

Kingdom News

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever.... (Matt. 6:13)

Volume 6, Issue 4

April 2012

Motto for the year of 2012

You are worthy, Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created. (Revelation 4:11 *KJV adapted*)

Living Waters



Your Kingdom ... Your Will (Part 3)

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10 KJV)

As our Lord teaches us to pray, His direction is that we are to exalt the *Hallowed (Holy) Name* of the Father. We are to prepare for and anticipate *His coming Kingdom*. And we are to seek for and submit to the execution of *His Will* in our lives and in our lands, just as His Will is done in heaven. ⁽¹⁾

Did last month's edition of this series ruffle your feathers a bit? If so, than please accept my very sincere appreciation for your returning to this month's edition. If your feathers are fine, then much love to you, as well. Truth and revelation can push the envelope on any number of disclosures. Either way, you have my

Living Waters

continued on page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 **Living Waters & The Leadership Corner**
- 2 **Son of My Wisdom & Journey to Intimacy**
- 3 **Choose: God or Mammon & Special Feature**

The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

Time to Stage a "COMEBACK"

All scripture is KJV paraphrased.

Have you ever been in a situation where it seemed like you had failed? Maybe you planned to achieve a particular goal by a certain point in time, but things didn't turn out the way you expected them to. It's possible that some people may have feelings of disappointment about certain areas in their lives. Some may think that 2012 has not gotten off to a good start for them.

I can tell you from my personal experience, this year started out rough for me and it has been trying to "run me over" since day one. Several unexpected events have taken place. And most of them seemed questionable as to how they fit into the direction I believe God told me to go in for this year.

In one of our past articles, we discussed the topic of failure. We shared that failure is truly based on one's perspective. We questioned whether utter failure in life (for an active believer) is really possible. I would like to propose a perspective for us to consider as it relates to things not going the way we had planned, which for some may equate to failure.

For many Christians, the month of April represents Resurrection Month. This is when we commemorate the death, burial, and resurrection (and ascension) of our

The Leadership Corner

continued on page 7

Son of My Wisdom



2 Chronicles 7:14 (Part 3)

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land.

For the last two editions of Kingdom News we took a look at II Chronicles 7:14 in light of spiritual warfare, or rather, we looked at spiritual warfare in light of II Chronicles 7:14. In doing so we discovered that we must actually live this scripture in order for us to engage in spiritual warfare in the Kingdom of God.

Furthermore, until this happens we are actually in spiritual warfare **against** the Kingdom of God. For, it is written, *“the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* We know this because *they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* God has given us the basis for righteous, spiritual warfare; namely, submission to God.

In the quote from the book of Romans we see that we all are in spiritual warfare all the time. *For, the flesh is lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* We are always in one of two dispositions of mind: *carnal* or *spiritual*. Therefore we are always warring: either in the flesh against God or in the Spirit (the Spirit of God) *putting to death the things of the flesh.*

However, in merely quoting the 7th verse of the 14th chapter of II Chronicles, so much is missed. We have come to merely quote this verse; however, so much has had to happen to come to



A Journey to Intimacy The Pursuit of Happiness?

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.⁽¹⁾

Hold on for just a minute (pages flipping). I'm having a hard time here; I've been trying to find the chapter and verse of this well-worn phrase. Can somebody help me here? Is this scripture found in the Old Testament or the New Testament?

The closest I could get was the scripture that says:

"... He that keeps the law, happy is he."⁽²⁾ ... No, that's not it.

"... happy is the man whom God corrects"⁽³⁾ ... Oh, my bad, that's not close either is it?

While this fine declaration seems to educate Americans about their right to *pursue happiness*; it seems a bit short on a few vital imperatives:

- Like providing instructions as to how exactly one is to go about "pursuing happiness..."
- Like properly defining what this object called "happiness" really is...

Thus we are left with every man doing what is right in his own eyes.⁽⁴⁾ And a fine mess we've made of this effort. We have more "objects of this supposed happiness" possibly than our ancestors just 2-3 generations prior. But we are more depressed and crest-fallen than ever. It seems somehow that this elusive destination called *happiness*, has managed to evade us yet again. I'm beginning to wonder if "happiness" is not much like riches, which make for itself wings.

most genuine respect; because you could have opted for reading a "comic book" or some other "romance novel" instead.

Admittedly, the road was a bit slippery last month. A few of the landmarks along that road were:

The Kingdom of God is our ultimate destination. Perhaps, we get the sense of this from a number of realities: One, Jesus is currently seated at the right hand of Majesty, in the Kingdom of God (*high above all principalities and powers*).⁽²⁾ Another is that Jesus Christ will deliver up the Kingdom (of Heaven) to the Father.⁽³⁾ But before He does that He will sit upon the throne of David, in that Kingdom.⁽⁴⁾

Kingdom of Heaven

The *Kingdom of Heaven* is circumscribed (although this is not exclusively the case, it has parameters that are "spatial" and it has temporal effects), and finds itself inside of the *Kingdom of God*. In the Kingdom of Heaven, there is a throne of David (concerning which there is yet an earthly promise to be fulfilled); upon which shall sit our Sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ.⁽⁵⁾ And Jesus Christ shall reign until the Father has put all enemies under our Lord's feet. And when all things have been subdued, then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that put all things under Him that it may be clear (to all) that the Sovereign God is (preeminent).

Kingdom of God

The *Kingdom of God* is irrevocable and cannot be advanced and it cannot be withstood. It is an everlasting, immutable Kingdom.⁽⁶⁾ Nothing can be added to it and nothing can be taken away.

As promised, this month we'll explore how it is possible to be *in the Kingdom*, and yet not be *submitted* to the will of the King.

Disclaimer: Please do not mistake the use of the phrase "in the Kingdom," as meaning that your name is specifically, and necessarily written in the Lamb's Book of Life.⁽⁷⁾ That place is not mine to assign (or assure); for a tree is known by its fruit, more so than by the orchard that it is planted in. The orchard may identify the *location* of the tree; but it won't necessarily identify the *type* of tree; that's one purpose of the fruit.

IN THE KINGDOM, BUT NOT IN THE KING

You may recall that it had been noted that "the coming of

His Kingdom is governmental and vital. The coming of *His Will* is personal and intimate." This helps us understand *how we can be in the Kingdom, and yet not be subject to the will of the King*.

Let's see what this potentially looks like. The waters, through this strait, are going to be choppy and may even be a bit distasteful; but if you hang in there, I believe it will have been worth it.

The *Kingdom of God* encompasses EVERYTHING, nothing is outside of the *Kingdom of God*. ALL of creation, ALL realms of authority, ALL worlds, ALL ages ... you see how that word "ALL" keeps showing up? That means that both the Kingdom of Light (Heaven) and the Kingdom of Darkness find themselves *within* the Kingdom of the Most Eternal Lord God.

By the Sovereign wisdom of God, He elected to also create a *Kingdom* here in the earth realm (under the heavens). It is called the *Kingdom of the Heavens* (aka the Kingdom of Heaven). He elected to set over it a man named Adam (and his descendants).

The idea of being *in the Kingdom* is an overarching ascription or effect; whereas to be *subject to the will of the King* is specific, personal and (dare I say, in some terrible use of language: it is also optional). "Optional" in the strict sense, that one has the right and responsibility to CHOOSE to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The ideas of being "in the Kingdom" versus "being subject to the King" respect completely different realms of dominion. Yes, I recognize the constant repetition of the various phrases; it is intentional. *That* the Kingdom is governmental and vital implies a **disregard** to "personal preference." Or said otherwise, the Kingdom is not "governmental and vital," because you or I prefer it so. It simply *IS*, because the Lord has determined it so. On the one hand, how THINGS behave and respond within the Kingdom is governed by the laws of the Kingdom, as set forth by the Sovereign. On the other hand, *how WE* respond to the King, Himself, has been left to our discretion. So we see, here, the two different realms of dominion.

Another important aspect of the difference between our *presence* in the Kingdom, versus our *participation* in the Kingdom, is that to ENTER the Kingdom requires *repentance*.⁽⁸⁾ To PARTICIPATE in the Kingdom requires *doing the will of the King*;⁽⁹⁾ or it requires our "*be being*" conformed into the image of

the Son. When you enter the Kingdom of Heaven, your "environmentals" are affected. And, what is expected of you, also changes. And, now you find yourself on the enemy's HIT list. This is just one, of many, reasons that it is imperative that you move immediately to becoming *participatory* in the Kingdom, which is a very personal, life-long, sacrificial, mortifying, painstaking, self-denying initiative.

Caution: The use of the term "participatory" is really a euphemism (or pleasantry) which means specifically whole scale, sellout (Greek: *metanoeho*). There needs to be a complete overhaul in our thinking and in our relationships: with God, His Word, and His Spirit: with each other; with sin, with our own flesh, with....

Prior to becoming *participatory*, we are in some sense *present*, but there is yet much land to be conquered within us. We get the intimation of this as Israel entered Canaan. They were **IN** the Promised Land, but there was much work to be done in order for them to come to the place where they could "reign and rest." There were yet many wars to be fought, and many strongholds to be usurped. I fear this is one major mistake, we make in ushering newcomers into the Kingdom. We believe we've gotten them across the threshold, and there we leave them, to make what they can of this new way of life. In many cases, they abort; and unfortunately they don't even know that they've aborted (because they have no means of measuring their progress). And they cannot measure their progress because they have been left using the same weights and measurement system as the "world."

Contrary to popular misconception, the *Way* of the Kingdom is difficult (especially for newcomers, who aren't taught this *Way*);⁽¹⁰⁾ they don't know how to adorn charity;⁽¹¹⁾ they don't know what is expected of them;⁽¹²⁾ they don't know who their enemy is,⁽¹³⁾; they don't know how to love not the world;⁽¹⁴⁾ they don't know how to bear arms;⁽¹⁵⁾ they don't know how.... Again unfortunately, this can and often does go on for YEARS; potentially exciting frustration and thoughts of spiritual suicide; because this way seems impossible, without the proper guidance and counsel.⁽¹⁶⁾

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Respect to my brothers and sisters who feel more comfortable seeing the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God as one and the same Kingdom.

The Kingdom of *Heaven* is at war (or at odds) with the

Kingdom of *Darkness*. The Kingdom of *God*, however, is **NOT** at war with the Kingdom of *Darkness*. In fact, the war itself is circumscribed by the government of the Kingdom of *God*. The enemy is not confused about the Sovereignty of God; he is however, confused about the Person of Jesus Christ.⁽¹⁷⁾ It is the Lord's intention that *we* would also become a source of confusion to the enemy. But that does not happen by us having a "passing" knowledge of WHO Jesus Christ is; it can only happen for those who are *subject* to the King. You'll recall that the scriptures teach that in order to frustrate the plans of the enemy, we must first *submit* ourselves to God; then *resist* the enemy and off he goes.⁽¹⁸⁾ There is no true, godly resistance; where that has not first been God-honoring submission to the King. The enemy knows the rules of engagement; unfortunately it seems that we don't. This type of confusion can only happen with those, who are being made to look-like, walk-like, and talk-like Him. A truer statement would be that "... it can only happen with those who are subject to the King; through whom are made manifest the *image*, the *walk of life*; and the *words* of our Lord."

Briefly, let's look at some of the places in the scripture, where we see persons, or relationships regarding people, who are "in the Kingdom," but are at "odds with the will of the King." Said otherwise, we'll see persons who are under a particular government or leadership, yet not *subject to* or *compliant with* that Ruler-ship. Why does the Lord represent the Kingdom in this way? Well, one reason He does this is so that we may *know Him*; and that we may come to understand that He does not trifle with non-compliance.

- Jesus says that if there is a branch *in Him* (Who is the True Vine) that does not bear fruit, the Father will remove and dispose of the barren branch.⁽¹⁹⁾ Please don't be mistaken, the Father does no prune barren branches, He removes them. He prunes fruitful branches.
- And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁽²⁰⁾
- In the parable of the talents: all were servants, but all did not handle their roles honorably and all were

equally loyal to the master. The resulting sentence being: "*And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"⁽²¹⁾

- In the parable of the marriage supper and the disrespectful guest. In this case, the resulting sentence being: "*Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.*"⁽²²⁾ Now you'll recognize that the disrespectful guest was both invited and allowed to enter the marriage supper event. HOWEVER, when the Master walked through to greet and socialize with the guests, He noticed the non-compliance exhibited by this guest, and responded accordingly.

We could go on, but I believe we see the pattern.

Why take this painful route? Because I believe that Wisdom bids us take a personal inventory. Now is a good time to discern whether we have pledged our allegiance to the King (Himself) or whether we are content with just saying "Lord, Lord."⁽²³⁾

HISTORICALLY AND PROPHETICALLY

When we look at the parade of nations that usurp authority over Israel for time and times (as the Lord allows); we are looking at a *temporal, mirror image of a war in Heaven*. The enemy had a kingdom in the earth realm. He rebelled against the Throne of God. The enemy was judged and deposed; while he retained his kingdom, the parameters of his reign were restricted. His rebellion brought over his kingdom (the Kingdom of Darkness), the jurisdiction of the new kid on the block. Lordship over the earth was stripped from the enemy's hands and given to another; it was given to a man. His name was Adam. Now we glimpse why the enemy worked (and does work) so strategically to humble Adam (mankind). Through Adam's rebellion (and ours), the kingdom was compromised and by means of the flesh, the enemy seeks again to usurp authority in the earth realm. The Father (destined to restore the *Kingdom of the Heavens* to Himself) sent His Son. Whom God raised from the dead; having all power in heaven and in earth. And Jesus gave the keys (rights and responsibilities) of the Kingdom of Heaven back to man. But not ALL men, only those who would become his disciples;⁽²⁴⁾ so that whatsoever we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever

we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

All along the way, the Father is giving us glimpses of the *Master Plan of the Ages*; and we're missing it. The Father has come to restore the Kingdom (not *just* to Israel) but to His Son. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to man. And the first Man to successfully take it was Jesus. And He left the government of that Kingdom in our hands and returned to the Father (to prepare *us* for a place within the Eternal Kingdom).

Now we can see what the Lord is intimating when He says, "*There was a certain householder; who planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.*"⁽²⁵⁾ Or when He calls His steward in for a Performance Review; and says "*give an account of your stewardship; for you may soon be unemployed....*"⁽²⁶⁾

Somehow we've been duped into looking at our place and purpose in this world as resolving itself into chasing worldly, temporal, zero-based ROI, fleeting ambitions. This is not to be so. The Lord is fitting us for a Kingdom; and all we want is a jersey and a seat on the bench. We're asleep, we're too comfortable. There is a Kingdom to be gained and an opposing ruler to be spoiled. If we continue to look at this world, through the "eyes of this world" we will find ourselves, at length, blind and altogether unable to see what God is doing in the grand scheme of things. And worst yet, unable to be useful to Him in accomplishing it (specifically in *our lands*).

And the Lord said, "Who then is a faithful and wise steward? It is him, whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household; and assign to him the duty of giving to the house their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord (when He returns) shall find doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He has."⁽²⁷⁾

Finally my brother (that includes sisters) let a man so account of us (or regard us) as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Let us always be mindful that it is required of Stewards that one be found faithful.⁽²⁸⁾ That is, that one be found both *in* the Kingdom and *subject* to the King.

God Bless You!!! *LW*

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) Matthew 6:9-10
- (2) Ephesians 1:19-23
- (3) 1 Corinthians 15:24
- (4) Acts 2:29-30
- (5) Isaiah 9:6-7
- (6) Daniel 4:3
- (7) Revelation 3:5; 20:12; 21:17
- (8) Matthew 3:2; 4:17
- (9) Matthew 7:21
- (10) Titus 2
- (11) Colossians 3:14-17
- (12) 1 Peter 5:5-10
- (13) 1 Peter 5:8
- (14) 1 John 2:15
- (15) Ephesians 6:12-18
- (16) Psalms 1:1; 16:7; 33:11-12; 119:24
- (17) James 2:19; 1 Corinthians 2:7-8
- (18) James 4:7
- (19) John 15:1-6
- (20) Matthew 8:11-12
- (21) Matthew 25:24-30
- (22) Matthew 22:11-14
- (23) Matthew 7:21
- (24) Matthew 16:19
- (25) Matthew 21:33
- (26) Luke 16:1-3+
- (27) Luke 12:42-44
- (28) 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

The Leadership Corner

continued from page 1

Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We know that because of Christ's sacrifice we have the ability to be in a covenant relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Because of this covenant, we have been given life, health, wholeness, peace, sufficient provision, safety, constructive correction, and so much more. We have the opportunity to experience God (and life) in ways non-Christians cannot even imagine.

But, before we get too excited about the benefits of Christ's coming (and Him being crowned King of kings), let's back up to the sacrifice He had to make in order for us to enjoy the privileges we have.

In John 10:10, Jesus said He came so that we could have and experience abundant life (to be used to fulfill the plan of God). Notice He did not say anything about Him having to die (at least not at this point). He also did not mention anything about Him receiving any more life for himself as a result of His trip to earth.

He came to give **us** life. Why? It's because we were dead in sin. We existed under a curse of death. So, Jesus had to submit himself to death in order to bring life to us. Christ died. Then, He came back (rose from the dead). But that's not all. He also ascended to His throne in heaven as our risen King.

Now, while Jesus was alive on earth many people, including His own disciples, thought that He would deliver them while He was alive. Therefore, when Christ died, some people (including some of His disciples) thought He had failed. They thought Jesus failed to do what He told them He came to do...give them abundant life.

It was not until after Christ died, rose, ascended, and sent the Holy Spirit did many people begin to understand that Jesus' original plan was to accomplish His goal through a "Comeback." He always knew He would come back to earth via the Holy Spirit. Even when He was preparing to go to the cross He told His disciples He would return. In John 14:18, He said He would come to His disciples. And in John 16:7, He tells them He will come via the Holy Spirit (whom the Father would send in Christ's name).

It was in the original plan of God for Jesus to bring life via a "Comeback." Christ had to conquer death by willingly submitting to death. This is a major revelation for us.

When we face situations where it seems like we have failed, we could associate this with a kind of death. Failure could express death of a plan, intention, purpose, or expectation. And, if this is true, when we face failure (death), how should we respond to it?

Well, I'd like to think that Jesus is our perfect example. In order to bring life, He willingly submitted himself to death – resting in the plan of the Father for Him. This is what we should do, as well.

As usual, let me give a personal example and then we will expand the concept.

In our small nonprofit agency, we recently had to move out of our office space due to a lack of sufficient funding to continue paying the rent, which was significantly higher than it should have been for the space we had. At any rate, after consultation with

The Leadership Corner

continued to page 8

my board of directors, and some trusted colleagues, I willingly submitted to this “death” or failure (to continue in that space).

It was not easy because we were not able to move immediately into new office space. Instead, my team had to operate on a mobile level. We were each stationed at either our home offices or our program sites in the community. We no longer had a “central office” to call home.

We worked diligently to secure our next office space, but the process seemed to lag on and on. While this was happening, the enemy was whispering in my ear (and he was no doubt chatting with my staff members also). He would pitch thoughts of failure, defeat, fear, and so many other things.

During this time, I had to be strong not only for myself, but also for my team. Then, at one point God whispered in my ear and said, “You know I’m doing this for you? I’ve caused the agency to die (at the old place) so that I can bring new life at the new place.”

Once I heard this word, I got with my team and we began to devise a plan to comeback “leaner and meaner” than before. We trimmed down expenses, office furniture, and other things (and relationships) that did not add value to what we were doing.

This approach allowed us to focus our energies on only the projects we knew God was calling us to do at that time. We also began to see God open new doors of opportunity that we didn’t have at the old place.

In effect, God wanted give us new, abundant life through a “Comeback.” But, first we had to die (seemingly fail) at the old place where we were.

May I ask you a question? Could it be that the failure, disappointment, or death you are experiencing is a sign that God is readying you for a more abundant life through death? Could it possibly be the case that it’s time for a “Comeback?”

Think about it. If so, I encourage you to do like Jesus and willingly submit yourself to the “death” component of God’s amazing plan so that you can receive the “new life” component.

Be blessed! [LL]

Joyce White, LMSW

that point. The temple has been built for the name of the Lord. The Ark of the Covenant has been brought into the temple. Solomon blesses God and the people. The glory of the LORD filled the temple.

In as much as the building of the temple is a type of the regeneration of man; neither is ready until it is full of the Spirit of God. This is where the II Chronicles 7:14 verse finds its context. This is what happens in the first part of the chapter, *the glory of God fills the temple*.

And in verse 15 God begins, “**NOW** mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attentive unto their prayer that is made in this place.” The word “Now” is in contrast to before. That means, until our temple has been filled with the Spirit of God, then we are neither a military threat, nor are we on the right side of the battle. And if we are not a military threat, then we need to ask why, and take repentant action.

So now I’m saying to you, look around in your life for rebellion, and idolatry. Repent from such warfare against the Most High God.

James says “*submit, therefore, to God, resist the devil and he will flee.*” Humble yourself, pray, seek the face of God, and turn from your own way of life. **THEN** his eyes shall be open, and his ears attentive unto your prayer that is made in that place.

He speaks of the people who are called by His name. He’s speaking in this day to the Church. For, many are called by His name, but few are chosen. Many are called Christians.

Yet say not, “we are Christians” from *within only*. For I say that God is able to raise up stones which are called by the name of Christ.

But, bring forth fruit meet for repentance. ~SOMW~

Scriptures: II Chronicles 7; Romans 8; Galatians 5; James 4

David L. White

Labor not to be rich: cease from your own wisdom. Is it wise, to set your sights on that which *is not*? Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.⁽⁵⁾

This same truth may be said of the aforementioned brand of "*happiness*." It would probably read like this.

Labor not to make happiness an object of pursuit: cease from doing what is wise in your own eyes. Can't you see the vanity of setting your sights on such a bird of prey that can never be caught? The *pursuit of happiness* is like trying to catch the wind in your hands. No sooner is happiness a bleep on your radar of aspiration, than it has vanished away like the clouds of heaven.

Oh woe is me! Can it be altogether wrong to desire to be happy?!? Pray tell what dainties then can the heart relish?

Alas, "*happiness*" is not a cursed thing; to be banished from the heart of the Lord's servants. Even so, it also is not an object that can (or that should) be pursued. Very really is it not at all an object, in any real sense of the word.

In the Kingdom of Almighty God, *happiness* is a thing of abundance. But it is so, as a "by-product" rather than a "thing in itself." Pardon the crass-ness of the following: In one sense, *happiness* is like the dog's tail. And if you've ever seen a poor dog chasing its tail, you'll understand why happiness is not to be pursued on its own merit. For where the dog is, there shall its tail be also (smiling). *I could not resist.*

Servants of the Living God, you may certainly have *happiness* and have it to the full. If you will have it on the terms of the Kingdom; and only if you handle it thus:

- See it for what "is it" and not for what "you want it to be"
- Come about it in a way that is befitting a

servant of the Sovereign Lord God

In one sense, *happiness*, (much like righteousness) is a *gift*. Every good gift ... comes down from above; from the Father of Lights.⁽⁶⁾ And happiness like righteousness MUST be "gifted" by God and not sought by us. I dare say, that we'd be hard pressed to find (in the scriptures) a map to the destination called "*happiness*." Nevertheless, in the Kingdom, you'll find the streets full of people who are very genuinely happy.

- *Happiness* is a natural by-product of the people whose God is the Lord.⁽⁷⁾
- *Happiness* is a bonus to the man who finds wisdom and who gains understanding.⁽⁸⁾
- *Happiness* is a way of life for the person, who does not map the course of their life after ungodly counsel.⁽⁹⁾
- *Happy* is the man in whose spirit there is no guile.⁽¹⁰⁾
- *Happy* is that man who makes the LORD the sole object of his trust.⁽¹¹⁾
- *Happy* is the man whom the Lord chastens and teaches out of His law.⁽¹²⁾
- *Happy* are they that keep judgment, and he that does righteousness at all times.⁽¹³⁾
- *Happy* is the man that fears the LORD and that delights greatly in His commandments ... wealth and riches shall be in his house.⁽¹⁴⁾

Is that a little too "old school" for you? Well let's fast-forward a few generations.

- *Happy* are the poor in spirit.
- Paradoxically, they that mourn are also regarded as *happy*
- And the meek ... they're *happy*.
- So too are the peacemakers.
- Aaahh lest we forget, *happy* are those who are reviled and persecuted for being righteous.⁽¹⁵⁾

Starting to prefer the "old school" version of *happiness*, are you?

Now for the *Pièce de résistance* Jesus said to His disciples (and He presently says to us) I have been to you an example of what you ought to do; as I have done to you that do to others. Now that

you *know* these things, happy are you!!!!⁽¹⁶⁾ Oh, I'm sorry that's not what it says. We wish it were that easy. It says "Now that you know these things, happy are you if you DO them." Okay that's better.

Although *happiness* may be a desirable element of this nation's Declaration of Independence, it is not an object of pursuit in the declaration of the Kingdom. Please let's not be confused about that.

Perhaps (in one sense), the problem is not so much that we "desire to be happy," as much as it is that we want *happiness* on our own terms. Not so, in the Kingdom. Pursuing *happiness* on your own terms will get you a trip to the doctor and a lifetime prescription for Prozac. *Happiness* is a gift; it **is not** to be sought after. It is "gifted" on God's terms, not ours. As an example, meekness is a precursor to *happiness*.

Happiness is inevitable to one who hallows the Name of the Lord; who is subject to the Sovereign rule of God and who does the will of the Father. For that one shall find food, forgiveness, leadership and protection.⁽¹⁷⁾ -JTI-

May our Lord richly "gift" you with happiness.

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, SMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Declaration of Independence

⁽²⁾ Proverbs 29:18

⁽³⁾ Job 5:17

⁽⁴⁾ Deuteronomy 12:8

⁽⁵⁾ Proverbs 23:4-5

⁽⁶⁾ James 1:17

⁽⁷⁾ Psalm 144:15

⁽⁸⁾ Proverbs 3:13

⁽⁹⁾ Psalm 1:1

⁽¹⁰⁾ Psalm 32:2

⁽¹¹⁾ Psalm 40:4

⁽¹²⁾ Psalm 94:12

⁽¹³⁾ Psalm 106:3

⁽¹⁴⁾ Psalm 112:1-3

⁽¹⁵⁾ Matthew 5

⁽¹⁶⁾ John 13: 17

⁽¹⁷⁾ Matthew 6

arrogant about them. You won't even entertain the possibility that these things may (by the grace of God) be eradicated from your midst. No one is crying out to God that these offenses may be purged from your midst.

As I contemplated these things before the Lord, I then heard Him say, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom....*" So I began to explore what Jesus had said to Nicodemus during this discussion. Here's what came of that...

If you don't mind, I'm going to contrast 21st century English with 1st century Greek. You may recall that we said that one of the reasons we benefit from searching the original text, is because we see also what "could have been said."⁽²⁾

I'm doing this because the scriptures, teach us that every word is to be established (or disallowed); or that judgment is to be passed after taking into consideration the testimonies of 2-3 witnesses.⁽³⁾ This is especially vital given that our "yea" no longer means simply "yea;" likewise for our "nay."⁽⁴⁾ Anymore, "with all of our getting" we **MUST** strive to *understand*.⁽⁵⁾ But in order to do so, it behooves us to thoroughly explore the context clues.⁽⁶⁾ (Whew! That was a mouthful.)

Our first witness is the *KJV Translators* of scripture. We'll consider them as a single witness, since there is "agreement" among them. Our second witness is the *Original* manuscript, as best we have access to them.

Now that we've identified our witnesses, let's have a look at the evidence.

Scripture

Except a man be born **again**, he cannot **see** the kingdom of God. ... Except a man be born of **water** and of the **Spirit**, he cannot **enter** into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is

spirit. (John 3:3, 5-6)

A couple of things that are being said to us, is that being "born again" is an imperative to *seeing* the Kingdom. And being "born of water and Spirit" are imperatives to *entering* the Kingdom. The word "imperative" here means, *that without which the following CANNOT occur*. Please ... please ... please ... (as servants of the Living God) let us understand that when the Lord says that a thing CANNOT be done; let us not say contrarily that it CAN. Lest we find, that our house thus being divided, is ripe for destruction.⁽⁷⁾ For the Word of the Lord, CANNOT return to Him void. The Lord is One with His Word, and He cannot/will not deny Himself.⁽⁸⁾

AGAIN

Now the KJV Translators chose the term "**born again**." The Original word for "again" is "*anōthen*;" it is only found in one other scripture: Galatians 4:9. The Greek work "*anōthen*" could mean "again," OR "from above," OR "from the beginning," OR "from the top." The origin of the Greek word "*anōthen*" comes from the Greek word "*ano*" which means "above, high up, upward." Trust me, we're headed somewhere (hang in there). You may be able to discern here that the original word "*anōthen*" translated "again" has LESS to do with sequence of birth as in "born a second time." It has EVERYTHING to do with origin of birth as in "born of God."

SEE

The KJV Translators chose the term "**see**." The Original word is "*eido*" (which expresses merely mechanical, passive or casual vision). Also reference the original words "*optanomai* or *optamai*" which give the impression of "*gazing with eyes open wide, as at something remarkable*." Another cousin (these two are used interchangeably) of this original word is "*horao*" which also means *to experience*. Another not so distant cousin of the original "*optamai*" is the Hebrew word "*raah*." This Hebrew word occurs a number of times in conversations between God and Moses.⁽⁹⁾ And the LORD said unto Moses, "*Get up into mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel*." Contrariwise, He

says, "*None of the men that came up out of Egypt ... shall see the land ... because they have not wholly followed Me*."

WATER

The KJV Translators chose the term "**water**." NOTE: All occurrences of this word in the New Testament (with only 2 exceptions 2 Peter 2:17 and Jude 12) comes from the same Greek word. The Original word is "*hudatos*" (both literally and figuratively) it means water. Now, this next part is hard for me (because it was not a part of my original understanding). The use of the word "water" while it does mean physical H₂O (where possible); it also has what I like to call, a "transcendent analogue."

Really quickly: A "transcendent analogue" is the original thing for which we have a physical expression or counterpart. Still too complex? Fair enough, let me try it this way. The scriptures say that, "*through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God*." So it is the case that the things which are visual and physical are not here simply to represent the thing itself.⁽¹⁰⁾ The term "worlds" mentioned above, encompasses EVERYTHING from the sub-atomic to the extraterrestrial; it also includes systems, philosophies, moral orders, if you can name it, it's included in the term "worlds." If you can't name it; it's included. Everything that was created or framed is a physical expression of some word of God (i.e., the term "water" being what it is; also points us to something more transcendent).

And I'm not ashamed to tell you that (at this time) I don't quite know how to tell you what the transcendent analogue (for water) is. It is as yet beyond the reach of my present knowledge and light (would to God that I may soon know Him in this way). But what I can tell you is that you'll see the intimation of the transcendent analogue in the following scriptures:

- ❖ But whosoever drinks 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 4:10-14)

- ❖ He that believes exactly what the scriptures have said concerning Me; out of his belly shall flow rivers of living *water*. (John 7:38 jcw)
- ❖ ... Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it. That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of *water* by the word. (Ephesian 5:26)

It seems clear (in these cases) that the Lord is talking about something more transcendent than physical *water*, something to which our physical expression of *water* points.

SPIRIT

The KJV Translators have chosen to use the words "**spirit and Spirit**." NOTE: All occurrences of the word "spirit or Spirit" in the New Testament (except for only 2 references in Matthew 14:26 and Mark 6:49); which incidentally is the telling of the exact same event) comes from the same Greek word. This is the case irrespective of whether the scriptures are pointing to the human spirit or the Spirit of God. Interesting isn't. Now that doesn't mean that the *human spirit* and the *Spirit of God* are the same (although they are both derived from the same original Greek word). In the Greek language, the contexts helped give color to the meaning of their words. Let's not misconstrue this. The Original word for "spirit" is "*pneuma*," which references human spirit, superhuman (angelic) spirit or Divine Spirit. So it is vital that we explore the contexts in which these words are nestled. This original word could also have been translated into either of the following: current of air; breath; breeze; rational soul; vital principle; mental disposition; angel; demon; Spirit of God.

Admittedly, the balance of this discourse has the potential to irritate or to chafe.

The forgone expositions being what they are, the opening scriptures could also very likely have been translated in one of the following manners:

Until it is the case that a man is born from above, he cannot (even if he were to go into a nearby mountain) look over into (or otherwise apprehend) the kingdom of God. ... Until a man has embarked upon a course that parts ways with his former life and been regenerated in his spirit, he will not submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, which is the lifestyle of the kingdom of God. Because that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

OR

Until it is the case that a man is born *as from the beginning* he cannot so much as *gaze with eyes open wide, at something as remarkable* as the kingdom of God. ... Except a man submits to the full pre- and post-requisites of baptism and has been begotten by the Spirit of God, he cannot take up citizenship in the kingdom of God.

Please ensure a bit of exposition on the phrase "born *as from the beginning*." What does it mean to be born as from the beginning? There is both the Genesis version of the phrase, and the Revelation version of this phrase. Let's peek at them both.

Genesis: ⁽¹¹⁾ "In the beginning God formed man out of the dust of the ground. And breathe into his nostrils (the spirit or) the breath of lives." The word "lives" is plural as rendered by the Interlinear. This gives light to the fact that Adam (man) was created with a principle of life that connected him to this world AND with a principle of life that connected him to God. Although they could have been, these two are not necessarily the same. We see this very clearly when the "one principle of life was severed, following the episode at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. So when we say that "except a man is born *as from the beginning*," we are saying that "except a man is born with a principle of life that restores his umbilical relationship with God, he cannot see the kingdom...."

Revelation: ⁽¹²⁾ "I am Alpha and Omega, *the beginning* and the ending..." and "These things say ... the beginning of the creation of God." It is clear from Revelation that Jesus Christ is Himself the Beginning. Therefore, except a man is born of Jesus Christ, it is impossible for him to, in any sense; see the things pertaining to the Kingdom. How is one to be born of Jesus Christ? A great question deserves a great answer. Paul says it this way "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live. But the *"I"* that lives is Christ Himself; because I have been born as of "the Beginning." (One day the Lord will give permission to share more about "The Two *"I"*s from Galatians 2:20.)

OR

Until it is the case that a man's birth begins at the Top, he cannot experience the kingdom of God. ... Except that a man is born through baptism and of the work of the Spirit, he cannot intercourse or transact in the kingdom of God.

Summarily

Be not deceived, God is not mocked, that which originates with the flesh can ONLY produce flesh and ONLY that which is begotten of the Spirit is spiritual. ⁽¹³⁾ And so it is with our new birth or our induction into the Kingdom of God. If the means by which we assay to embark upon entry are purely of the flesh, check your boarding pass you may be on the wrong train.

Had you ever gone to a particular store and tried to "remember" what was on your shopping list (at home)? So you pick up the things you can remember. Only to get home to learn that the things that you most needed escaped your recall, while at the store. There you stand with your half-done shopping list in your hand. And you sigh, "boy I wished I had remembered that when I was at the store. It's okay to miss a few items on the shopping list, when you're at the store. But we won't want to find ourselves in this same situation, while standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Sighing, "Boy I wish I had dealt with *that* before now. We are admonished to be sure of our calling and election.

And "now" would be the best time to address the matter. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Unfortunately we do not do that by flipping through our mental rolodex, saying "Hhmm, is there anything that I may be missing regarding my relationship with God. We discern apple trees by looking for apples on them. Just because a tree is planted in an apple orchard, does not make it an apple tree.

The Lord has given us many exceeding great and precious promises. By these we may become partakers of His divine nature (*actually become apple trees*). We know that this is taking place, as we find that we are progressively escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust. Focus on being diligent and add to your faith virtue. Then move on to adding knowledge. Grow into increased temperance. Be stretched through trials of your patience and then graduate into godliness. Express increased maturity through brotherly kindness and cap it off with charity (which is the bond of perfection). If these things be in you and abound you will never have to fear being barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, whoever finds that he lacks these things, will also find himself (which includes herself) to be quite blind and incapable of seeing afar off. This type of blindness is always accompanied by a severe case of amnesia; where one forgets that he was purged from his old sins. With such amnesia, one finds that he is still living like Jesus Christ does not govern his life. In an effort to avoid these injurious and dangerous positions, give diligence to making your calling and election sure. This can be done by cultivating the type of godly lifestyle that naturally bears the fruit of the Spirit. If we do these things, we shall never fall. ⁽¹⁵⁾ If we elect not to do (or neglect) these things, at length we shall find ourselves tares in the midst of the wheat harvest. ⁽¹⁶⁾

I know ... I know ... you'd rather not hear this, especially from me. That's cool. I'm done ... (for now).

Lots of love and respect.

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) 1 Corinthians 5:1-2
- (2) March 2102, Kingdom News edition, column Living Waters
- (3) 2 Corinthians 13:1
- (4) James 5:12; Matthew 5:37
- (5) Proverbs 4:5, 7
- (6) John 5:39
- (7) Matthew 12:25; Mark 3:24-25
- (8) Isaiah 55:11
- (9) Numbers 27:12; 32:11
- (10) Hebrew 11:3
- (11) Genesis 2:7
- (12) Revelation 1:8; 3:14
- (13) Galatians 6:7
- (14) 2 Peter 1:10
- (15) 2 Peter 1:4-10; Colossians 3:14 (*jcw version*)
- (16) Matthew 13:24-30

Special Feature

continued from page 3

said to her, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man pitched a stone? She said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." ⁽¹⁾

This is an amazing story, riddled with pearls of wisdom and flecks of gold. Let's look at some of them.

Although it may happen, it is not here my goal to weave a tapestry; but simply to point out the threads that run through the fabric of this event. I am taken by the many "introductions" in this occurrence.

- We are *introduced* to the malevolent intentions of the scribes and Pharisees.
- We are *introduced* to the Person of Jesus Christ, in a most intriguing, challenging situation.
- We are *introduced* to the relationship between the Law and Grace.
- And if we'll allow, we are *introduced* to our own hearts: in both the religious leaders and the adulterous woman.

THREADS

Early in the morning Jesus came again into the temple and all the people came to Him. Jesus sat down and taught them.

This particular note identifies that Jesus is regarded

by the populous as a teacher of the Law. We'll see its relevance shortly.

The scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman taken in adultery. When they had set her in the midst...

When this occurred, Jesus was sitting among "all the people" who came to hear Him expound the Law. Right in the middle of this crowd is brought a woman and put on public display. The scribes and Pharisees sought to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people. They were setting Him up; for if He judged wrongly on this matter, they could "take away" His teaching license. The people, esteemed the teachings of Jesus, as greater than those of the religious leaders of that day.

Matthew says (7:28-29) "*And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as One having authority, and not as the scribes.*"

They said to Jesus, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery (in the very act).

We believe that the writing and preservation of the Scriptures is inspired by the Holy Spirit, right? Which means that of all the iterations and translations, the Lord still governs what is retained, and even how it is represented (the error of our humanity notwithstanding). Why, then, was the Spirit careful to retain and include the words "*in the very act*?" Will you allow me some stretch (some leeway) here? The scribes and Pharisees thought, that the words "in the very act" would remove any wiggle room that Jesus might have occasioned if He wanted to "forgive her" or "stop them from stoning her." What they didn't know was that the words "in the very act" actually nailed *them* to the cross, instead.

How does one (*who knows the Law*) justify within their own conscience how you can catch someone "in the act" of adultery, and only bring one to judgment and not the other. OR if you didn't actually catch her "in the act" you are not a *witness* (in the legal sense) and are thus disqualified from casting stones. There must be multiple witnesses (or a thorough investigation),

Special Feature

continued on page 15

to invoke the penalty of the Law (which in this case would be "stoning").

Again, in order to catch someone "in the very act" of adultery, there must be an accomplice to the transaction. According to the Law, both of them are to be brought forth; they are to be stoned together. So Jesus could likely have said "We can start pitching stones when you bring the other party to the transaction. After all isn't that what the Law clearly requires?"

Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned. But what's Your opinion on the matter?

A few things more: the religious leaders of the day knew that one could not both openly contradict the Law and at the same time be a teacher of the Law. They thought that they had a well laid plan of espionage. They were banking on the fact that the *people* didn't know the Law. They had also hoped that Jesus, for fear of indicting his own Mother (more on that shortly) would sidestep the Law, in this case. Much to their surprise, not only did Jesus KNOW what the Law required; He also knew that they too KNEW the Law. The religious leaders, had gotten so used to manipulating the Law to control the people, that even to them the lines between the Law and the traditions of the elders had begun to blur. ⁽²⁾ You know the old adage: *if you tell a lie (or live a lie) long enough it will be regarded as truth*. Allow me to say it this way: Jesus *knew* that if He left them along with the Law and their consciences, the Spirit would discover to them the error of their ways. This is a lesson that we could well afford to learn: don't argue, be silent and allow the Spirit to reprove (to convict) the consciences of men. That's *His* responsibility. ⁽³⁾

On another note: when Jesus, didn't respond, they were confused: because it was customary to debate matters of the Law, of theologies, and of philosophies. And this was especially done in public forums. ⁽⁴⁾ That is partially where the scribes and Pharisees got their fame and awe among the people.

Additionally, they wanted to compare Jesus' right to teach the Law, with their own. This is why we would hear them asking Jesus, where do You get Your authority from? ⁽⁵⁾ Because much of John's

gospel represents Jesus' travels through the southern region of the Diaspora of Israel, there was the considerable influence of the Greek mind. They knew that Aristotle **sat** at the feet of Socrates, who **sat** at the feet of Plato. They knew that Jesus **did not sit** at the feet of a respected Teacher of the Law; they knew that Jesus **did not** descend from a line of Priests or Scribes; and they had **never** heard Jesus win any public debates regarding the Law. Never mind that He was the Giver of the Law.

Now here (*they thought*) was the Achilles heel of the whole event: They also knew that "according to their telling of it," Jesus was of illegitimate birth, himself. Although Mary's husband, Joseph "made an honest woman of her" everyone knew that Mary was pregnant before their marriage was consummated. Might this have been at the back of their scheme, when they brought "a women caught in the act of adultery?!?" to see what Jesus would judge.

Quick detour: According to custom, in the Jewish culture, there to be a time lapse of about one year, from betrothal to the wedding or consummation. According to the Kingdom, it was imperative for it to be known that Joseph was not the biological progenitor of the man Jesus Christ. If this were in any way marred or obscure, then our argument for the Divinity of the birth of Jesus Christ would have been a bigger cloud over Christianity than the fact that He rose from the dead.

Additionally, with the "illegitimate" tag on Jesus' collar, he didn't qualify to be a teacher of the Law. This was always a bone of contention for the religious leaders of that day. They even went so far as to call him a Samaritan, which we know implied "mixed-breed." ⁽⁶⁾

- They could not understand how He qualified to teach the Law.
- Contrariwise, Jesus understood how that they didn't qualify to teach the Law.

And on occasion, Jesus would say to them (the likes of) "you *couldn't* possibly know the Law of Moses (*Torah*); or you would understand what I'm saying to you."⁽⁷⁾ And as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Are you a master of Israel, and know not these things?"⁽⁸⁾

This they said, tempting him so that they might have an occasion to accuse Him. What did they want to accuse Him of, pray tell? They thought they had Jesus "between a rock and a hard place." On the one hand (*rock*), they had asked Jesus questions before, but none as up-close and personal as the question of adultery, which they secretly assumed about Mary, his Mother. On the other hand (*hard place*), everyone knew that God was no respecter of persons. I mean hadn't the Law also said as much "Thou shalt not respect persons?"⁽⁹⁾ They surmised, that based on the way they set this temptation in array, Jesus had either of two choices.

- 1) If Jesus, said "Go ahead and stone her according to the law;" it would be (as they understood it) for Him to judge Himself unworthy; being the off-spring of a questionable origin. Or
- 2) Jesus could have categorically forgiven her and released her; which would have been (in their estimation) a blatant disregard and violation of the Law.

Either of those two realities would have disqualified Jesus' right to be a teacher of the Law.

Here is what I saw happening in the realm of the conscience. Out of their mouths, they said "***It is written, that such should be stoned.***" But in their heart (which a bit of silence and Holy conviction proved), they knew what the Law actually said:

Law: If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband (or a virgin betrothed to a husband), **then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman:** so shalt you put away evil from Israel.⁽¹⁰⁾ **Clarification:** This particular Law deals with *married* women. Just in case the question comes up. How did we know that this woman had a husband/was married? In the Original language, the use of the term

"adultery" was reserved for a person either in a marriage covenant or betrothed. Where there was no marriage covenant, the term "harlot" was used. (See the accusation against Tamar in Genesis 38:24.)

Now mind you, as difficult as it may have seemed (to have the Law mutilated and handed to Him), this was not a *new* place for Jesus. He had been here before. In the wilderness the devil said, "It is written..."⁽¹¹⁾ as he proceeded to manipulate Jesus through a misappropriation of Psalm 91:11-12. **Jesus stood up and said to them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."** Now here is an amazing appropriation of the heart of God, as Jesus reintroduces Himself to us as the Giver of both the Law and of Grace. Here Jesus braids together two realities: one of Law, the other pointing to Grace. John wrote it, but Jesus said it, "If you say that you have no sin, you deceive yourself, and the truth is not in you."⁽¹²⁾

The **Law** says: that as a "witness" you can pitch the first stone.

But **Grace** illuminates: that only those can pass judgment; who are themselves without sin. Because the same judgment that we meter out will be measured again to us. It is well if one who is without sin passes judgment; because one who is without sin, passes a righteous judgment.⁽¹³⁾

This of course, disqualifies us all.

And so now that we see that we are all on an equal footing as the adulterous woman. And as we are inclined to tip silently out the back door; in the words of Jesus, "... go and sin no more."

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) John 8:2-11
- (2) Matthew 15:1-3
- (3) John 16:7b-8
- (4) Acts 17:17
- (5) Matthew 21:23
- (6) John 8:19, 41, 48

⁽⁷⁾ John 5:39, 46

⁽⁸⁾ John 3:9-10

⁽⁹⁾ Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:17; 16:19; 2 Samuel 14:14; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:1, 9; 1 Peter 1:17

⁽¹⁰⁾ Deuteronomy 22:22-24

⁽¹¹⁾ Matthew 4:6

⁽¹²⁾ 1 John 1:8

⁽¹³⁾ Deuteronomy 17:4-7; Matthew 7:1-2; John 7:24

My Pledge of Allegiance

I [*JoAnn*] pledge that I will honor the Lord and His Sabbath; not finding my own pleasure; not finding my own way; or speaking my own words. (Isaiah 58:13)

And as I choose to forfeit the right to do life my *own* way; as I honor the Lord with my life; He that spared not His own Son; but delivered Him up for us all; shall (with Him) also freely give me all things.

- JoAnn C. White

Remission of Sins

Remission of sin by God is that the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, shall continually purge our conscience from dead works (sin) so that we may live a life of service to the Living God. (Hebrews 9:14)

Remission of sin by man is that if we are asking the Father to lead us not into temptation (Matthew 6:13); and deliver us from the enemy and the flesh. We are by that same petition acknowledging that we are NOT debtors to the flesh; we are NOT obliged to live or act according to its dictates. (Romans 8:12)

- JoAnn C. White

Are You Sure?

There is a healthy contemplation that drives us to check our commitment to our various relationships with others. While I have your attention may I ask another question? Do you ever wonder if you're really saved? I don't mean to intrude ... okay maybe I do intend to intrude. Do you contemplate your loyalty and commitment to your relationship "with Christ" very specifically? Respectfully, we are not talking here about your relationship with a religious institution. We're asking about a very up-close and personal relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ.

The scriptures encourage us to periodically check our "fruit." We are admonished to work out your own soul's salvation with fear and trembling. ⁽¹⁾

I can just imagine Jesus standing before the fig tree, asking "Hey guys, what type of tree is this?"

His disciples replied (almost snickering), "My Lord, it's a fig tree."

And Jesus asks again, "How can you tell, that this is a fig tree?"

His disciples reply again (almost bursting at the seams), "Teacher, we can tell by the leaves."

Jesus once again, "Okay, let Me ask you guys one more question ... what is the purpose of a fig tree, if it won't bear figs." They all fell silent.

Jesus cursed the fig tree saying, "Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit, My Father will remove. It will not be allowed to continue to make demands of (or trouble) the ground." ⁽²⁾ He looked at the disciples and walked away en route to Bethany. ⁽³⁾

So I ask again, how do we know that we have a personal covenant with God?

May I make a few suggestions on ways to discover the truth? ⁽⁴⁾

1. How does your covenant with Jesus Christ affect your concept of God and your attitude towards Him?

2. How does your relationship with God affect your attitude towards Jesus Christ (Him as a Person and His Lordship over your life)?

3. How does your covenant with God affect your attitude towards the Holy Scriptures?

4. How does your relationship with Christ affect your attitude towards your "self-life" or your "flesh"?

5. How does your covenant with Christ affect your relationship with and attitude towards your fellow Christians?

6. How does your relationship with Jesus affect your relationship with and attitude towards the world?

7. Last, but in no way least, how does your covenant with Jesus affect your attitude towards sin?

Perhaps we should take the next couple of weeks or months and grapple with this? Try to answer each question thoroughly in light of the scripture's mandates on each of these respective relationships. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. ⁽⁵⁾

Be Sure!

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

(1) Philippians 2:12

(2) John 15:1-2; Luke 13:7

(3) Matthew 21:17-19

(4) Gleanings and adaptations from A.W. Tozer's Man: The Dwelling Place of God, p.62-68

(5) Hebrews 13:20-21

