

# Wisdom & Power

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We hope each issue gives you something to think about, laugh over, pray on, and pass around.

Readers are urged to submit articles for publication. We can't guarantee that they will be used, however.

We gladly receive mail from you. Tell us what you think of the magazine.

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# First Words

## Put Your Faith Where Your Mouth Is

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At a recent Bible study we talked about “visible faith,” using Luke 5:17-26. I wanted to establish the fact that our faith needs to blossom beyond words. I wondered out loud if faith was a verb? I’m not an English major, but if it isn’t, it should be.

Faith that is only professed can’t be called “visible faith”. Visible faith is what is seen in the actions of those who are living their faith. This is what James said, “What does it profit, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? But someone will say, You have faith and I have works. Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by works” (James 4:14,18).

This was highlighted in our text from Luke 5. As Jesus was teaching in a crowded home, some men carried a paralyzed man to him. Access to Jesus was hindered by the crowd, so they made a hole in the roof and lowered the man down. Verse 20 declares, “When Jesus saw their faith...” Jesus saw that these men displayed visible faith.

In response to their faith, Jesus pronounced forgiveness on the paralyzed man. How fantastically wonderful! The faith of those who brought the man was enough for Jesus to set the man free from the prison of guilt, shame, and sin.

Your visible faith can do the same thing. Read that again if you missed it. Yes, the same result. Consider that person, who you may have concluded is “too far gone”. Do you believe Jesus can free them from whatever self-imposed prison they are bound by? Well, if not, then of course you wouldn’t go to the trouble of introducing them to Jesus. But, if on the other hand, you can say, “Yes I believe the Son can set us free,” then put your faith where your mouth is! Turn your invisible faith into visible faith.

The text in Luke gives us a good contrast between visible faith and words only. Let me put it into today’s setting. You know someone who is “too far gone”. Is it possible for this individual to receive forgiveness? That’s not too difficult to answer. Looking back, the

Pharisees called it blasphemy. They would not have offered it, but we can. Do you?

As the account indicates, Jesus went beyond just talking, by offering proof of what he said. The paralyzed man got up and carried his bed home. Your friend who is “too far gone” can also receive forgiveness **and** walk in a new kind of life, something, perhaps, that wasn’t thought possible until your faith became visible.

The record doesn’t say how the men felt when they saw the man get up and walk home. I’m sure they hurried down to rejoice with him as he glorified God. You would too, wouldn’t you?

Verse 26 tells us that the people who saw this work of faith said, “we have seen strange things today”. That’s right, your visible faith seen by others, will indeed seem strange in our world today. Amaze those who know you by putting your faith where your mouth is.

This issue comes with a couple of themes, one is putting your faith into action (if you’ve read this far you know what I think about that) the other is standing firm in the face of difficulties we face in life. Pastor Jeff Fletcher and Patrick Navas write about peace. We have several shorter articles that I hope will encourage you as well.

In an effort to help people get connected, a new email group has been established for readers of *Wisdom & Power*. My goal is to give a platform for discussion about articles, make announcements, prayer requests, and share fellowship pictures. You are invited to join at: <http://groups.google.com/group/wisdom-and-power>

If you don’t own a computer, your local library may be able to help. Contact me if you need more help.

As always, I hope this issue is a blessing and encouragement to you. Thanks for your prayers, and support.

Read on,

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# A Call to Live With Kingdom Purpose

“Put Your Money  
Where Your Mouth  
Is!”

By Angela Hays Moore

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Do you remember the old 1970's toothpaste commercial slogan, “*Put your money where your mouth is?*” The toothpaste company wanted you to spend your money on a more expensive toothpaste to ensure that your smile was brighter and healthier. We tend to use this idiom to mean: “*Back up your words with action!*” I believe that's what we are all called to do, as stated clearly in this Scripture: “*For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead*” (James 2:26). In other words, if you *really* believe that the Kingdom of God is real and that it will be established on this earth someday at the return of Christ (that's faith!), then what are you going to do about it? It's going

to begin to sink in and permeate every facet of your life. This faith of yours will change how you view everything that you do and everything that you say. It will impact how you view your relationships and what you choose to do in your free time, how you spend your money, how you raise your kids, what your priorities are in your schedule, and cause you to do things that you never even imagined for yourself. It's called “Living with Kingdom Purpose!”

That's really what happened to our family. It's not exactly like this doctrine of the Kingdom was anything new to us. Tony and I had both been raised in the Church of God since we were babies. We believed in the Kingdom and that God is one (not three) and thought it was important. What we didn't get then, was that we had fallen into complacency with these important truths. Something happened to us when we moved away from our home church in Ohio and were forced to look elsewhere for a new church. It slowly began to dawn on us what a gift we really had, in being able to attend a church where we could be very open with our beliefs, and not silenced into keeping these important truths to ourselves. When we had the freedom to talk about our hopes as Christians in eternal life when we will inherit the Kingdom, and about the fact that Jesus is the SON of God, not God himself, we took that freedom for granted and didn't discuss it..... hardly ever! When we attended a few Christian churches in our area, that freedom was taken away. That's when the importance of the truth took a new seat. It moved from the back of the car to front and center.

The lyrics from a song that Joni Mitchell sang comes to mind. The

song is entitled "Big Yellow Taxi" and the lyrics go something like this:

*They paved paradise and put up a parking lot*

*With a pink hotel, a boutique, and a swingin' hot spot*

*Don't it always seem to go*

*That you don't know what you got 'til it's gone*

*They paved paradise and put up a parking lot*

*Ooooh, bop bop bop*

*Ooooh, bop bop bop.*

It's sad, but true. You don't know what you have, until it's gone. There are many Churches of God that are small and struggling, or believers who share our faith but are isolated. I want to encourage you, don't give up. This work that we do is all worth it! It's the work that backs up what we believe. If we only believe these beautiful truths, and then go hide our lights, what's the point? You have to ask yourself, ‘Do I really believe this stuff?’ If the answer is ‘yes,’ then you will be called to go out into the world and begin to share your faith with others. We've been silent too long.

What Tony and I have done here in Knightstown, Indiana, is not really so much as ‘plant a new church’ as much as it is to recognize that we were ‘isolated members of the Church of God’ and then make the decision that we no longer wanted to be isolated! We haven't done anything grand, exceptional or noteworthy, we are just humbly attempting to ‘put our money where our mouth is’ and actually get out there, in any way we can possibly think of, to reach people for Christ.

Ezekiel 2 convicted me. God is talking to the prophet, Ezekiel, and sending him out to speak to the sons of Israel, with the command to

“open your mouth,” knowing full well, that the people probably wouldn’t listen to him. God basically told Ezekiel, that if Ezekiel refused to say what God was telling him to say, it would be disobedience and he’d be just as sinful as the Israelites. We can’t be afraid or worry how we will be received. That’s God’s part of the equation. Our job is to just be obedient and open our mouths!

This convicted me, because I’d rather not tell people what I believe. I have lots of reasons why: I hate conflict, I want to be liked and accepted, I don’t want people thinking we are weird or a cult. Some people don’t get it, until you tell them what we **don’t** believe and then it sounds like we’re being negative. There’s really never a good time to share it. I’ve seen people share what we believe in an argumentative way, and I certainly don’t want to come off like that. But, what God *IS* calling us to do, is to be obedient. What Jesus told us to do was love people and to be a light to show people the way to inherit eternal life. If I remained silent, and kept my mouth shut, so we didn’t create waves....would this truly be loving people?

By believing the words of Jesus, it forced me out of my comfort zone. By backing up faith with works, it has made me look at everything our family does as an opportunity to meet new people. God has placed this burden to love others into our hearts, so that it’s all about them. It’s all about the lost sheep. And whatever we may have to sacrifice, it’s worth it.

I like to call it “living with Kingdom Purpose” because that’s what it’s all about. It’s sort of like putting on a different pair of glasses that causes you to look at the world with a different perspective than

you may have had before. I used to isolate the kingdom truths like they were “doctrines” that you only pull out when you’re ready for serious study. Now I see that the Kingdom permeates every little thing of my life! I can no longer separate the kingdom from the practical. They are married; glued permanently together, welded. Let me give you just a few examples: I can’t attend my son’s basketball games without thinking, ‘who am I going to sit by, so I can develop a new friendship?’ with every intention behind it of someday getting to share my faith and bringing them to Jesus! I can’t see the Superbowl as just a football game. I see it as an opportunity to open my home to bring closer connections with families, so that we can have more of a chance to share our love of Jesus with them! The kids can’t have a sleep-over without me thinking, ‘Who is from an unchurched family who needs God in their lives and hope for the Kingdom?’ We look at absolutely everything we do now with the purpose of sharing and increasing the Kingdom.

We became a church plant, so that we can feel very open about what we are doing! We don’t want people to have any doubt what we are about! We’re about loving and serving the one and only living God, creator of the universe! We’re about loving them and doing whatever we can to further the gospel of the kingdom. We are spreading the gospel of the kingdom, one heart at a time.

We don’t know what God will do with us here. We might never have a traditional church like one usually thinks of when you say the word ‘church.’ But, what we do have is a heart for God and for His Son, and for the people around us within our community. What we do

have is the willingness to step out in faith, and see what God will do with one obedient family. We’re just one single, isolated family out here, in rural Indiana. But the kicker to it all is, we worship an amazing, creative, powerful, mighty God, who can make something out of nothing. He can make the impossible become possible. And that’s where we have decided to place our faith. In HIM. It’s not in us and what we can or can not do. It’s what we’re believing and expecting **God** to do. It’s time to put your money where your mouth is!

**Note:** Tony and Angela Moore began a few years ago with living with kingdom purpose, by hosting “Out-of-School-camp outs” and “Back-to-School Bashes”, inviting kids and their families to their home and back yard. In March, 2008, they decided to officially step out as “Knightstown Family Fellowship, Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith” by renting the local town hall and hosting six weeks of “5 Keys to the Kingdom” for Kingdom-Ready-Kidz ministries. They taught the kingdom to over twenty-five children from the community. Since then, they’ve hosted a Back Yard Bible school, camp-outs, parties, rented the elementary school for adult bible studies and kids’ ministries, hosted a Christmas service, organized family outings, and personal social times with families. Currently, they’re using an intermediate school in Knightstown, offering a Dave Ramsey finance study. To see more of what they’ve been up to, check out their website at [www.kff.homestead.com](http://www.kff.homestead.com) or email them at [kff@wwvremc.net](mailto:kff@wwvremc.net). Angela’s children’s book, Maggie Seeks the Kingdom of God is still available on amazon.com. 🍷

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# YAHWEH, The Ineluctable

## THE God, O` Theos The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Dr. Joe Martin

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I confess, I had to look up “ineluctable” when I first read it in an article about Yahweh. It means “not to be avoided, resisted or changed.”<sup>1</sup> Well, if that’s the case, I’m a little “ticked,” perturbed, bothered. We’re losing God’s identity, my Abba, my Father by hiding him with another tradition. In a letter from the “Congregation for Divine Worship,” dated June 29, 2008 and signed by Cardinal Francis Arinze and Archbishop Malcom Ranjith, the Vatican no longer wants the name of God, **Yahweh** used in liturgy, that is songs, preaching, or other parts of formal service.<sup>2</sup> As Charlie Brown would say, “Good grief, whose idea was that!”

In II Chronicles 7:14 God says, “If my people, who are called by **my name**, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” How can we be called by a name if it’s not used? Exodus 3:15 God tells Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD (YHWH, Yahweh), the God of your fathers-- the God of

Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob-- has sent me to you.’ This is **my name** forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.” How can it be remembered from generation to generation unless we use it?

The Tetragrammaton, four-letter name of God given by God, YHWH, (hwhy), is used some 6,828 times in the Bible. Two hundred times God says, “I am Yahweh.” Sixty-eight times God says, you will “know that I am the LORD” (YHWH). “The form ‘**Yahweh**’ is now accepted almost universally.”<sup>3</sup> However, tradition has become the enemy again! The Bible says for the third commandment “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain!” (Ex. 20:7) The N.I.V. says “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.” It does not say you shall not *use* the name of the LORD thy God!

Jesus was a little perturbed at tradition as well. They had taken the sixth commandment, “Honor your father and mother...” and twisted it also. He says “Thus you nullify the word of God by your **tradition** that you have handed down” (Mk. 7:13). Some took the money to help their

parents in their old age and put it in a fund “for God” (or so they said!). Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 4:6 “I have applied these things ... so that you may learn ...do not go beyond what is written.” In two MAJOR commandments (the big TEN!) we’ve gone from what is written to tradition!

Where did the idea of not EVER speaking the name of God come from? The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says “Use of the name disclosed...an ineluctable demonstration of divine reality.”<sup>4</sup> In the context of the Vatican letter, and the Jewish tradition of not using the name of God, why are many submitting to tradition rather than the word of God? If ineluctable means “*not to be avoided, changed, or resisted,*” why are some proposing that we avoid, change and resist the use of the proper name? As they say in the south, “that’s a crying shame!” Jesus used the phrase “Lord our God” and “the Lord your God” several times that go back to the name of God. Nine times the “Lord God” is referred to in Revelation.

Evidently as Hellenism, Greek influence, was growing between the testaments, (400 b.c. until Jesus)

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1995.

[http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=28949](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=28949)

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<sup>3</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Eerdmans, Vol. 5, p. 500.

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<sup>4</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, G. Kittel, ed., Eerdmans, Vol. 3, p. 1063.

some Jewish religious folk decided that since the name could not be well translated into Greek (note Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament), and possibly abused, it should not be used at all. It does not say that in the Torah/Pentateuch, or the Tanakh/entire Old Testament.<sup>5</sup> It became part of a tradition! Evidently, tradition becomes more important than the WORD! This is also part of the problem with Catholic/catholic traditions. We let tradition overrule the Word of God. Good examples of this are the illogical, unbiblical, unreasonable points in the Creeds of Christianity. Many feel they must be accepted because church tradition to them is just as valid as the Word of God. I'm a "Bibletarian," if it's not in the Bible lighten up. If it is in the Bible, tighten up. Why not just quote scripture on what we believe? For example, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God!" (Mt. 16:16, Peter speaking)

If Jesus says "You nullify the word of God by your tradition," shouldn't we be very careful obeying the rules, laws or traditions of man rather than God? Check out Peter and John in Acts, "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29) In the transition from the word to tradition, the Jews came up with a "novel" idea, *Qere and Ketib*.<sup>7</sup> *Ketib* is what is written, such

<sup>5</sup> Tanakh is an acronym for the Torah (Law or Pentateuch), Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (writings) hence T N K =Tanakh. It's our entire Old Testament.

<sup>6</sup> The Roman Catholic church, and the church universal, the catholic church.

<sup>7</sup> One of the best places to review this phenomenon is [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qere\\_and\\_Ketiv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qere_and_Ketiv) (there is an underscore between Qere and Ketiv) and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahweh>

as the name of the LORD, YHWH, Yahweh, (hwhy). Since they didn't want the name said, they would put a "Q" in the margin and have different vowels surrounding the tetragrammaton and as they were reading would say a different word such as *Adonay* (the Lord) or *HaShem* (meaning "the name"). This "Q" or *Qere*, became *what is said*. Afterwards, in some cases, they just wrote the *Qere*, what was to be said, instead of the actual word! It also seems we are cautioned against that in Revelation 22:18,19 "If anyone adds... or if anyone takes words away..."

A prime example of this is in the "Shema" of Israel, Deut. 6:4. It is the foundational verse of both Judaism and Christianity according to Jesus in Mark 12:29 and following. In Hebrew there are only 6 words: *Shema Yisrael YHWH Elohinu, YHWH Echad* or Hear Israel, YHWH Our God, YHWH One. In English, it is, "Hear O Israel, The LORD our God, the LORD is one." However, Jews say, "*Shema Yisrael Adonay Elohinu, Adonay Echad*." They substitute the *Qere: Adonay*, for the *Ketib: YHWH*. Now it is mostly written, *Adonay!*

So... what's the point!! We're losing God, THE God, Greek, O Theos. Of course Jesus teaches and stresses God/YHWH as Father. One hundred and seventy times he tells of his and our Father's nature. His prayer, our prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..." is our standard. He also said in Matthew 23:39 (from Psa. 118:26) "For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (Hebrew, *BeShem YHWH*) Jesus will return in the name of the LORD/Yahweh, his Father and hopefully our Father,

HIS God, and hopefully our God.<sup>8</sup> Later, the Arabic *al Lah* originally "...simply meant 'the God,' [and] was identical to the God worshipped by the Jews and the Christians."<sup>9</sup> This statement, which Karen Armstrong says was Muhammad's(sic) first beliefs, would be hotly contested today.



Tetragrammaton

If the LORD/Yahweh is the ineluctable God, not to be avoided, resisted or changed, let's continue to fight against "tradition" when it goes against the word of God, whether we find this in the Jewish traditions, the Catholic/catholic traditions, in our creeds and traditions, or in MY traditions. Hallelujah! Hallel U Yah! Praise the LORD! Praise Yahweh the ineluctable God of heaven and earth, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father! ☺

<sup>8</sup> Compare "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 11:31; Eph. 1:3; Eph. 1:17; 1 Peter 1:3. Jesus says "My Father" 40 times! "My God" 10 times. Yahweh is His God and Our God. cp. Jn 20:17.

<sup>9</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1993) p. 135.

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# The Winter “Blues”

Pastor Dave Hixon

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If you're anything like me, you absolutely cannot stand to be cooped up inside during the winter. The cold and nasty weather seems to last forever. You sit and look out the window longing for the first signs of spring, maybe that lone robin chasing worms in the front yard, or maybe the first buds that begin to emerge on the trees. You know all the signs and you know that “winter” is still here, but you also know that spring is just around the corner.

It's easy to get discouraged when you want something so bad and it doesn't happen right when you want it to. Being patient is easier said than done. But what does patience do? It develops character, doesn't it? Isn't that what your parents always told you? Well, in this case they were absolutely right! You've heard the quote that “patience is a virtue”. Patience is mentioned as one of the Fruits of the Spirit.

When we consider Jesus' return, you could say that we are in the “long winter” right now. We so want Him to come now. But he tells us, “Have patience, look at the signs around you, my coming is near”. Just like at the end of a long winter, when we can see the signs all around us that spring is almost here, so are the signs that Christ's return is near.

We are told by Jesus Himself, in His famous Olivet prophecy in Matthew 24, that there will be false christ, wars and rumors of wars,

famines, earthquakes and many other signs. But, of course, these signs have been around for a great deal of time now haven't they? So how do we know, really, that Christ's return is drawing near? Well, when we look specifically at a couple of key prophecies we will understand.

One prophecy that I would like to draw your attention to is in Daniel 12:4 “But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.” Did you read those last three words? Just in my lifetime, there has been an incredible explosion of knowledge. Things that when I was young seemed impossible are very common today. In the last 70 years, there has been an explosion of knowledge that has never been seen before. This brings me to another important prophecy.

In Matthew 24:14: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” Jesus said this must happen. This “gospel of the kingdom” must be preached to the whole world. How long has this been possible? Maybe in the last 20 years? With the advent of the internet, television and satellites, it is now possible to send information completely around the world in a millisecond.

This last prophecy brings me to my last point about patience. Patience does not mean sitting on

your hands, inside your home in a comfy chair and waiting... It is wanting something so badly that you will act upon it. In this case it is “Spreading the gospel of the kingdom”. If we truly long for Christ's return, we will be about our Father's business of spreading this Gospel. Who else will do it? I am sure that if we say, “I don't feel like it” or “I am afraid to talk to people because they will think I am crazy,” God will find someone else to carry His message. Woe to us if that happens.

We see the signs all around us – we see the fig tree budding. We know Christ's return is drawing near. It is time for us to stand up, pull our coats on and venture out in this “long winter” and do what God would have us do. If we are busy for God and Christ, spring will be here before you know it, and our patience will be richly rewarded. Spread the gospel of the kingdom!

When we  
consider Jesus'  
return, you  
could say that  
we are in the  
“long winter”  
right now

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# The Gospel of Peace

by Patrick Navas

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The Christian message is the “good news” about “peace” and “reconciliation” with God. Though once estranged from the Creator by their sinful and unholy condition, believers are now, through faith in Christ and the cleansing power of his blood, at peace with God and brought near to Him as beloved children of a father (Rom 8:15; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 3:1-3). “*Therefore,*” wrote the apostle Paul, “*since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God*” (Rom. 5:1, 2).

Elsewhere, Paul wrote in the same spirit regarding his purpose as a minister of the good news:

*“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”* (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

This was the call of the gospel in the first century; it remains

unchanged in the twenty first because God is a being of utter holiness, purity, and goodness. Humans defiled by sin must be purified before entering the necessary, life-giving union with Him which God has effected through the blood of His Son Jesus which “cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:5, 7; Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16; Rev. 4:8)

## The Kingdom of God

The promise of God’s Kingdom was spoken of by the prophets of Israel and confirmed in the teachings of Jesus and his apostles. The “good news of the kingdom,” in fact, lies at the very heart of the Messianic message. It is a message about a Kingdom that “will crush and put an end” to all imperfect, human kingdoms and governmental systems (Dan. 2:44). The message about the Kingdom is “good news” since it heralds a coming age ruled by “the righteous one,” Jesus the Messiah (Compare 1 Cor. 15:25-28). He will rule, unfailingly, as the prophet foretold, in the “spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah. And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with *righteousness* he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and

he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and *faithfulness* the belt of his loins” (Isaiah 11:1-5).

The Kingdom of God under “the Prince of Peace” will be righteous. It will bring about the relief and lasting peace humankind has long struggled to establish through its own governing agencies. The prophet Isaiah described it vividly as an age when “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox...They shall not hurt or destroy in all [God’s] holy mountain; for the earth (under the Kingdom of God and Christ) shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:6-9).

The current state of human affairs is marked by political division, social fragmentation, tribal warfare, international conflict, racial barriers, economic inequities, financial crises, and ignorance of God. But the Kingdom of God will *peacefully* and *effectively* unify every tribe, nation and tongue on earth in the spirit of brotherly love under the worship and praise of Jah, the true God and Creator of all

(Rev. 21:22-27; 22:1-3).<sup>1</sup> Unlike the ruling institutions of a corrupted human race, the righteous rule of God is, and will be, “an everlasting dominion,” a Kingdom “that will not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14). That is why the disciples of God’s Son pray, “Our Father in heaven...let your kingdom come, let your will be done, in heaven and on earth...” (Matt. 6:9-13).

Thus, as the true remedy to man’s disobedience and resulting alienation from his Creator, the Kingdom of God becomes the means by which God’s will for humankind, indeed, for “heaven and earth,” is fully executed. It is the instrument through which God’s sovereignty is fully, lovingly, and wisely, expressed; the scheme whereby sinners are reconciled to God and paradise restored in a “new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to [God’s] promise” (2 Pet. 3:13; Isaiah 66:22; Rev. 21:1). This is a description of “life in the age to come,” in the Kingdom of God, which promises blessings that “no eye has seen nor ear heard,” “an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure”, an everlasting inheritance “prepared by God for those who love him” (2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Cor. 2:9).

In the promise of the gospel, believers look hopefully to this coming era when God will be “making all things new,” a time when it will be truly said... “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them

as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. The former things have passed away.” (Rev. 21:1-7).

This is the Christian hope; the hope of eternal life in “the Kingdom of God.”

### Repentance and the Baptismal Command

The call to repentance is essential to the “good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Matt. 3:2, 11; Luke 13:5; Acts 8:12; 20:21; 25:20). It refers to a complete change in the heart of a believer. It is spoken of in Scripture as a “repentance that leads to life” and a “repentance that leads to salvation” (Acts 11:18; 2 Cor. 7:10).

Repentance has been manifested by God’s servants in the past by a “broken spirit” and a “humbled heart” which God will “not despise” (Ps. 51:17). To repent, then, is to *change* the inner life of the mind, resulting in a *turning away* from sin and a devotion to that which is righteous in the Creator’s sight (Compare 1 Pet. 2:24). The true spirit of repentance was expressed well in the writings of Isaiah, when God’s word was declared thus to the wayward people of Israel:

*“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause...”* (Isaiah 1:16, 17; Compare Col. 3:5-11).

Centuries later, after the ascension of the Messiah, Peter proclaimed first to the Jews how “God raised up his servant [Jesus] and sent him to bless you *by turning*

*each of you from your evil ways”* (Acts 3:26).

Eventually, Paul too would openly teach that God, through the proclamation of the gospel, “*commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.*” (Acts 17:30, 31).

All the prophets and apostles agree that a time will come for the judgment of the world (Dan. 7:22; Matt. 12:36; 2 Pet. 2:9). That is why Peter also declared to his countrymen:

*“Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus, who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets”* (Acts 3:19-21).

Along with “repentance” the command to “be baptized,” or “immersed” in water, represents the believer’s acceptance of, and faith in, the good news. Because water is an agent of cleansing and purification, the repentant are commanded to be immersed in it as “an appeal to God for a good conscience” (Acts 10:48; 1 Pet. 3:21). Upon the symbolic “burial” of the “old man,” believers rise from the baptismal waters to a new life in union with Christ. This is why the apostle Paul wrote to a community of the faithful in the city of Rome: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was

<sup>1</sup> See: Rev. 19:1-6; Psalm 68:4, *KJV*. The expression “Hallelujah” (appearing in the book of Revelation and throughout the book of Psalms) is literally a command to people to *praise* “Jah”—an abbreviated, poetic form of the name Jehovah used by the scriptural writers.

raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, *so we too might walk in a newness of life*" (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 3:9).

True repentance, followed by, or symbolized in, immersion, represents an acknowledgment of sin and the need for God's forgiveness. To those who were already believers, the apostle John wrote: *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* But, wrote the apostle, *"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:8, 9).

We can rejoice therefore through the "grace in which we stand," assured that the blood of God's Son continually "cleanses us" from every trace of impurity—confident that the one "who confesses and forsakes [transgressions] will obtain mercy" (Rom. 5:2; 1 John 1:7; Prov. 28:13). Thus the call of the gospel is still: *"Repent, be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38; Compare Matt. 28:19).

It is through the "hearing with faith" leading to heartfelt "repentance" that believers receive the empowering, life-giving spirit of God imparted through the gospel. And because the sins of the faithful are "forgiven on account of [Jesus'] name," believers "perfected in love" have not fear but "confidence for the day of judgment," knowing that the Son of God "died for all," so that, in the true spirit of repentance, *"those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised"* (Gal. 3:2; 1 John 2:12; 4:17; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15). 🌹

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# Conflict Handled Well

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by Pastor Steve Taylor

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How we handle conflict is a big deal. The consequences are much greater than we probably realize.

"The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

Conflict is inevitable. I've spent too much of my life denying this truth, to the detriment of both others and myself. My responses have ranged from the extremes of doing nothing to reacting harshly, none of which have been helpful or biblically-motivated. The proper response, which I see much more clearly now, is to be "patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition". Which all leads to Paul's very important explanation to Timothy as to why it is so important that we handle conflict well:

*"...if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."*

This explanation fits well with the great truth found in Proverbs 15:1, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger." A gentle answer does more than diffuse anger; it rescues the one in conflict from the snares of the devil.

Those in opposition to us, as we represent God's truth, are in a precarious position. It is a watershed moment; they can either be rescued into God's truth or turned away to the devil's schemes, depending on how we handle the conflict. In opposing us, they unwittingly fall into the devil's snare and are held captive by him to do his will. Our response is a key factor in freeing them or further enslaving them in that snare.

I wonder how much division exists in Christianity due to improper response to conflict? Probably all of it. Improper responses have consigned countless numbers of people to the snare and will of the devil.

There is more to conflict than meets the eye, as we have seen in Paul's words. Our response has eternal consequences.

While I have not always handled conflict well, there have been times when I have. I've discovered that these are valuable teaching moments. Every conflict holds the potential for spiritual growth and renewal for both sides. May God use conflict in our lives to claim and reclaim His lost sheep. 🌹

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# Malawi African Missions, Inc.

By Jim Mattison

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## OUR MISSION SINCE 1994

To Preach “the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12).

“Preach the word,” Paul said (2 Tim. 4:2).

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” said Jesus. “The one who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16).

It has been our heart-felt desire to be faithful to this commission of our Lord in Malawi and Mozambique these last fourteen years. I've been able to make eleven teaching trips to these countries. Always, uppermost in our minds has been this war cry: Preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the things about Jesus Christ. Everything done has been toward this end; the building of churches, the giving of bicycles, the printing of many tracts on fifty-nine major Bible teachings, digging a few wells, giving food relief when there has been no rain. God has been with this effort. Our desire is to see this effort continue. We need close to \$5,000 to help finish buildings and pay for printing.

In the process 221 men have come forward to preach this message and baptize those who believe it. Each has his own waterproof packet of tracts for study

and sermon help. These men have zealously gone forward preaching the gospel. It is because of them going from village to village with the Message that 218 church buildings have been built with 3 more needing only roofs. We have asked that only good mortar be used in these brick structures, mortar made of river sand and cement. It will withstand the elements where the old mud mortar won't.

We have found that the believers need their own church building for worship. Meeting under a tree soon comes to an end. Because of mission-minded people here in the States who have sent money for African missions, many believers now have hope of being in God's Kingdom when Jesus returns. This causes them and us great joy.

After the team came home from this 2008 June/July trip, we found out that our African helper, Linda Limbe, had become seriously ill and had been in the hospital. The report was that she was bleeding from the eyes and had had a large tumor removed from her abdominal area. She is still working for the African churches. A friend was of great assistance to her during this time. We thank God for that friend.

Several projects need completing. One is the printing in Blantyre of an AFRICAN Maggie book Maggie Seeks the Kingdom of God, with Linda being the mother, and her young daughter, Takonda, being Maggie. The author, Angela

Moore, has not only given us permission to do this, but this is what she wrote me: “The idea of 'Takonda Seeks the Kingdom of God' is a big huge “YES” from me. I have absolutely no problem, whatsoever, with Linda Limbe doing an adaptation of the original “Maggie.” I have never thought of it as “my” story, but rather something God placed upon my heart to write. I don't think He cares who writes it, as long as someone does....”

African mission needs continue. Linda writes, “The price of maize per 50Kg bag is K3,750.00 (\$26.40). Several areas have reported food shortages. The metal sheets and the concrete that are the largest items in building churches. Both have to be imported and transported. Each country has a 7-person Board to oversee the mission work. They report to us what new churches they have selected for building (we and they have agreed that we can build only 3 churches in each country a year), and their secretaries are supposed to send us news of the mission work.

Please keep praying for this African mission effort. Thank you so much for helping this work to grow. I'm sure God is pleased and has blessed you. If you desire to send an offering, it can be sent to MAM, 250 Stoneybrook, Pelzer, S. C. 29669, or LHI, PO Box 100,000, Morrow, GA. 30260. ☺

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# Choose Peace

by Pastor Jeff Fletcher

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I love peace. Perhaps I was destined to be a peace-loving person. My name, Jeffrey, comes from the Old German and means peace, so, in a sense, my name is “peace”.

I like a peaceful, quiet environment, which of course explains why I have 11 children, right? Seriously, I find I spend a lot of my time trying to create a peaceful environment, which is a challenge because the world I live in is not a very peaceful one. I don't have control over what other people say and do and how they live their lives. I have no control over the people who are rude on the roadways. I have no control over my children when they fight. As pastor of a church I have no control over my flock. I can't force anyone to behave in any certain way. I can't force anyone to go to church, and I can't force people to make godly choices. This sometimes causes me a great deal of frustration, because I'm trying so hard to control my environment and make everything peaceful that I become very disturbed inside and I find I'm without peace.

I'm guessing that you like peace and when your environment isn't peaceful, you find yourself frustrated and without peace. How can we come to experience peace, true peace, in an unpeaceful world? How does Jesus bring peace into our world and into our lives? Let's look at the Prince of Peace.

When Jesus was brought to the temple for his dedication, he was met by an old man named Simeon. We don't know a lot about Simeon; he lived a right life, he was a faithful worshiper of God, and was living in the expectation of the fulfillment of God's promises recorded by the prophet Isaiah. God promised him that he would keep Simeon alive until the day he laid his eyes on the Messiah. When Simeon saw Jesus, the Spirit of God told him that this boy child was the Messiah. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and said, essentially, "Now I can die in peace" (Luke 2:25-32). Isn't that what we all want: peace?

Reminds me of a bumper sticker I once saw. It said “NO Jesus, NO Peace. KNOW Jesus, KNOW Peace”. A little play on words, but it conveys the message that to know Jesus is to know peace. So does this mean that meeting Jesus will automatically bring you peace? Well, no, actually it doesn't say that at all. As Simeon takes Jesus into his arms and pronounces a blessing over him he makes an amazing statement about Jesus.

He said that Jesus would cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, that Jesus will be a sign that would be opposed or spoken against, that Jesus would reveal the inner thoughts or heart of many.

Notice that he doesn't say that Jesus will automatically bring peace

wherever he goes. Jesus doesn't automatically bring salvation to everyone he meets. There is no pie in the sky notion that everyone will suddenly bow down and worship God because of Jesus. Warriors will not automatically lay down their weapons when Jesus comes by. The world will not instantaneously become a perfect place just because Jesus has arrived.

In fact, the arrival of Jesus introduced a crisis. Because now, decisions have to be made. Some will decide for Jesus and some will decide against Jesus. And the decisions that people make either for or against Jesus will determine whether they rise or fall.

As the Story of Jesus unfolds some people do fall. Herod the King, the most powerful man in Israel became so threatened when he heard about the birth of Jesus that he tried to have him killed and in the process killed all the little boys of Bethlehem. Herod soon died after his failure to destroy Jesus.

Many of the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, priests and teachers of the law all opposed Jesus and were responsible for Jesus' ultimate arrest and crucifixion. And yet, eventually, their temple was destroyed, their city was razed and burned to the ground by the Romans and they were scattered throughout the earth for nearly 2000 years.

Pontius Pilate, the Governor who had the power to free Jesus and chose instead the way of the coward by washing his hands also fell. He is dead and gone and his name is associated with cowardice.

Those are just a few of the many who met Jesus and fell on account of their rejection of Jesus as Messiah and King. Many of them great and powerful, and yet they are now dust.

At the same time, many lowly people rose up on account of Jesus. The fishermen Simon, Andrew, James and John, as well as Matthew and Zacheus the tax collectors that everyone hated, and Simon the Zealot and other men of no reputation, rose up as Jesus' disciples and apostles and formed the backbone of the Church.

Nicodemus, who first came to visit Jesus at night, rose up to be a brave disciple, claiming the body of Jesus from the cross and seeing to it that Jesus was given a proper burial.

And of course, Lazarus, Jesus' friend and follower, who died, was buried, and while asleep in the tomb heard Jesus cry out "Lazarus, come forth" and rose up from the grave to live again.

Just as Simeon prophesied, some fell, and some rose up, and some rose up only to later fall. It seems so odd, that one who was to be called the Prince of Peace should leave such a trail of sorrow behind him. Even Jesus himself understood that his mission to bring peace to the earth would not result in peace for everyone:

*"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law*

*against her mother-in-law - man's enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it"* (Matthew 10: 34-39)

Peace would not trail immediately behind Jesus, but in fact bitter division, the kind that tears apart families. Now, if you grew up in a good, church-going family you might not understand this. But for many, embracing faith in Jesus can lead to loss of a significant family relationship, sometimes separating parents from children, brothers from brothers, and even husband and wife.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace, but the peace he brings is not an easy peace, it's not an instant peace, and it's not a guaranteed peace. There are no promises that following Jesus will suddenly make your outer world a more peaceful place.

There were still wars and rumors of wars. There was still violence and disease and immorality and turmoil. The peace we can experience is not contingent upon the world around us being peaceful; that peace comes from within.

There is so much that you and I cannot control in the world today. We have no control over the world's economy, the violent things that people do, the choices others make. We can't prevent terrorists from hurting people, nor can we prevent gang members from killing one another. We can't keep husbands

and wives from breaking their marriage vows, we can't keep parents from abusing children and junkies from abusing drugs. We can't prevent times of great tribulation and distress from coming upon the earth. We have no control over accidents that happen, diseases, epidemics, plagues and droughts. We can't make this world a perfect paradise of peace and harmony.

I can't control you and force you to act in the ways I think you should. Every person must choose peace for themselves. Sometimes there are those who choose to follow the Prince of Peace and sometimes there are those who don't choose Jesus and don't choose peace. We can't control them; we can only point them to Jesus and we can only choose Jesus for ourselves.

The only choice you can make is for yourself. Will you choose to be one of those who rises up with Jesus, or will you choose to be one of those who falls? Will you choose to commit your life to following Jesus as your king and as your Lord as Simeon did? Or will you choose to turn away from following Jesus and follow this world? I invite you to choose Jesus. Choose the Prince of Peace. You may not be able to bring peace to all the world but if you let him, Jesus will bring peace, perfect peace, to you, so that you can live in this world of trouble, and know true peace.

Imagine if each of us could choose peace for ourselves and be followers of, and servants of, the Prince of Peace. Perhaps, then, our homes, schools, community, and especially our churches, could become little havens of peace. But even if they don't, we can always carry around the peace of Christ in our hearts. 🍀

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# Something Old, Something New

By Angela Hayes Moore

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Everyone has heard of the old wedding tradition:

*“Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and a silver sixpence in her shoe.”*

This saying came to mind one morning as I thought about our new church plant, Knightstown Family Fellowship, Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. Although this saying is not Scriptural at all, and supposedly originated in Britain in the Victorian era, I think it can be applied to the foundation of why and what we are doing here in Knightstown, Indiana and why you are probably doing what you are doing, wherever you are!

Each item in this poem represents a good-luck token for the bride. If she carries all of them on her wedding day, her marriage will be happy. I, personally, don't believe in 'luck,' but I believe in God's Spirit dwelling inside each believer, guiding us, allowing particular circumstances to occur, for His will and purpose to be fulfilled for each one of His children. Now, stick with me here, because this is kind of cool how we can apply this simple, traditional saying to bringing us blessings from God for the bride (His church).

## “Something Old”

This symbolizes continuity with the bride's family and the past. In our case, “something old” represents the foundation of why we decided not to attend a church of different beliefs, but to begin a new work here in Knightstown. That “something old” is the promise that God made with Abraham in the book of Genesis, when God covenanted with Abraham to bless him with more descendants than the stars in the sky, and that those descendants or seed of Abraham will someday inherit the land. This promise of the future and coming Kingdom of God to the earth, when Christ returns, is the foundation of KFF. We believe this promise and stand upon it. We also believe that the “Ancient of Days” is the one LORD God, and He divinely created a human lord Messiah, Jesus, in the womb of Mary. Jesus became our savior and redeemer, so that we can be found pure and blameless on the day when Christ returns to the earth. We are thrilled to have a mediator in Jesus, who was exalted to such a high position as to sit upon the right hand of this Almighty God! This old, foundational truth propels our family out of its comfort zone and out into the world!

## “Something New”

This means optimism and hope for the bride's new life ahead. How like this is to our spiritual hope! Our “something new” is when the earth is restored and renewed to its original state of creation. This is when Jesus has subdued all his enemies under his feet, and then God comes down from heaven to dwell with mankind. Our “something new” is also applicable to our new life in Christ, when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and are washed anew in the waters of baptism, signifying our death to sin, and our resurrected life of purity and cleanliness. That's real hope. That's real optimism!

## “Something Borrowed”

This is usually an item from a happily married friend or family member, whose good fortune in marriage is supposed to carry over to the new bride. The borrowed item also reminds the bride that she can depend on her friends and family. For us, “something borrowed” may represent our fellow believers of the Body of Christ, whom we depend upon to lift us up in prayer, to encourage us, to build us up in faith and be our covering of protection. We “borrow” your strength! Although considered “isolated”

Church of God members, since we have started KFF, we no longer have that isolated feeling. We feel so many reaching out to us, loving us, and praying for us. It is a gift like no other.

### “Something Blue”

As for the colorful item, blue has been connected to weddings for centuries. In ancient Rome, brides wore blue to symbolize love, modesty, and fidelity. “Something blue” for us represents different things. One is the feeling of ‘blue.’ Our feeling of being without a home church and part of a local Body of Christ has been one of the deepest heartaches I have ever experienced. Church was such an important part of my life that, without it, it we felt a huge void. But, without those ‘blue’ feelings, we would not have felt compelled to start KFF.

The second ‘blue’ is one that symbolizes love. We began KFF, because of our desire to have a local body of Christ. Now we find

ourselves motivated by the love of Christ within us for others! It has been a slow and silent shift, but an important one. It’s no longer about what will make us feel happy and complete, but it is about the salvation of others! God provides this love for others in abundance, and one need only ask and you will find this burden for the lost overflowing your heart to the point of action, not just thoughts and desires.

### “A Silver Sixpence”

And finally, a silver sixpence in the bride's shoe represents wealth and financial security. It may date back to a Scottish custom of a groom putting a silver coin under his foot for good luck. For optimum fortune, the sixpence should be in the left shoe. These days, a dime or a copper penny is sometimes substituted, and many companies sell keepsake sixpences for weddings. A sixpence is a coin that was minted in Britain from 1551 to 1967. It was made of silver and

worth six pennies. A sixpence to us represents God’s provision and blessing upon us in many ways, not just financial. We know that whatever we have on this earth ultimately belongs to Him, and realize that we are meant to be generous and willing to share. How much more are we to be willing to part with our finances, if it will lead to the salvation of one lost sheep? We count our blessings to have such an opportunity as this.

Knightstown Family Fellowship dons our “something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue and a sixpence in her shoe” saying, because this is all part of being the bride of Christ. We are preparing for our wedding and the wedding supper – the great and awesome day of our Lord’s return. What hardship we endure now for the sake of furthering the gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus is little compared to the glory we shall someday see when our Lord returns in the air!

Hallelujah! And if we be so fortunate, to bear fruit and see those families, and their children and their children’s children be resurrected also, won’t that just be the best that one can hope for? Won’t it make the toil all worth it? May we all persevere and not grow weary in doing good! 🙏



“The world's financial markets will recover in order to crash again many years from now. That future crash is foretold in Revelation, chapter 18.” (Chas. French and Graham Bacon, in Bible Views on the News. no. 19).

This writer agrees with the above statement. Revelation 18 teaches the rebuilding of the city of Babylon, and Babylon becoming the world center of trade. Because this is a godless system, God will destroy this great city, making many merchants “weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more.”

Chapter 17 tells us of a coming harlot riding on the Beast who will be over the peoples of the earth, also called Babylon: “Upon her forehead a name was Written...” Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.” This blasphemous woman is Babylon, but in another sense, apostate religion. Let's study this harlot first to see what she really represents, then go on to the great city, Babylon, the godless world trade center. Both of these end-time systems God will destroy in His wrath through His Son, Jesus. God's people are warned to have no part in either Babylon. *“Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities”* (Rev. 18:4,5).

### The Beginning of Babylon

After the flood, people moved eastward to the plain of Shinar (Gen. 11:2), which is the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Disobeying God's instructions to “be fruitful and

multiply, and fill the earth,” they said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth” (v. 4). This was in direct opposition to God's command. These people rebelled against God. The Bible says “The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built” (v. 5). Because of their disregard of Him, God confused their language which caused them to scatter abroad over the face of the earth.

The city of Babylon was built by Nimrod. “The beginning of his kingdom was Babel” (Gen. 10:3). His kingdom was the first kingdom on earth, and he was its ruler. He is called a “mighty one” (Heb. gibbor,) The name Nimrod means “let us rebel” (Babylon, Mystery Religion. Woodruff, p. 9). In plain language Nimrod set himself up ‘before’ God (the Hebrew word is also translated against and impudent). The Jewish encyclopedia says, “Nimrod was he who made all the people rebellious against God” (ibid, p.9). This king of Babylon was a tyrant, a rebellious person, and one who set himself up against God.

The name Babel (the Hebrew form of the Greek word Babylon) means “confused” (Gen. 11:9). “Throughout the Bible, Babylon was a symbol of the confusion caused by godlessness” (Ancient Babylonia, p. 2). We remember that Nebuchadnezzar said in his arrogant ignorance, “Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built...by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?” (Dan. 4:30). The result of his self exaltation was that he was driven from men and ate grass like a cow for seven years.

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# Will the World's Economy Recover?

## Part One

by Jim Mattison

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“Not only was Nimrod against the true God, he was also a priest of devil worship and of heathenism of the worst kind ...then finally Nimrod the priest king of Babylon, died ...after Nimrod's death, his wife Queen Semeramis claimed he was now the Sun-god” (Woodruff, p. 9). Later this adulterous and licentious woman gave birth to an illegitimate son Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14) whom she claimed was Nimrod brought back to life. She is the one Jeremiah speaks of as “the queen of heaven” in Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19,25 (Woodruff, p.9). Thus we see the

origin of a counterfeit plan in opposition to the Divine Plan that a woman would bear a son who would deliver his people. This happened centuries before Jesus was born.

As men spread out from Shinar (Gen. 11:9), they took with them this corrupt and godless religious system until it filled the whole earth. Centuries before the Lord Jesus, every country worshipped a divine mother and god-son. "Among the Chinese, the Mother Goddess was called Shingmoo. Her picture shows a child in her arms. In ancient Germany the worship was of the Virgin Hertha, with a child in her arms. In Scandanavia, it was Disa, also with a child in her arms. The Etruscans called her Nutria, while among the Druids the Bergo Paritura, was worshipped as the Mother of God. In India she was known as Indrani. The Babylonian Mother was known as Aphrodite or Ceres. The Romans called her Venus and her child was known as Jupiter (ibid, pp 13,14. See also Acts 14:12,13; 19:35). In Ephesus she was known as Diana or Artemis (Acts 19:34). Not only was she worshipped in Ephesus, but "in all Asia and the world" (Acts 19:27).

Even Israel, the people of God, fell into this religious and sensuous idolatry. They worshipped an imaginary heathen goddess called Ashtaroth (Judg. 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 12:10; 1 Ki. 11:5-13; 2 Kings 23:13). Notice that David's wife, Michal, took the household idol and laid it under his blanket to deceive Saul's men who had come to kill David (1 Sam. 19:13). Even Rachel, Jacob's wife, when leaving Laban's house to go to Canaan, "stole the household idols that were her father's" (Gen. 31:19). Ezekiel 8 shows how prone to idol worship the leaders of Judah were: "At the

entrance to the temple of the LORD...were about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun" (v. 16). It is beyond belief that people who had known the true God and had seen His wonders would sink so low as to follow these heathen practices. God's prophets, including Jeremiah, rebuked them sharply. In the days of Israel's and Judah's kings, when the king was godless, the people resorted to this licentious and idolatrous worship system (1 Kings 14:21-24; 2 Kings 16:1-4; 17:7-19; 2 Chron. 28:104). The golden calf was part of this system. When the King was God-fearing, the people worshiped the true God.

The Roman Catholic Church has adopted this same idea of "the Mother of God" and even almost the whole "Christian" world worships the "Trinity," or three gods, whereas Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Does the truth matter? Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Israel's /shema /was "Hear O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! And you shall worship the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4-5). Christians today have that same creed (Matt. 22:36-40).

Paul was very familiar with this ungodly, licentious, and idolatrous worship system. He saw it at Athens: "While Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" (Acts 17:16). These statues are still

standing there in the marketplace today. Note also that 1 Corinthians 10:18-21 and Romans 1:22-25 speak of this manmade false religious system.

This worldly, manmade, sensuous and idolatrous worship system is this harlot riding the back of the Beast in Revelation 17. She is called "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth." God called both Israel and Judah a harlot because they forsook Him and worshiped idols (Jer. 3:6-9; Ezek. 16:15-41). She is false religious worship personified. This religious aspect of "Babylon" will be destroyed by the Beast and the 10 kings some time before the destruction of Babylon the City.

"The ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot, and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh, and will burn her up with fire" (Rev. 17:16). And since "the waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues" (v. 15) this shows us that there will be, at the end, a world church, with all beliefs welded into one great ungodly system, an ecumenical church. This movement has already begun. This system will be destroyed by the beast and ten kings as the beast sets up the worship of himself and his image at the beginning of the three and a half year Great Tribulation (2 Thess. 2:4; Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15-24; Rev. 13).

In the next issue we will look at City Babylon, trade and financial center of earth, which will be destroyed by Christ as He administers God's judgment and wrath upon this wicked system at His second coming. ☹

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# Fellowship of the Struggle

by Chuck Jones

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This line came to mind as I was preparing a sermon and I thought it had some merit. The phrase says a couple of things for me; maybe you'll agree after reading this.

Let's start with the "struggle" part. First I want to describe what we all know too well: life is full of struggles, especially the life of righteousness. Jesus taught it this way: "The law and the prophets were till John; but then came the preaching of the kingdom of God, and everyone makes his way into it by force" (Luke 16:16). In general terms, that struggle (or the use of force) is against sin; it's shedding the old man with his (or her) corrupt ways so we can put on Jesus.

We are instructed to "...put off concerning your former conduct, the old man, which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-23). This applies, without exception, to everyone. However the personal specifics will be different from person to person.

Paul goes on to identify some specific matters in life that are sources for the struggle: our deceitfulness with others (don't lie), personal gratification (be angry without sinning), selfish self-centeredness (don't steal), destructive language (corrupt

words), and our tendency to ignore the Holy Spirit. These categories can be broken down even further as each is applied personally. Isn't it sad to see these things displayed in any congregation? If you say "yes" to that question, get busy looking at your "old man". Is he (or she) still hanging around? Are you prepared for the struggle? Shedding the old behavior doesn't happen automatically. It is a struggle and it takes force, but it isn't impossible. You've got what it takes to win. God's given us everything, by His divine power for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). We are winners, but we still must enter the battle.

Take this lopsided illustration for example. What if the Super Bowl champions were to play the Pop Warner champions? There isn't any doubt who would win, but the champions would still have to suit up for, and play, the game. That's where we are in our struggle for righteousness; we've been handed a victory, but we have to suit up and get in the game. You can shed the old man regardless of the lies you've heard or the excuses you use.

Getting a handle on this struggle helps in other struggles as well, like dealing with hostile people, an alluring world, loss, or sickness.

Everyone has a story about struggle, whether it's a success or failure. Some choose to remain silent, but there's no help in that. At

the least we should be vocal about our struggles with Yahweh, and add to that seeking support and guidance from other strugglers. Then we have the fellowship of the struggle.

Fellowship describes a companion who has something in common, a co-participant (like a team member) who shares the same goal. We are all in this together- we have a common goal of standing before Jesus with joy! This type of fellowship brings together all who struggle, to share the burdens of each other with encouragement, support, and help. Some may find that opening up about their struggles is a struggle in itself. Overcoming that struggle in God's power is liberating. Someone said that a struggle shared is a struggle halved.

Don't avoid the struggle for righteousness, because regardless of your background, you have what it takes to win! 🍀

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# We've Got Mail

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## Question and Answer

Dr. John Roller

Hi Chuck,

I would like to thank you and those who work with you in putting out a very good magazine. I would also like to add some more names to your list of subscribers.

In Christ,  
William Cramer

Hello, I just received my first copy of Wisdom & Power and I already know it will be a continuing blessing. Thank you!!

I wonder if you've ever considered putting some folks names and address in the back of the magazine, that are isolated and would like to snail mail letters to each other. I see in this edition a woman named Wanda is in the same predicament as I. We don't live near a COG. We don't have the opportunity of talking to like minded believers. I imagine we aren't the only ones and so I thought I'd ask.

Thank you and God Bless.

Regina S.

*Editors note: There is a new email group that everyone is welcome to join who reads Wisdom & Power.*

*You can find it at:*

<http://groups.google.com/group/wisdom-and-power>.

Hi Chuck,

Please forgive me for waiting this long to thank you for the book, *Claiming the Promises*. It is wonderful and will be helpful for the rest of my life. Thanks for writing it. I'd like to order two copies and wonder if you can give me an idea of what the postage will

be so I can include it with the cost of the books. And, thanks again for Wisdom and Power.

In Christ

Wanda Williams

*Editor's Note: The book Claiming the Promises can be purchased for \$5 each plus postage. Just let me know how many you'd like.*

Dear chuck,

Some where down the years a couple of verses were changed and our writers, teachers, and preachers don't seem to be aware of it; never mention it. Yet it is so important.

When I lived in Columbus Ohio, I became aware of the King James discrepancy of Isaiah 9:6 and Psalms 45:6. With our knowledge of Jesus' place as a human being, I phoned a Jewish Rabbi listed in our phone book. I asked him how those verses read in the Jewish Bible.

He kindly read to me Isaiah 9:6, "His name shall be called 'Wonderful, Counselor of the Mighty God; of the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'" And Psalm 45:6 read, "Thy throne given of God, is forever and ever".

Made quite a difference, "of the" and "given of God".

Christian love,

Betty Ackels

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Q: In the movie, "The Gladiator," when the hero dies, he goes to Elysium, where his wife and young son are waiting for him. In a biblical view of Eternity, will we remain the age that we were when we died? Will people who died in old age be old people forever? Will people who die as babies be babies forever? If that is the case, it seems to me that it would be better to die in the prime of life.

A: The first problem with the movie's portrayal of the afterlife is the idea that everyone "goes" somewhere immediately after dying. According to the Bible, people who die don't go anywhere but to the graves in which they are buried (Ecclesiastes 9:10). There, they sleep (our English word "cemetery" is based on the Greek word "koimeterion," which means "a sleeping room") until the day when Jesus returns to raise them from the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:14-16). During that time (except for the last few years' worth of people who die right before He comes), they decay into "dust" (Genesis 3:19). When Jesus returns, He will perform a miracle as amazing as the miracle of Creation itself: He will bring all those people back to life (John 5:28-29). What kind of bodies will they have? The Bible says that it's foolish for us to even ask such questions (1 Corinthians 15:35-49). They will certainly have bodies; the bodies will certainly be human; people will be able to tell who is who (how else can Matthew 19:28 be fulfilled?); but the difference between what a person looked like when they died (Q & A continued next page)

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# Waiting Room

by Kara Taylor

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It was a Sunday morning in November, and my husband and I were on our way to pick up my grandmother for church. I knocked on her door and heard her say that she was unable to answer it. I called for one of the nurses at the residential facility, and asked them to open her door. I found my grandma lying up against the wall. She looked injured, and evidently, I had arrived just in time.

Grandma explained that she suddenly fell as she was getting ready to meet me. The nurse indicated that someone needed to take her to the emergency room. Without hesitating, I told her that I would insist on getting her there. She remarked, "The LORD sent you at the right time to come and help me." This was yet another instance in my life when God chose to reveal his impeccable timing that cannot be mistaken. "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

My husband and I helped her into our car, and we headed off to the hospital. When we arrived, we sat in the waiting room as we listened for her name to be called. I was amazed at how courageous she was at that moment. My grandma is a small woman; petite in height and stature. However, that has nothing to do with the size of her faith. As she sat in that waiting room, she displayed the meaning of the "mustard seed." Like a small mustard seed, her faith was able to move mountains (Matthew 17:20).

A mustard tree can grow anywhere and not be affected or

altered by its surroundings. That is why Jesus proclaims, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20-21). This was the attitude that my grandma displayed that day. She was in an emergency room, but she still grounded herself in faith. She was not altered by fear or anxiety.

My grandma's name was called, and she was instructed to go through a series of tests to see if there was any damage from the fall. After she went through a CAT scan and X-ray, she came back to her room and talked with me. She explained, "We never know what will happen to us throughout the day, but we do know that God will always be there with a way to help us." I still admired that she was not upset about falling or having to spend the day in the hospital. Rather, she was grateful that the LORD had planned for me to find her at that given moment when she needed assistance.

Three days passed and she was able to return home. The doctors found no concerns from the fall, so she must have lost her balance. It was difficult to see her in pain, but I was so grateful to be a part of the day when I witnessed my grandma's extraordinary faith. After that day, I can say that the occurrence transformed me into a stronger believer. I am not as easily triggered by anxious or troubled emotions. I am not concerned if tragic events happen in my life, because I realize

that God will have someone or something planned to assist me in time of need.

Our time in that waiting room strengthened my relationship with my grandma. More than ever, I see her as a powerful follower of Christ who will follow him all the days of her life. I make an extra effort to visit and spend time with her. I am touched that the LORD uses our time together as a way for me to become closer to Him, and grow into the woman He continues to create me to be. 🌹

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(Q&A From page 19)

and what they will look like when they are raised is comparable to the difference between what a seed looks like and what the plant that grows from it looks like.

There's a problem with your "conclusion," too. It assumes that it is possible for life in eternity to be "better" for some of eternity's inhabitants than it is for others. If that were true, how could it be a "perfect" life? The right answer (in my opinion) is the one that I heard Dwight Carpenter give over a quarter of a century ago. When asked, "In eternity, how old will you be?" Dwight responded, "According to Revelation 21:5, I won't be 'old' at all; I'll be 'new,' and instead of getting older and older, I'll be getting newer and newer!" (Thanks for this good theology, Dwight! I've used it hundreds of times!!) 🌹

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# Not Easily Shaken

by Chuck Jones

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My dog Ruby doesn't like fireworks, she trembles at the explosions and can't appreciate the sights. I, on the other hand, enjoy them, and try to calm her when they go off. The difference is that I know there isn't any immediate danger, while my poor dog can't understand that and remains terrified.

It's as Jesus said, "the truth will set you free". I don't understand all there is to know about fireworks, but I do know enough not to be frightened by them; I'm free to enjoy them. It's the knowledge of the truth that sets us free from being

bound by fear, worry, and anxiety. More than just knowing the truth, it's living like we believe it, that makes the difference.

The current economic environment we live in has created much uncertainty about jobs, investments, and possessions. Anxiety and fear can creep into our thinking and replace peace, joy, and hope in our lives. What can the truth do to help us from being bound by fear? What follows is my observation and experience.

Jesus taught us that those who hear his teachings and live by them would be like the one who built his house on a rock. This house (or life) would face storms, but it will not fall. I believe that we can all acknowledge this truth. Storms or troubles happen in life, how we face them, what we think about them, how we respond to them is predicated on who or what directs our lives.

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of Yahweh our God. They have bowed down and fallen, but we have risen and stand upright" (Psalm 20:7-8). Standing or falling depends on who we trust and follow, because where our treasure is that's where our loyalty will be.

In another place David wrote: "I have set Yahweh always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:8). That's sticking close to God! Not like a lucky rabbit's foot, but the commander of your life; in actions, words and especially thoughts.

Psalm 15 begins with the question, "Who may abide in Your tabernacle?" The next four verses answer that question by describing one who walks upright in Yahweh's path. It concludes by saying, "He

who does these things shall never be moved".

The idea contained in the word "moved" is to slip, shake, waver, or fall. We can slip into a bad attitude, our trust in Yahweh can be shaken, we might waver from the path, or fall into dismal moods, when we're not thinking correctly. This is where the truth is important in respect to what we allow to dominate our thinking.

Here's some more truth: "Because he (you and me) has set his love upon Me," Yahweh says, "therefore I will deliver him. I will set him on high because he has known my name. He shall call upon Me and I will answer him. **I will be with him in trouble**; I will deliver him and honor him" (Psalm 91:14-15). That's truth you can believe! Taking this to heart will help eliminate worry and anxiety about things we can't control.

It's as Pastor Michael Cisler has said, "The times are uncertain, but God isn't". Setting our hearts and minds on the promises Yahweh has given will take the terror out of the future. Understanding who fights for us, who provides, who protects, will greatly ease the uncertainty. The more we know and understand the truth the freer we become. If only Ruby knew there was nothing to fear from fireworks; but she refuses to listen.

"I would have lost heart unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of Yahweh in the land of the living. Wait on Yahweh; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on Yahweh" (Psalm 27:13-14). It is possible to lose heart, unless we believe. These times will try to shake us, but trusting in Yahweh will make us unshakable. 🍀

# The Stranger

Submitted by Ron Suzuki

A few years after I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small Texas town. From the beginning, dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around from then on.

As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me good from evil, and Dad taught me to obey, but the stranger...he was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies.

If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to our first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but dad didn't seem to mind.

Sometimes, Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to the kitchen for peace and quiet. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.)

Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home...not from us, our friends, or any visitors. Our longtime visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears, made my dad squirm, and my mother blush. My

dad didn't permit the liberal use of alcohol, but the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing.

I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked... and NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you could walk into my parents' den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures.

His name? We just call him 'TV.' He now has a wife now...we call her 'Computer.' 🍷

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## The Coat Hanger

A pastor was at church when she received a phone call that her daughter was very sick with a fever. She left church and stopped by the pharmacy to get some medication. She got back to her car and found that she had locked her keys in the car. She didn't know what to do, so she called home and told the baby sitter what had happened. The baby sitter told her that the fever was getting worse. She said, "You might find a coat hanger and use that to open the door."

The pastor looked around and found an old rusty coat hanger that had been left on the ground,

possibly by someone else who at some time had locked their keys in their car. She looked at the hanger and said, "I don't know how to use this." She bowed her head and asked God to send her help. Within five minutes a beat up old motorcycle pulled up, with a dirty, greasy, bearded man who was wearing an old biker skull rag on his head.

The pastor thought, "This is what you sent to help me?" But, she was desperate, so she was also very thankful. The man got off of his cycle and asked if he could help. She said, "Yes, my daughter is very sick. I stopped to get her some medication and I locked my keys in my car. I must get home to her. Please, can you use this hanger to unlock my car?" He said, "Sure." He walked over to the car, and in less than a minute the car was open. She hugged the man and through her tears she said, "Thank You So Much! You are a very nice man."

The man replied, "Lady, I am not a nice man. I just got out of prison today. I was in prison for car theft and have only been out for about an hour." The pastor hugged the man again and with sobbing tears cried out loud, "Oh, Thank you God! You even sent me a Professional!" 🍷

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## Hot Air

My pastor friend put sanitary hot air hand dryers in the rest rooms at his church and after two weeks took them out. I asked him why and he confessed that they worked fine but when he went in there he saw a sign that read,

"For a sample of this week's sermon, push the button." 🍷