This brought a fresh flood of tears from all present, and the conductor knelt by her side, and embracing her, wept the reply he could not utter.

I thank God that I was a witness to this scene, but I was sorry

that at this point I was obliged to leave the train.

Friend, are you on the “Jesus Train”? Are you going to see your parents and loved ones when you pass on? It may not be an easy road like coasting on the broad road to destruction, but it is the only real “Freedom Train.” The Bible will tell you the way. Jesus has promised that no one who comes to Him will be refused.

Give Him your heart today!

Selected from the June 2026 *The Vindicator* by the Editor.

MEDITATIONS

Hung between the heavens and earth, neither could contain Him.

God is faithful in this generation. He’ll also be in the next.

Legalism is the letter without the Holy Spirit.

Death is a reality but not a finality.

Fear not, old age is not an illness.

Pride is never satisfied.

Choose joy.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

This section offers some questions to think about, or for Sunday afternoon discussions, or to prompt future articles from our readers, etc. Readers are encouraged to offer questions.

We hear the Scripture say that in the last days men will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:4). This strikes some fear in our hearts because we all know that we are inclined to love some pleasure.

Is there a balance that God can be pleased with?

Questions:

1. Which of my great longings and

wishes are the most clearly manifest to my family and friends?

2. After the basic needs of my family are taken care of, does my checkbook accurately record my main loves and cravings?

3. A lover of pleasure more than a lover of God? How can that be? Is that just written about unbelievers?

4. How can I be very clear that I love my God more than all?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

June 28, 2026; West Manchester, IN
 Jeremiah Cripe
 June 29, 2026; Fall Creek, IN
 Taylor Filbrun

COMMUNION NOTICES

Sept. 26, 2026..... Pleasant View, OH
 Oct. 3, 2026..... Providence, IN
 Oct. 10, 2026..... Lower Twin, OH
 Oct. 10, 2026..... Zillah, WA
 Oct. 17, 2026..... Clearwater, IN/WI
 Oct. 17, 2026..... Maple Grove, OH
 Oct. 17, 2026..... Western Kansas, KS
 Oct. 24, 2026..... Stillwater, OH
 Oct. 31, 2026..... Bethel, OH

Oct. 31, 2026 Columbia River, WA
 Nov. 7, 2026..... Covington, OH
 Nov. 7, 2026..... Kidron Valley, KS
 Nov. 7, 2026..... Shenandoah, VA
 Nov. 7, 2026..... West Modesto, CA
 Nov. 14, 2026..... Fall Creek, IN
 Jan. 30, 2027 Pine Grove, FL
 Feb. 6, 2027 Living Epistle, NM

HARVEST MEETINGS

Aug. 2, 2026..... Maple Grove, OH
 Aug. 9, 2026 Covington/Sugar Grove, OH
 Aug. 23, 2026..... Stillwater, OH
 Aug. 30, 2026..... Salem, OH
 Sept. 20, 2026..... Bear Creek, OH

POEMS

LESSONS FROM DAVID

His mercy endureth forever, young man David sang.
 His voice and harp with melody across the pasture rang.
 Oh how pleasant and peaceful was the joyful sound.
 As the little lambs rested in the green pastures around.

His mercy endureth forever, anointed David did sing,
 While hiding in the cave or in the presence of the king.
 His life was on the line because of jealousy and pride.
 Yet a song was on his tongue by which fear he did override.

His mercy endureth forever, as king David wrote.
 While mourning over his sin which caused his son to be smitten.
 His tears, his cries, his pleas in brokenness he did raise.
 After it was over, in song to God his voice did praise.

Conclusion:

Praise God in the peaceful times.
 Praise God in the troubled times.
 Praise God in the sorrowful times.

FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER!!

Winter Etter, New Lebanon, Ohio

HEAVEN

Anita Martin

Just beyond the golden sunset
 And the sky that's tinged with blue,
 Lies the city of our homeland
 That's prepared for me and you.
 There's a river clear as crystal
 And the street is shining gold,
 With the Lamb in whitest garments
 On a dazzling throne, we're told.

Oh, the angels' harps are playing
 With sweet melody sublime;
 See the saints around the footstool
 Of their Savior—yours and mine.
 Sweet triumphant songs are swelling,
 Praises ringing o'er the land;
 Heartaches, sighing, tears have vanished
 E'er we join that happy band.

I am longing for that city
 Where no sin can enter in,
 Where we'll join the heavenly concert
 And a golden crown we'll win.
 There we'll nevermore be tempted,
 Sorrow's pain will not invade;
 Hallelujah, what a promise!
 Where the roses never fade.

Dearest friend, now comes the question,
 Will you join me over there?
 Can you lay aside your treasures,
 Seek your Savior's face so fair?
 All the hardships we encounter,
 All the trials we endure
 Will be thought of, then, as nothing
 When we reach the heavenly shore.

Make the choice today, my brother;
 Lay your burden at the cross.
 Christ will give you peace and mercy
 And redeem you from the lost.

We are here today to labor
 For the morrow is not ours;
 Christ may come tonight in glory
 From among the shining stars.

What a wonderful reunion,
 What a shouting there will be!
 Christ will take us home to glory,
 Friends and loved ones we will see.
 Oh, just think of all the rapture
 We'll behold with shining eyes,
 Find a place among the angels,
 Yes, eternal in the skies!

Just suppose you'd miss that ending.
 It's not worth the risk, dear friend;
 For there is another dwelling
 That's eternal in the end.
 There's a place prepared for Satan
 And the people he has won,
 Where there is eternal darkness
 And the fire burns on and on.

Can't you see the day approaching?
 Will your title then ring clear?
 As you stand there at the Judgment,
 What will be the words you hear?
 May it be, "Thou faithful servant
 Enter to that street of gold.
 Thou wast faithful over little,
 Now the joys are yours untold!"

Selected by

Sue Flory, Pleasant Hill, OH

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:15-17).

OBITUARIES

KUNTZ — Will Roger, son of Willard and Cathern (Denlinger) Kuntz was born March 4, 1938, in Covington, Ohio (Main Street). He passed away May 18, 2026, at the age of 88 years.

Roger was united in marriage with Martha Irene Flory on August 16, 1958. They shared life's joys and challenges together for 67 years as joint heirs of the grace of God. They were blessed with three sons and three daughters.

In August of 1960, Roger and Martha accepted Jesus Christ and became followers of Him in His Kingdom and were baptized into the fellowship of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church. In 2009, while considering the commandments and attitude of Jesus Christ and His Church, to live at peace with God and all men, they chose to join the New Conference.

After graduating from Troy High School in 1956, Roger worked as a welder and ornamental iron railing installer before joining NCR Corporation in Dayton until 1958. He then worked for Better Bulk Fertilizer, delivering products and helping farmers erect grain bins and bucket elevators. Later, he worked at Tait Manufacturing building water pumps before moving to General Films in Covington, where he advanced from second-shift foreman to production manager in the extruding department. In 1972, he joined the startup of Crayex Corporation as production manager

and helped launch its McDonough, Georgia plant. In 1979, he transitioned to trucking Crayex products for the next 29 years, calling it his favorite job until retiring at age 70. Alongside his career, Roger farmed with his oldest sons and started an agricultural lime spreading business that has continued through his son and grandsons since 2004.

Roger and Martha were blessed to make a trip to the Holy Lands, a Church History trip to Germany, and a trip following Apostle Paul's Missionary travels in Turkey, Greece, and Italy. They enjoyed traveling to all the 50 states and taking the family on vacation to Canada to fish for many years.

He is survived by his loving companion, Martha; sons, Michael (Karen) and Eldon (Janice); a daughter-in-law, Sandra Kuntz; daughters, Susan Kelley, Karla Weaver (Matt), Melinda Lair (Andrew); 24 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren; three sisters, Nancy Garber, Kathleen (Kenneth) Miller, Ruth Ann Kuntz, and many nephews, nieces and friends.

Preceding him in death were his parents; parents-in-law; brother, Sam Kuntz; brother-in-law, Harold Garber; in-laws, Mark and Lois Simmons, Fred and Mary Ellen Pansing, Eugene and Ida Mae Kelley; a son, Lowell in 2012; grandbaby, Gabriel Lair; and two great-grandbabies, Grace Kuntz and River Kuntz.

“A walk in the Spirit with God and His Son, Jesus Christ, has been a peaceful time, amid a world of chaos, sin and turmoil! God is good! Praise ye the Lord!”

The funeral service was held on Friday, May 22, 2026, at the Sugar Grove meeting house with interment following at the Sugar Grove cemetery.

Written by Roger in 2011 and updated by

The Family

DEATON — Ruby (Garber), daughter of John and Maude (Turner) Garber was born on September 27, 1925, at Pratt, Kansas. She peacefully passed from this life to eternity in the early morning hours of May 19, 2026, at the age of 100 years, 7 months and 22 days.

She moved with her parents to Modesto, California, in her early teens. She accepted Christ as her Savior and was baptized into the Old German Baptist Brethren Church on December 2, 1945. She remained faithful to her vows until death. She was united in marriage to Clifford Deaton on June 1, 1947, at her parents' home.

They shared the joys and sorrows of life for over 63 years until Dad's passing in 2010. This union was blessed with 6 sons and 3 daughters. Alan (Ruth), Julie (Brenton) Wise, Wayne (deceased) (Kathy), Ward (Becky), Bruce (Julie), Brian (Diane), Carol (Ren) Rumble, Patty (John) Ritter, and Daryl (Geneva).

Mother and Dad lived in Preble County, Ohio, all their married life. She enjoyed caring for her family and working in her garden and flower beds. She loved quilting and spent many hours in later years sewing aprons. Her strong faith and trust in the Lord showed in many ways. She left an example for all of us to follow.

Mother lived at Brookhaven Memory Care Center for over six years. Many hours were spent singing and visiting with her. The staff lovingly cared for her and commented on her singing and cheerful countenance many times. Mother commented to one nurse, “I am almost ready,” and on May 19 she met her Savior.

She is survived by her children, 32 grandchildren, 115 great-grandchildren, seven great-great-grandchildren. One sister-in-law, Dorothy Brubaker.

She was preceded in death by her son Wayne; grandson, John Deaton; and great-grand-daughters, Jana Sink and Adelyn Bowman. Also, her siblings and their companions, Eva (Sam) Wolf, Claude (Anne) Garber, Lavern (Bernice) Garber; and her in-laws, Glen (Bertha) Deaton, Omer (Esther) Deaton, and John Brubaker.

Services were held on May 30, 2026, at the Lower Twin Meeting House by the home brethren. Mother was laid to rest in the Lower Twin Cemetery awaiting the resurrection day. She will be greatly missed by us all.

The Family

RIFFEY — Homer Alva, son of Alva Charles and Vernia (Barnhart) Riffey was born January 12, 1935, at home near Harris, Kansas. He was married to Marilyn Kay Flory on September 21, 1957, at the home of her parents, Henry and Ruth (Long) Flory. After spending the last 2½ years living at the homes of his children, he passed away June 13, 2026, at the home of his daughter in Peru, Indiana, at the age of 91.

He was baptized into the Old German Baptist Brethren Church at a young age, receiving the anointing twice, later in life.

He is survived by his children, Debra and Kendall Eichman, Bonita and Stanley Baker, Edward and Karla, and Gayla and Gary Hufford; 13 grandchildren; Melody and Nathaniel Bauman, Brett and Mary Eichman, Logan

and Carrie Eichman, Trent and Malinda Baker, Todd and Sara Baker, Tamera Baker, Kenya and Jacob Deaton, Kodi and Beth Riffey, Lane and Marcia Riffey, Lanta and Douglass Lavy, Klayton and Julie Hufford, Cyrena and Kyle Metzger, Angela and Patrick Garber; 36 great-grandchildren; brothers, Glen and Velma, Wayne and Rosanna; and his wife's siblings and companions.

Preceding him in death were his wife, his parents, parents-in-law, his little sister, Wanda, and two brothers-in-law.

Funeral services were held June 17, 2026, in the Cedar Creek meetinghouse by the home brethren. Burial followed in the Bethel Cemetery near Westphalia, Kansas. There to await the Resurrection!

The Family

Terms

Subscriptions should be made through the congregational contact or through *The Testimony* office. Subscription price is \$30.00 per year. New subscriptions should be paid (prorated) through the remainder of the current year. All renewals begin at the first of the calendar year. Newly married and those unable to pay for a subscription may receive a free subscription through the agent of their local congregation.

Contributors

Authors of essays, devotionals, poems, etc. are asked to review the Statement of Purpose on the back page of this periodical. Articles should

be based on Scripture. References are appreciated. Shorter focused articles are more desirable than articles that move from one topic to another. Selected material will be considered. Original writings are preferred. It is recommended that writers submit themselves to the Spirit, which reveals the will of God to the Church in every age, according to the varied needs and circumstances.

Written articles should be legible. Typed material is preferred and should be double-spaced. Electronic transmission or CD will be accepted. The author's name and address must be included on all material. An attempt will be made to contact the author of articles that are not accepted.

Old German Baptist Brethren
Church—New Conference

THE TESTIMONY

353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102

The Testimony is a Christian publication intended for those who desire nourishment in their spiritual walk, and for writers who wish to express witness to the Truth of the Gospel as experienced in their own lives. It holds the Holy Scriptures to be its only Creed. Its purpose is to bear witness to the Truth of God's Word as it is applied in the daily life of committed Christians. It supports the anabaptist and pietist foundations of the Brethren of Schwarzenau, Germany (1708) including the biblical principle of the community of believers bound by a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus confirmed by adult immersion baptism (Mark 16:16). It strives to promote a life of true living piety among all who confess Jesus as their Lord. It seeks to restore and maintain

a fellowship of true primitive Christianity through the communication of all good things.

Send all communication to:

The Testimony

353 Billman Rd.

New Paris, OH 45347-9102

Phone: (937) 604-9464

thetestimony@emypeople.net

The Testimony Committee

Lowell Miller, Editor

Phil King

Tim Deaton

Grant Fullmer

Rusty Flora

Associate Editors

Marcus Miller

Darryl Filbrun