

# Kingdom News

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

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## *Motto for the year of 2011*

Render therefore unto God ... **the things that are God's.** (Matthew 22:21 KJV)

### **The Chief Cornerstone**



### **The Unrighteous Mammon**

You've heard the parable of the unjust servant or steward, right? For those of you, who have not heard the story, in short order it is the case that a householder left his steward in charge of his resources. This is normal; such is the responsibility of the steward. While away on his journey, the householder received a telegram that his steward was not behaving wisely. So upon his return, the householder would "call the *steward* on the carpet;" demanding that the steward give an account of himself.

Now the steward got wind of this forthcoming chastening, and decided to do something to "soften his fall, from grace." He called the debtors of his Master and negotiated with them. ...

What was the steward's fault? He had sold his Master's goods, as was his business to do. However, the steward had not been diligent in collecting his Master's

Chief Cornerstone

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### **Precepts in Practice**



### **Many Baptisms**

All scriptures are taken from the King James Version of the bible and may be paraphrased.

When my siblings and I were growing up in church, we were taught about "Water Baptism." I remember the day I was water baptized at the end of a Sunday morning service. I had taken great care, earlier that morning, to style my hair so that I would look pretty for the ceremony. Then, once I emerged from the baptismal pool, I looked like a wild person with my hair all over my head. So much for looking pretty.

We were also taught about being baptized with the Holy Spirit. My understanding at that time, and for many years after that, was that these were the only baptisms I needed to be aware of. Well, I've come to learn this is not the case. In this article we will talk about five baptisms that we as Christians can and should experience.

#### **Five Baptisms Include:**

1. Baptism into the name of the Father
2. Baptism into the name of Jesus Christ – the Son
3. Baptism into the name of the Holy Spirit
4. Baptism into the Truths of God's Word
5. Water Baptism

Matthew 28:18-19 is when Jesus gave His disciples the "Great Commission." He told them to go into all the world proclaiming the gospel. He was also very specific about three of the five baptisms. His disciples were to

Precepts in Practice

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# Son of My Wisdom



## The Logos of Man

Scriptures taken from KJV Bible

We come now in our (Ethos/Logos/Pathos) series to the Logos of Man.

So far in this series we have addressed the following:

- *Ethos* of God,
- *Logos* of God,
- *Pathos* of God, and
- *ethos* of man

Now, in speaking of the *logos* of man we find that like the *Logos* of God, others come to know us by and through our logos. That is, by means of our thoughts, words, and deeds we make ourselves known.

“Wherefore,” Jesus says “by their fruits you shall know them.” (Matthew 7:16, 20)

We know something of ourselves by our thought life. Even others can know some things of us by our conversation. And still much more can be known of us by our conduct.

As with the *ethos* of man, the *logos* of man has three general phases. The logos of man accordingly takes on three different qualities.

- There is the *logos* of man as he was originally created
- There is also the logos of man as a fallen being
- There is thirdly the *logos* of man as a regenerate being

Of the first phase we have very little scripture, and no experience. Of the fallen phase we have abundant scripture, and abundant experience, because this is the world into which we are born, excepting those few regenerate souls. Of the third phase we have scripture also, and maybe some experience. Of this regenerate phase we will discourse more thoroughly later in the series. Considering the foregoing, we will handle the second phase more than the others in this series.

“Then they said unto him, what shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” (John 6:28) Of all that can be said of this scripture I would like to highlight this. Man, fallen man, does not work the works of God. For my



## A Journey to Intimacy

### The Enemy is No Fool

#### But We May Be ...

If I could get you to lower your weapon for just a moment, I'd like to explain my audacity.

At one place in the scriptures we are taught that “the fool has said in his heart that there is no God.”<sup>(1)</sup> Another place in the scriptures we're taught that the “devil *knows* that there is One God, and he trembles at this reality.”<sup>(2)</sup>

When the scriptures say to us that the “devils know that there is One God...” It is saying to us that the enemy (and his hosts) has intimate knowledge of the presences of the Living God. Therefore, he has not said in HIS heart that “there is no God.” However, he may try to say “in YOUR heart” that there is no God; which of course (if we allowed this), would be quite foolish.

Although we may at times feel compelled to call the enemy “out of his name.” One thing he certainly is not is a “fool.”

Deceived? Absolutely!!!!  
“A fool?” Not quite.

Because the enemy knows in his heart, not only that there is “a” God; he knows very specifically that there is “only” One.

The real question that we're after, here, is whether or not WE “know” that there is “only” God. And further, the inquiry comes, “Do we have irrefutable, incontrovertible, personally intimate knowledge of the True and Living God?” Now ... now ... before you allow your mouth to write a check that your b--- ... bank account cannot cash; consider the following with me.

To *know* God is to come to *love* Him.

Trust, when I tell you that (of the seed of Adam) you cannot KNOW God and not come to LOVE Him. They are one and the same. Furthermore,

To *love* Him, is to *keep* His commandments<sup>(3)</sup>

# Love and *The Truth*



## The Secret Life of a Christian V

### *The Body and Raiment*

In our discourse on the secret of the Christian life we have been discussing how there is much of the Christian life that, though it is manifest in this world, is not fulfilled in this world, but in the next. Now we have discussed *life*, and *food*, and *drink*. There is a life which though it is ours *now*, we have not fully experienced it in this world. There is food and drink, which is to say there is sustenance, that is only fully experienced, or perceived as such in the next world. Now, be sure that I never mean to minimize the life of Christ that we can experience here. For, I believe that we can experience exponentially more Christian life than we tend to believe God for. I only mean to convey that however much of the Christ life we can experience here, it is inconceivably greater than this world can contain. The fullness of this resurrection life can only fully be realized beyond this world, in the world(s) to come.

Now we come to the portion regarding the “body and raiment.” There is so much to get from the scripture concerning the “body and raiment.” I will convey a reality of scripture that is both broad and deep. It is both glorious and sobering. I will try to expand upon this under a few headings. These headings will make an essential declaration, and under each heading I will enlarge upon the essential declaration.

1. **We shall be judged by our fruit.**
  - a. **Fruit is an outward adornment that springs forth from an inward principle, which principle the Spirit of God is in those saved by grace.**

Matthew 3:10 is clear that every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Matthew 7:15-27 is all but totally focused on fruitful Christian life. In verses 15-20 Jesus says in essence you shall “know the real from the fake” by their fruit. In verses 21-23 Jesus in essence says I will have known the *fruitful*, and have not known the *unfruitful*. Furthermore, in verse 24-27 Jesus says “they (the fruitful and the unfruitful) will be judged by their fruit.” So then, we cannot just go to church and listen to “good” preaching. We must live Christ. He is our life. Again He says the tree is known by his fruit in Matthew 12:33. Most excellently though, he



## Boot Camp

### Public Enemy #1 - *The Flesh*



#### Part 6 – The Relationship between the Human Spirit, Soul and the Flesh

As the education continues, the Lord will teach us the following:

- ❖ We will expose the relationship between the human *spirit*, the *soul* and the *flesh*
- ❖ The Lord will teach us how He intends for the *human spirit* to mentor and lead the *soul* (you will NOT want to miss this topic)

Last month, we unfolded the relationship between the *human spirit* and the *Spirit of God*. This month we are linking together the relationship between the *human spirit*, *soul* and *flesh*.

By way of recap, here are some definitions, descriptions and attributes of the following faculties and/or entities:

#### **The *human spirit* is ...**

The *human spirit* is not the same as the Spirit of God; although the Spirit of God does communicate or interface with our *human spirits*.<sup>(1)</sup>

The *human spirit* and the *soul* are not the same; although they work very closely together. As we understand it, the faculties of the *human spirit* are the Intuition, the Conscience and the Communion.

The *human spirit* is not, itself, a “person.” The *human spirit* does not have its own (mind, will and emotions); which are the marks of personhood. It, however, does have faculties that are functionally very similar to the faculties of the soul. One reason for this is because the *human spirit* is, to us, a gift from God; it is the breath of life, which helped produce the *soul*.<sup>(1)</sup> Another reason, that the *human spirit* is functionally similar to the *soul*, is because it was given as a vehicle by which the Spirit of God will conform the *soul* into the image of Christ.<sup>(2)</sup>

## Living Waters



### Make His Path Straight

Preparing the Way of the Lord

Have you ever been in a restaurant, on a bus, on a train, in an airplane or other public location and “overheard” another person’s conversation? And have you ever “overheard” something that just revolutionized your life? Have you walked away saying, “Wow ... or OMG! ... although I wasn’t really trying to “spy” on their conversation, I am glad that I heard that.” Sometimes it can be the other way around. Right? You can have “overhead” something and gone away, saying “T-M-I (Too Much Information) I “R-E-A-L-L-Y didn’t need to (or want to) hear that!”

While I have your attention, may I ask another question? When you were a child, did you used to play “let’s pretend?” No? You may not have called it by that name, perhaps. What was the name you used for this game? With technology these days, our children’s method of playing “Let’s Pretend” has changed greatly; and in many ways very dangerously. (Now that’s a topic for another day and time. By the grace of God, I pray we have permission to return to it, later.)

Now regarding the game of “let’s pretend” ... it can be an extremely useful tool for young children. In many, many ways the “world” of young children is very small (and I pray “safe”). The game “let’s pretend” allows young children (and others) to “vicariously” experience something that they may otherwise not have had an opportunity to experience. And in many ways it enables the young child (or others) to expand the use of their *imagination*. Let’s have a practice run, shall we.

Now, “let’s pretend” that you are sitting on an airplane (an international flight) adjacent to me and “overhearing” a conversation that I am having with a colleague of mine. Since we’re pretending, let’s share the fun. *I’ll* pick the day and time of our flight; our destination and the topic of the conversation. How about, *you* pick your seat on the airplane (it’s an international flight so pick a comfortable seat). Whichever seat(s) you pick, I and my colleague are

revenue. What’s more, is that it appeared that the steward may have given credit to persons that were either “not diligent” or “not able” to pay their bill in a timely manner.

The time had come that the steward was being audited and his Master’s “assets did not match his liabilities” therefore his balance sheet ... well ... didn’t balance. Not good.

We have a steward that is not “stewarding.” And we have a Master who is preparing to assess his servant’s performance. And the question is ... what is our Lord intending to teach from this somewhat messy situation.

Of the many lessons that “scream” to us from this parable; one thing catches my eye ... the scriptures say that the “the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely”<sup>(1)</sup> Said again, the unjust steward was commended. For what?!? For being “unjust?” No, he was commended for being “wise.” And so for the sake of this discourse, let’s not trip over his “unjust” label. Let’s take off our shoes and recognize that we stand, here, on sacred ground. Instead let’s learn from his “wise” label. What could be the *wisdom* in the dealings of this unjust servant?

When the steward got wind that his Master was on his way back, he had a “K-Mart blue light special.” The steward gave his Master’s debtors a 20% - 50% discount on his Master’s goods and services. This of course fared quite well for the debtors. And from the looks of things it fared considerably well for the “wise” steward, under the circumstances.

**Brief Disclaimer:** PLEASE do not misunderstand the parable to be showing that the Lord Jesus (in telling this parable), is in any sense implying that we can live a careless, reckless life and just because we “do wise things” we will be allowed to skate into the Kingdom. I beseech you, in the name of our Lord Jesus; do not walk away with this misunderstanding. That being said....

Here is the Kingdom principle that our Lord wants us to capture.

**In the world:** It is painfully, and shamefully, clear that we “use people,” to “gain things.” When in the Kingdom, it’s just the opposite.

**In the Kingdom:** We are to “use things” (*the unrighteous mammon*) to “gain people;” to “gain”

souls.

We see Paul admonishing Timothy (his “son in the gospel”) to charge those who are rich in this world to refrain from trusting in their uncertain riches and from being high-minded. Those who had possession of the *mammon of unrighteousness* were to “distribute to the necessity of the saints” and they were to “do good and to communicate.”<sup>(2)</sup> And by this it is said that they would be “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”<sup>(3)</sup>

Now, what does it mean to “gain” people; or to “gain” souls?”

- To gain people, implies the making of friends and acquaintances. It is the extending of grace and other generousities for the purposes support which can result in endearing others. The scriptures say it this way: *Whoever has this world's mammon (goods), and sees his brother's need, and refrains or withholds compassion from him, how can it be said that the “love of God” dwells in that one. Let us not love “in word,” neither “in tongue;” but we are to love, both, in deed and in truth. For it is by the truth of our deeds, that we assure our hearts before him (both man and God).*<sup>(4)</sup>
- To “gain souls,” implies the winning of souls for the sake of the gospel. When we properly make use of *mammon*, we give way for others to see our “good works” and glorify our Heavenly Father.<sup>(5)</sup>

Everything that the Lord gives us; has given us; makes available to us, or assigns to our jurisdiction is for the purpose of “gaining souls;” first our own, then the souls of others. What’s that, you want me to repeat that? No problem. EVERYTHING, every resource or opportunity assigned to us in this world, is for the ultimate purpose of gaining souls; first our own then the souls of others. The gaining of one’s own soul means ... (Paul can say it better than I can ... )

*The things that would normally be considered by this world, as tokens or emblems success, those I counted loss for Christ. Without a doubt, I write ALL things off as a loss in exchange for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. It is because of my testimony of Him, that I have suffered the loss of all things. What’s better is that according to my calculation all of those things were worth less than dung. My singular desire is that I may win Christ. I long to be found IN Him,*

*not having my own righteousness, which is of the law. Instead I must have the righteousness that is the result of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. If only I may know Him, the power of His resurrection; and the fellowship of His sufferings; being made conformable unto his death. My hope is to (by any means necessary) attain unto the resurrection of the dead. None of my words or deeds stem from a heart that assumes that I had already attained, either were already perfect. I follow after Him, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (mature), be thus minded: and if in anything you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*<sup>(6)</sup>

Please understand that the gaining of souls is not for us; it is for our Lord. Right?!? “All souls are His, but the soul that continues in a life of sin, shall die.”<sup>(7)</sup> And since it is not His will that any should perish, we have our work cut out for us, don’t we.<sup>(8)</sup>

Now back to the *wisdom* of the “unjust servant.” During the “blue light special” the debtor who owed the Master 100 measures (baths) of oil,<sup>(9)</sup> got a 50% discount on his bill. The debtor who owed the Master 100 measures (cors) of wheat, was given a 20% discount, leaving him a balance of 80 (fourscore) measures of wheat. Imagine, if one of your creditors called you up one day, and said “Hey, listen we’re going to reduce your loan repayment amount by 50%.” Somebody pinch me! Would you say that that creditor had fallen into your good graces? I’d say so!

Now allow me to disclaim this next piece.

**Disclaimer:** I believe the following is what the Lord has revealed to me. However it is soooooo far from anything that I’ve ever heard before. If I have misinterpreted what the Lord has revealed, then I will indemnify our Lord, His Christ and His Gospel. And I remain fully and personally responsible, for any misrepresentations. What I’ll ask that you do is read this next section like a piece out of a fiction novel (smiling). The reason for this request is so that you lower your resistance long enough to “get” the gist of the message. Upon ascertaining the message, you may then

(prayerfully) decide whether or not you'll retain this in your body of knowledge. If you choose to disregard it, you have my most sincere respect. If on the other hand, you elect to retain this for future consideration I genuinely believe that the Lord will enlightening our understanding further.

I found this portion of scripture a bit disconcerting, because it didn't fit my "then" present theology.

**Scripture:** *Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*<sup>(10)</sup>

I don't mind sharing with you that what the Lord showed me; shook me a bit. Here is what I saw:

It appears to me that the parable of the unjust steward (in Luke 16:1-12) is an analogy of a Christian. Our Lord first gives the parable in verses 1-8; making use of natural relationships. He then gives a direct command to his disciples (and to us) in verses 9-12.

Now to discover other vital truths in this verse:

The "*mammon of unrighteousness*" is "stuff" (*material* wealth) that one can engage in unrighteousness with. You know, "money, power, status, temporal things." Let's clarify (by use of contrast); our Lord teaches that we are (contrariwise) to lay up for ourselves heavenly, incorruptible treasures.<sup>(11)</sup> These treasures or riches are "*immaterial* wealth." We are to cultivate a poverty of spirit, meekness, patience, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness and faithfulness.<sup>(12)</sup> As you can see, one cannot likely engage in "unrighteousness" by use of these riches.

"*Making friends of the ...*" This phrase does not mean that children of God are supposed to "befriend" stuff (silver, gold, houses and cars). It is saying instead that we are to make use of mammon to befriend the souls of man ... to gain souls for the Kingdom.

"*When you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*" Here is where my eyes came open. When the Lord said that "*when the unjust steward/servant fails...*" He was saying that there will be stewards who

will **misuse** *the mammon of unrighteousness* in this world. And when their works or stewardship comes up for performance review and fails the test or is found to be comprised of wood, hay or stubble. They will fail of their reward, although their souls will be spared.<sup>(13)</sup> What appears to be a likely occurrence, is that even though some stewards may fail of their stewardship; they still may gain the favor of other stewards who may be able to extend them grace and "a place" among them in the Kingdom. The scriptures express (or imply, however you like it) that there will be rulers over "five cities" and rulers over "ten cities."<sup>(14)</sup> As an example, if it just so happens that the unjust steward (befriends or shows favor to the servant who was faithful over ten talents) he may be given a place in one of those "ten cities." So we see how "*they*" would be able to receive the unjust steward into *everlasting habitations*. None of these things can be said of one who misses Heaven, altogether.

And so we see some of the import of the use of Kingdom principles at every opportunity throughout our lives. They enable us to bear fruit, not only in this world, but especially in the worlds to come.

*Back to the disclaimer* - Thank you for "listening." I would admonish you to be prayerful about your disposition on this bit of revelation. It has the opportunity to serve us well if we heed it. I submit to you that as you continue to "Walk this Way" you'll see the riches of this amazing truth sparkle throughout the scriptures; and I pray throughout your own life, as well.

One of the many truths that it reveals to us is that we must be judicious about both our "soul's salvation" and our "works of faith." The one will get us to Heaven; the other will determine how we fare once we get there. This we see also very lucidly in the parable of the talents.

What we're being given here is a solemn warning regarding (very specifically) our use of the *mammon of unrighteous*; and (very broadly) our "works" (or our stewardship). We're not talking about *works* instead of *faith*. We're talking about *works* subsequent to *faith*; the works that result from *faith*. I believe (and you may too) that we often underestimate the value of "works." While (in some sense) they certainly will not save us,

nevertheless, they will absolutely have an eternal affect on our well-being. Agreed; *works of the law* are useless, except that they may cause one to bode well on their journey through “this land.” I think that we all know that one would go a long way by not coveting his neighbor’s wife. *Works of the Law* will not favorably impact your salvation or your place in the Kingdom (on either side of the grave). However, the “*works of faith*” have everything to do with our treasures, our rewards, our character, etc.

If therefore we have not been faithful in the use of *unrighteous mammon*, God will not commit to our trust (on entrust us with) the true riches. And if we have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give us that which is your own?<sup>(15)</sup>

The resources (*unrighteous mammon*) that we have been entrusted with, in this world, belongs to the Master. What we *gain* by the use of these things belongs to us. Better said, what we *become* by the use of these resources is a gift to us (both in this world and in the world to come).

I adjure you, by the mercies of God; please do not get swept up in the current of this world; amassing “stuff;” tearing down your barns to build bigger ones. Lest it be said of you, by God, “Thou fool, this night you will be required to give an account of your soul, now whose shall those things be, that you have amassed? So shall it be said of all who lay up treasure for themselves, and are not rich toward God.”<sup>(16)</sup>

The *mammon of unrighteousness* is our servant, in the Kingdom. By it we win friends to our Lord Jesus Christ; and influence people concerning the goodness of God. <cc>

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, SMHG

### **Scripture References - King James Version (KJV)**

<sup>(1)</sup> Luke 16:8

<sup>(2)</sup> Romans 12: 13; Hebrews 13:16

<sup>(3)</sup> 1 Timothy 6:17-19

<sup>(4)</sup> 1 John 3:17-19, with slight adaptations

<sup>(5)</sup> Matthew 5:16

<sup>(6)</sup> Philippians 3:7-15

<sup>(7)</sup> Ezekiel 18:4

<sup>(8)</sup> 2 Peter 3:9

<sup>(9)</sup> Luke 16:5-6

<sup>(10)</sup> Luke 16:9 adapted

<sup>(11)</sup> Matthew 6:20

<sup>(12)</sup> Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>(13)</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

<sup>(14)</sup> Matthew 25:20-21; Luke 19:17-19

<sup>(15)</sup> Luke 16:11-12

<sup>(16)</sup> Luke 12:20-21, with slight adaptations

baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (KJV paraphrased).

Now, at first glance one would think I’m going into a discourse on whether Christians should be water baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or in the name of Jesus Christ. Well, rest assured, this is not the conversation we will have in this article. That may be a conversation you want to have on a coffee break at work. We have deeper revelations to reveal at this time.

So, let’s get a hold of some working definitions to frame our discourse. We will utilize Webster’s New World dictionary.

Baptize = to immerse, christen, change someone’s name

Name = a word or phrase by which a person is known, to identify (identity), baptize, characterize

It’s interesting to note that a name has to do with a person’s identity and character. Let’s test this theory. Think of a person in your family, a friend, or someone you work with. When you get this person in your mind, what words would you use to tell about their character? One of my former supervisors comes to my mind. Words I would use to describe this person include aggressive controlling, angry, and loud. My coworkers and I talked about him and they used some of the same words to describe his temperament. These words are actually a part of his name. They may not be his legal name, but they identify his personality and character. Therefore, they are a part of his identity.

We should keep in mind, that people have the ability to change their names whenever they like. This can be done legally, and as far as their personality is concerned, people can change behaviors so that the words used to identify them will change. Can you see how names are used as labels to identify a person and/or their behavior?

So, let’s get back to baptisms.

### **1. Baptism into the name of the Father**

The first baptism we will discuss is Baptism into the Father. Our Father God has a personality. Scriptures teach us a lot about His character. He is kind, gracious, long suffering, forgiving, love, and peace. Looking into the word of God we also find that He is a provider, our shield, our protector, healer, deliverer, mind regulator, wisdom, and He is jealous. These

words are His names. They identify the Person of the Father.

You may have read scriptures where God is called:

- In Genesis 22:14 - Father God is Jehovah-Jireh: Provider
- In Exodus 17: 15 - Father God is Jehovah-Nissi: Banner
- In Judges 6:24 - Father God is Jehovah-Shalom: Peace
- In Ezekiel 48:35 - Father God is Jehovah-Shammah: He is Present

When we talk about being baptized into the name of the Father, we are actually saying we are able to come under His name as a covering. Proverbs 18: 10 says “The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.”

We become baptized into the name (person) of the Father by yielding to His word. We simply agree with what He says about Himself and commit to apply His word in our everyday lives. This happens with the help of the next two baptisms.

## **2. Baptism into the name of Jesus Christ – the Son**

Now it gets even more interesting. One would think that if we are baptized into the name of the Father (in total agreement with His person), we would automatically be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ His Son. While there is a direct relationship between the two, there are some key distinctions.

First, Jesus has different names than the Father. Below are some of Jesus’ names.

- In John 4:42 - Jesus is the Savior of the world
- In John 14: 6 - Jesus is the Way to the Father
- In John 10:7 - Jesus is the Door of the sheep
- In John 11:25 - Jesus is the Resurrection

Can you see that we get to God the Father by being baptized into Jesus Christ His Son? We are able to have a covenant with the Father because of the sacrifice of His Son. To be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, the Son, means we accept the gift Jesus gave us, access to the Father. We accept that we CAN have a relationship with God the Father.

Many people believe that God the Father exists. They even try to embody some of His character traits. But, as you and I know, nobody can successfully walk in the character of the Father unless they have a personal

relationship with Him. There are however, “Christians” (or so-called Christians) that do not believe they CAN have a personal relationship with God.

This is an example of someone being baptized into the name of the Father (mentally), but not into the name of the Son (having a personal relationship). If we are not baptized into the name of the Son, we cannot truly be baptized into the name of the Father (not in reality).

## **3. Baptism into the name of the Holy Spirit**

Ok, let’s crank it up another notch. Let’s take a look at some of the names of the Holy Spirit.

- In John 14:16 - the Holy Spirit is the Comforter (encourager, soother, relaxation, happiness, pleasure, etc.)
- In John 14:17 - the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth
- In John 14:26 - the Holy Spirit is the Teacher
- In Acts 1:8 - the Holy Spirit is the Power (Authority of God and Ability of God)
- In Acts 1:8 - the Holy Spirit is the Witness (the Knowing in our spirits about the things of God that we can’t know of ourselves)

When we have been baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit we receive the Spirit of God inside of us. As a result, we have a constant companion. He walks and talks with us. He tells us things that we could not possibly know in our own intelligence. He causes us to be able to do things we can’t otherwise do. He covers us when we make mistakes. He helps us to understand things about God’s character and shows us how to walk in these character traits.

If we are not baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit, we will wrestle our entire lives trying to live a good and upright life. We will get depressed; we may give up, when victory is right around the corner. Can you see the importance of being baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit? This simply means that you accept the reality that God can live inside of you, by His Holy Spirit. You ask God to come into your heart and live there. You yield your will to His will. If you sincerely ask God to do this, His Holy Spirit will come in. He’s waiting on some of us to ask.

## **4. Baptism into the Truths of God’s Word**

You might be thinking, “Ok, Joyce, what could this possibly mean? This is too many baptisms for me.” Well, if you think this, you are probably in good company. Others may feel just like you do. But, if you

will continue to read, I promise you we will bring it all together in one nice package.

In John 8:31-32 Jesus gave a clue about baptism into the truths of God. He said that if, as believers, we “Continue” in His word, then (and only then) are we truly His disciples. And, we shall “Know” the truth and the truth shall “Make” us “Free.” In today’s terminology, Jesus was saying that if Christians adopt lifestyles where we look to and submit to the word of God on a daily basis we will get to know God’s truth (principles God has set in place that will guide us). When we receive God’s revelation about a particular truth (or principle), we are to agree with Him and bring our thinking, behavior, and our lives in line with that truth. At that point, it will be that truth (principle) that will free us from the mental bondage we were in (related to whatever God is speaking to us about at the time), and allow us to make the changes in our lives to successfully move forward.

Here is another key about being baptized into the truths of God. This happens only as we go through our lives. There are many truths (principles) of God. We can’t possibly begin to understand them all at once. God has to reveal them to us step-by-step. As He reveals a truth to us, we agree, yield, and conform to it. Then, we will see changes we’ve never seen before.

### **5. Water Baptism**

Many of us have heard about and/or experience water baptism. Still, we may not know what significance water baptism holds in the plan of God.

In Luke 3:3, 16 (and the first 15 verses) John the Baptist explains a little bit about water baptism versus baptism with the Holy Spirit. John tells people that if they desire to turn from their wicked ways, they can repent and be baptized. Once they are baptized he instructs them to deal honestly with everyone and do the things prescribed in the law.

John went on to say that when the Messiah is come, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. This will enable the people to continually do the things God desires. Water baptism is a ceremonial declaration that signifies to others that we’ve made a decision to accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and to yield our lives to God. It’s a natural symbol of a spiritual transformation.

We should be clear here and state that water baptism does not and cannot bring salvation. It’s only a symbol.

So, what does all of this mean?

When we come to a place in our lives where we begin to want to come to God, we go through a series of baptisms.

First, we have to believe that we “CAN” have a relationship with God the Father (baptism into the name of Jesus Christ the Son).

Second, we ask God to come into our hearts and lead our lives, at which time He comes into our hearts by His Holy Spirit (baptism into the name of the Holy Spirit).

Third, as we continue to live our lives seeking to know more about God through His word and by allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us, we begin to understand and apply truths (principles) in God’s word to our lives (baptism into the truths of God).

Fourth, as we are being transformed by God’s truth we are continually showing the character of God in our thoughts, speech, and behaviors (baptism into the name of the Father).

Fifth, at some point in all of this, we decide to formally declare that we’ve chosen to accept Christ as savior and yield our lives to God. We do this by being baptized in water as a symbol of the change in our hearts.

In closing, baptism is about changing from someone we were to someone God wants us to be. As you can see it is a life-long process. If you haven’t begun your personal journey, or if you’ve stopped somewhere along the way (you are not experiencing all of the baptisms), I invite you to do so today.

Be blessed! ~PIP~

Joyce M. White, MSW – CEO Leadership Living, Inc.

## **Just Say, “Yes”**

**If you look up into His face and say, "Yes, Lord, whatever it costs," at that moment He'll flood your Life with His presence and power.**

**Alan Redpath**

*thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The LORD goes on to say “*so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void...*” (Isaiah 55:11)

The contrast, however, between the thoughts, words, and deeds of God and those of man (Logos for logos) is stark; it is crystal clear. Just read through the book of Lamentations to see this **stark** contrast.

To give you a taste, of Solomon’s perspective, consider the following:

*As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that labored for the wind.*

(Ecclesiastes 5:15-16) *What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.* (Ecclesiastes 1:3-4) *There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.* (Ecclesiastes 1:11) *I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit (grasping after the wind). That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting (lacking) cannot be numbered.* (Ecclesiastes 1:14-15)

Since this all precipitated from the fall of man, let’s take a look there to get some understanding of the quality of man’s thoughts, words, and deeds; of man’s logos.

*Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it was thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* (Genesis 3:17-19)

Most centrally, I’m hoping that as you read this that you could see the futility, the vanity of man’s labor.

Consider that the ground, in scripture in large part, typifies both the heart of man and the nature of man (flesh). For, God moves directly from the futility of the man working the ground to him returning back to it (**dying**). He even says it in the form ‘you will labor in futility **until** you return to the ground (**die**).’ Such is the *logos of man* (after the Fall). This is the line of thinking in Genesis 3:18-19. This Old Testament reference has a New Testament illumination. We begin to see certain truths that correlate to it, like: for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; (Romans 8:6) for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live; (Romans 8:13) It is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing...; (John 6:63) for he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:8) Remember the ‘flesh’ is typified there in Genesis by the ground. So then, the connection is clear between man sowing in and sowing to his own nature and man reaping death as a nature outcome.

All of the foregoing was to illustrate this one point: the *logos* (thoughts, words, deeds) of unregenerate man are vanity, and they lead undeniably to death. Now if there is any way to set out the quality of the unregenerate man’s logos, remembering of what it consists, let me leave you with this.

1. Proverbs 15:26 - The **thoughts** of the wicked are an **abomination** to the LORD...
2. Proverbs 12:22 - Lying **lips** are **abomination** unto the LORD...
3. Remember that he is a liar who denies that Jesus is Christ (1 John 2:22)
4. Proverbs 21:27 - The **sacrifice** of the wicked is **abomination**, how much more when he brings it with a wicked mind.
5. Proverbs 28:9 - He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his **prayer** shall be **abomination**.

I would say that it is exceedingly clear from scripture that the *logos* of the unregenerate man is futile, is leading to death, and is an abomination to the LORD. We need to know this so that we would cease from our own futile labors (especially when it comes to trying to please God). Instead we are to take refuge in or enter into the labor of our Lord. -SOMW-

*David L. White*

Again, I ask you to trust me when I say, that we **cannot** LOVE Him and not KEEP His commandments. There is no “two ways” about this. Since this is the ONLY real means by which God measures our love for Him. We may “say” that we love Him; but we could not make a believer out of anyone else (God included); if we are not keeping His commandments.

We’ve heard all of this before, haven’t we?! Of course, we have. I’ll ask the next question for you. “Then why (pray tell) are you, JoAnn, reiterating this discourse yet again?”

Because, upon the threshold of our time is “another plague.” A plague that will make us question everything we ever thought we knew about God ... His Son ... and our salvation. The beauty of having this discussion at such a time as this; is that we have an opportunity to perform a “gap analysis” on our relationship with God.

**Glossary (by jcw):** Gap Analysis (in this context) is a “tool” by which we are able to measure our actual performance over against our potential performance.

A *gap analysis* should probably begin with the question: **Where am I in my relationship with God?** Now before you proceed to answer that question yourself, let me offer this:

If you are in an intimate relationship with someone (anyone), that other person ought to be somewhere in your life. There ought to be some manifest representation of their presence, right. There ought to be fingerprints, footprints ... something. There ought to be clothes in the closet; or their name ought to appear on pieces of paper (mail, documents, bills, etc.) throughout the house. There ought to be pictures (with them in it, preferably). There ought to be “stuff” that proves that they exist and that they are a part of YOUR life. Is that the case with your relationship with the person of Jesus Christ? If not, you have my permission to put this newsletter down, promptly, and deal with that before God. (First things, first)

A *gap analysis* would then proceed to ask this question: **Where am I supposed to be in my relationship with God?** Now this question will require a bit of research. We don’t get to answer this

question, for ourselves; because all of a man’s ways are right in his own eyes.<sup>(4)</sup> The Lord has taken the liberty to settle that score for us.

The scriptures teach that if we do not have a relationship with the Son of God, we do not have Life.<sup>(5)</sup> And if we do not have the Spirit of God, we do not have a relationship with the Son.<sup>(6)</sup> On the other hand, if we do have the Spirit of God the fruit of this reality are manifestly<sup>(7)</sup> love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. It goes on to say that those who are in relationship with Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If these things are not a reality for you, very personally; I suppose then that you have a “standing appointment” with the Word of God and with the Living God until this matter is resolved.

In another sense, a *gap analysis* measures the distance between “where you are currently” and “where you should be” and assesses the delta (difference). Now in measuring a “gap” of any kind, the goal is to determine how far off the mark we are so that we can line up.

May I suggest to you (and to myself) that we spend some quality time ALONE with God and work through this assessment in the depths of our hearts.

Better *sooner* than *later*... but certainly better *later*, than never.

God speed. \*ππ\*

*Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG*

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

(1) Psalm 14:1; 53:1

(2) James 2:19

(3) John 14:15

(4) Proverbs 12:15; 22:2

(5) 1 John 5:12

(6) Romans 8:9

(7) Galatians 5:22-24

## Thinking His Thoughts

**We need, men so possessed by the Spirit of God that God can think His thoughts through our minds, that He can plan His will through our actions, that He can direct His strategy of world evangelization through His Church.**

**Alan Redpath**

says in John 15:4 “*abide in Me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.*” In fact John 15 begins speaking verily of Christian fruitfulness; he then speaks of what will happen if we do bear fruit; and he goes on to speak in general of what that means to be fruitful. Now there is something that we are supposed to draw out of John 15:4. I will state it as this:

**The Christian life is a manifestation of a principle of Life which springs up in us, quickening us to bear the outward signs of that inward principle.**

These outward signs are the covering of the tree. So that even though the tree seems to be a body, when it is without fruit it is said to be NAKED. Now, Jesus connects fruit and obedience explicitly back in Matthew 7:15-24, which we see particularly in the continuation of thought from verses 15-20 through to 20-24. He has therein given ‘fruit’ and ‘obedience’ a sort of interchangeability. So then fruit is most fundamentally obedience to God. However, fruit is not simply the acts of obedience. It is the obedience that comes forth from a disposition to obey, which being wrought by the Spirit is considered to be fruit. Wherefore we know the categories of such fruit, for indeed they are the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. <sup>(Galatians 5:22)</sup> In all of this we are not so interested in which category the fruit falls, but that we in all points are conformed to the character of Christ.

**1. The spiritual fruit borne in this life, will determine the magnitude of the glory of our resurrected (glorified) body.**

If you use a concordance to look up words such as ‘clothed,’ ‘adorned,’ ‘raiment,’ and such like terms you may be astounded how often one is said to be clothed upon or adorned with character traits and personal realities such as righteousness, majesty, salvation, strength, honor, humility, propriety, sobriety, doctrine, meekness, quietness of spirit. You will also be astonished how it is “purity of character” that will clothe us ultimately; which of course is our conformity to Christ. I can find no clearer saying of it than in Romans 13:14 - *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.* The body and the raiment are one in the kingdom of heaven. They are both brightened and dimmed by our conformity to Christ, in this life.

All of this reveals a Divine Mandate, and is a Means of

Measurement. Be conformed unto Christ’s character. For, the measure of conformity will determine the brightness of splendor. Scripture tells us plainly that the Life in the Word is the light of men. <sup>(John 1:4)</sup> In this magnificent revelation we see why God is so explicit when he says “mortify the deeds of the flesh, and sow to the Spirit and not to the flesh.” He is preparing us for the world to come.

I must leave you with some scriptures for those of you who want to study this until it is made apparent to you also. These will get you started. These are not in any particular order:

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4,12-20, 23, 29, 35-55
- Job 29:14
- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Psalm 93:1; 104:1; 132:9; 132:16
- Isaiah 61:10
- Ezekiel 16:1-14
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-10
- 1 Peter 3:3, 5:5
- 1 Timothy 2:9, 10
- Titus 2:10

Remember, these are just to get you started. Each of these scriptures has a different context, so please read well and cross-reference. However, it is my experience that these contexts yet lend themselves to this revelation. -LATT-

*David L. White*

## Your Task

**There's some task which the God of all the universe, the great Creator, your redeemer in Jesus Christ has for you to do, and which will remain undone and incomplete until by faith and obedience you step into the will of God.**

**Alan Redpath**

**The soul is ...**

According to our current understanding, the faculties of the *soul* are the Mind (Intellect), the Will (Volition) and the Emotions (which include our appetites and passions).

The *soul* was *created* to enable the breath of Life<sup>(3)</sup> to express itself through the physical body. It is by the *soul* that we are conscience of our selves. The soul is the man (the person) it is that by which we have our truest identify and individuality.<sup>(4)</sup>

The *soul* is that for which the Lord has ordained salvation. Now the just shall live by faith ...and believe to the saving of the soul.<sup>(5)</sup> At the hour appointed, our *spirit* will return to God. For it is the breath of His Life.<sup>(6)</sup> Our body will return to the dust of the ground;<sup>(7)</sup> (for it is the only part of our being that was taken from the ground. Therefore it is the only part that will “return” there. At our Lord’s coming our bodies will be changed from mortal to immortal; from corruptible to incorruptible.<sup>(8)</sup>) But the soul; the person; the “I,” will be required to give an account before God, of itself, its stewardship, and its relationship to the Person of Jesus Christ. As told to us by the parable of a *certain rich man* who said to himself, “Soul ... eat, drink and be merry.”<sup>(9)</sup> To whom the Lord said, “How foolish! You may certainly eat and drink. But you will not be merry tonight; come near and give an account of your soul.” Now, the functions of the soul are its ability to think, to choose and to express itself.

**The flesh is ...**

In the New Covenant, the *flesh* often typifies the *fallen human nature*. This particular use of the term *flesh* is not indicative of the physical body. The *flesh* represents the fallen nature that governs the faculties of the *soul* (when the soul is out of fellowship with God).

The *flesh* is the immoral state of existence into which mankind fell (that fateful day in the Garden). It is the *flesh* that drives the *soul* to choose sin either transactionally or as a way of life.<sup>(10)</sup> The *flesh cannot* be disciplined; it cannot be reprogrammed; it cannot be white-washed it must be crucified. You cannot dress

up the *flesh* in a suit and tie; its deeds must be mortified (put to death, very specifically by way of the Cross). The flesh cannot be negotiated with.<sup>(11)</sup>

It operates by one law: SIN.  
Its deeds yield one outcome: DEATH.

With that recap, let’s have a look at the relationship between these entities.

The *human spirit* was given to lead the *soul* into obedience to the law of the Spirit of Life, in Christ Jesus. The *flesh* came into being (at the Fall); it’s

Mission Statement is to “lead the soul into captivity to the prince of the power of the air; to distract the soul from its duty before God; and finally to anchor the soul to this world.”

You may recall, from one of our prior discussions, that the soul is neither constitutionally moral nor immoral. Its standing before God is determined by its “lordship.”<sup>(12)</sup> The soul is a servant. It will either serve the *flesh*, whose law is sin (rendering its standing before God as immoral). Or it will serve the *spirit*, whose law is life (rendering its standing before God as morally acceptable). This is one reason that Paul (in Romans 6-8) depicts for us the vital necessity of walking after the Spirit; because sin has been “condemned in the flesh.”<sup>(13)</sup>

The soul belongs to God.<sup>(14)</sup> The soul is to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, characteristically. Our ethos is to be aligned with His Ethos. It is the only part of us that can truly be conformed into His image. Because ...

- The *spirit* of Christ is the Third Person of the Godhead. So we won’t attain to that.
- The *body* of Christ is resurrected, so it’ll be a moment before we attain to that. And there is a considerable bit more to this life than simply a resurrected body.
- Meanwhile, the *soul* (wherein resides the fullest expression of personhood) is supposed to be in the process of being conformed into the image of our Lord.
  - It is in the *soul* that we develop the common virtues: meekness, temperance, patience, humility and selflessness, etc.

- It is in the *soul* that we experience love, joy and peace.
- It is in the *soul* that we learn to love God with our all, and to love our neighbor as our own self.

It is the *human spirit* that interfaces with the Holy Spirit in this transformation.

With these truths before us, it is imperative that we nurture the type of internal (inward) environment that will be conducive to the proper, godly maturity of the soul. What does that mean? Oh, it means a great many things, but of them here are a few points of interest.

### **We are to be mindful of what we allow to influence us.**

Example: if you live in a house that has asbestos or lead paint; and you somehow come in contact with them, you expose yourself to their influences. These situations potentially result in asbestos or lead poisoning. Not something that one aspires to, is it? Likewise, we live in a world that is full of sin and death; and when we intentionally or negligently expose ourselves to these, we open ourselves up to systemic poisoning. And the cares of this world; the deceitfulness of riches; and the lusts of other things come in and choke the Word, and it becomes barren or unfruitful in us. <sup>(15)</sup>

**We are to be judicious over our transactions in this world and with the things of this world.** This world is a temporary place of preparation for us; it is not our ultimate destination. <sup>(16)</sup> For those whose name is written in the Lambs Book of Life, <sup>(17)</sup> we didn't come here, to stay here. We really need to begin to live according to this truth. Sometimes we find ourselves living like what we have *in this world* (possessions, etc.) and what we have that's *of this world* (status, notoriety, accomplishments, etc.) are all that we *shall* have. In the words of Paul, "...count it all but dung..." Let's follow after Him, with the hope that we may apprehend, that for which we have been apprehended. <sup>(18)</sup>

### **We are to be critical of our attachment to this world.**

We are to wear this world as a loose garment. We are to be prepared, at all times, if this world should attempt to take hold of us; we are to part with its things and its ways and flee to the Lord of our Salvation. Joseph gave us a running start, when Pharaoh's wife was after him. <sup>(19)</sup>

**Insert:** For my brothers "in the gospel," who are wrestling with just this trial; remember that Joseph was a man of like passions, as you. Wisdom bid him "run!!" You run too!!

Pharaoh's wife is symbolic of (power, lust, and riches) if that does not depict the course of this world, I don't know what does. She was the physical embodiment of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. <sup>(20)</sup> And what was Joseph's response to all of that? Let us go and do likewise.

Or take Daniel, <sup>(21)</sup> for example, on Tuesday he was walking the streets of Jerusalem. On Thursday, he was sitting in the palace of the King of Babylon, with his feet kicked up under the King's table. What might the appetite of a young man do to him, under those circumstances? Let's broaden our view a bit; (although it was included) this was not just about the physical, literal "food on the King's table." Daniel and "his boys" had been placed in some of the most enviable positions of his day. Imagine having the opportunity to be schooled and tutored by the teachers of Royalty; or having the privilege to learn new languages and to "stand before" the King. Can you see the visions of sugar plums that would dance in your head, if those were your shoes? What was Daniel's response to this situation? I can tell you...

*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.* <sup>(22)</sup>

Does that sound like something you, or I, would do? Probably not. But I think the bigger question is, "Why not?" Is it, perhaps, because we are not critical enough about our attachment to this world's things?

This list of admonishments could go on into eternity. But *time* won't go that far (smiling), so we'll stop there.

In summary, the relationship between the *human spirit*, the *soul* and the *flesh* is such that the soul is obliged to follow one of them, at all times. Which one? ... You choose. But I'll help you. If you're not under the government of the *spirit* (as directed by the Spirit of God); be certain that you're in league with

the *flesh*. The terms of this engagement are black and white; there are no gray areas here.

As stated above, “the soul is a servant” and no *servant* can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.<sup>(23)</sup> But you must serve one of them. -bc-

*Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG*

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

- <sup>(1)</sup> Romans 8:16
- <sup>(2)</sup> Adapted from the May 2011 edition of this series)
- <sup>(3)</sup> Genesis 2:7
- <sup>(4)</sup> Adapted from the February 2011 edition of this series)
- <sup>(5)</sup> Hebrews 10:38-39
- <sup>(6)</sup> Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7
- <sup>(7)</sup> Genesis 3:19
- <sup>(8)</sup> Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:35, 42-44; Philippians 3:21
- <sup>(9)</sup> Luke 12:16-20
- <sup>(10)</sup> November 2010 Kingdom News edition; Beyond the Cross article; Son of My Wisdom column
- <sup>(11)</sup> Adapted from the January 2011 edition of this series
- <sup>(12)</sup> Romans 6:16; adapted from the February 2011 edition of this series
- <sup>(13)</sup> Romans 8:3
- <sup>(14)</sup> Ezekiel 18:4
- <sup>(15)</sup> Mark 4:19
- <sup>(16)</sup> John 14:3; Ephesians 2:1-2
- <sup>(17)</sup> Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 20:15; 21:27
- <sup>(18)</sup> Philippians 3:8, 12
- <sup>(19)</sup> Genesis 39:6-12
- <sup>(20)</sup> 1 John 2:16
- <sup>(21)</sup> Daniel 1:1+
- <sup>(22)</sup> Daniel 1:8
- <sup>(23)</sup> Luke 16:13

sitting in the same seat(s) on the row, immediately behind you. Go ahead and pick your seat(s) on the plane. What did you pick ... first class, row three, a window seat? Good choice. My turn ...

**Day and Time:** The days of John the Baptist, nearing the end of his ministry.

**Destination:** We’re going to the wilderness of Judea, down by the river Jordan.

Oh! I forgot the disclaimer ...

**Disclaimer:** Now we must honor the rules of the “let’s pretend” environment. In *our* “let’s pretend” world, you’ll remember, that we are on an international flight. This means that while you may certainly get up to attend the washroom, or to chat with someone, ultimately you must at some point return to your seat and you must be present for the whole ride. And thus present for most of this conversation. Fair enough!?!?

Here is the conversation that I am having with my colleague, during our flight across the great Atlantic. Although it used to be socially inappropriate to eavesdrop on other people’s conversation, you have my expressed permission to listen in, if you like.

**CONVERSATION ....**

**ME:** “You are soooo NOT going to believe what I heard!!! On the morning of May 6, 2011 [about 6:45AM (PT)] ...

**MY COLLEAGUE:** “You ... remembered ... the date and time?!? ...”

**ME:** “Yes! Because what I heard absolutely shook me. ... It just so happened that I was listening to Alexander Scourby read the book of Matthew. He was at Matthew 3:1-3, which says ...

*“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias [Greek for Isaiah (verse 40:3)], saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight ...” (KJV, with slight modifications)*

**ME:** “Just then, in my heart, I asked the Lord;

## We are IN Him

As our Lord thinks, we think  
 As our Lord does, we do  
 As our Lord desires, we desire  
 As our Lord speaks, we speak; and  
 As our Lord is, we are

*JoAnn C. White  
 May 9, 2011 7:50AM (PT)*

“Father, what does it mean to *make His paths straight?*” As I asked this question my thinking was this: “Isn’t the path (or way) of the Lord *already* straight?”

Now when I ask the Lord questions, (although I *always* expect a response) I usually don’t expect an *immediate* response. It seems that these days, I may need to change my expectations, huh.

Immediately!! ... the Lord replied. “*You, JoAnn, have to make His paths straight.*” I asked, “Father ... me!?” “How do *I* make His paths straight?!”

**MY COLLEAGUE:** “Oh my, that seems like a tall order. Do I want to hear the rest of this?!”

**ME:** “I think so. Essentially, if the Lord has certain expectations of us, it might be nice to learn about them now, while there’s still time to meet these expectations. Right.

So I asked, “How do *I* make His paths straight?!” And you’re right (I say to my colleague) I was a bit concerned about this responsibility, too. But one thing I know about God, is that if He opens a door, wisdom encourages that we walk through it. So I was fearfully determined to understand this responsibility.

Here are a few expressions of this responsibility to “make His paths straight.”

We all follow others through this life. Few, if any, of us really walk this road alone (although sometimes we may think that or feel as if we do). We’re *all* tracking the heels of those who have gone on before us. Think about that. Everything we come to know, we learn from someone else. There really is “nothing *new* under the sun.”<sup>(1)</sup> No original thought, they’ve all be thought before (in some sense or another). Everything comes from “somewhere (or somebody) else.” Why does this matter? Well it has one effect if you’re the one following on the heels of someone else. But this has quite a different nuance if someone is following on your heels, through this life.

We have a most vivid picture of this when new parents give birth to their “first” little one. They begin to see the world completely differently

from before. Every little detail of life springs up before them. Why? Perhaps, it is because they have the care and influence of this precious soul in their hands.

The words that they use; the gestures that they display; the foods they eat; the decisions that they make; and the activities that they engage in all begin to judge them, before the eyes of that child. And good parents want to “make straight paths” for the feet of their child. Perhaps it is because, ideally, that child may want to be just like Mommy and/or Daddy (*at least for the first few years*).

And so it is with us. As children of the Living God, we walk through this life with others on our heels. We make tracks that others will follow in. The writer of Hebrews tells us that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.<sup>(2)</sup> But at some point, the roles change, don’t they? We ourselves become a part of that cloud; as others (near and far) look on; longing in their hearts for “straight paths.”

This world is growing increasingly wicked as the pages of the calendar continue to fall off. As we lay down tracks through the sands of time, we have a very strict mandate from the Throne to “make those paths straight.” Others are coming along behind us and will in the darkness of their day, grope for “straight paths” to the Lord, for there will be precious few of them.

At each new version of the Holy Scriptures, more and more truth is being adulterated. At some point in time, it will be a “personal gift from God” to have access to a version of the scriptures that has any real semblance of veracity left in it. Those who come behind us will need to be able to follow our footprints, to Jesus. Those who walk along side us each day, also need “straight paths.” Whether or not you think that they are watching you, trust that they are; we all watch each other (whether intentionally or unintentionally).

People want to SEE Jesus; people NEED to see Jesus. And our lives should be able to lead them to Him, straightway (no pun intended). We’ve heard more truth than we’ll ever be able to live in this world. But we have not SEEN enough of it.

The writer of Hebrews goes on to say:

*... Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily trouble the path of our feet, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. And let us make straight paths for our feet; lest those who follow us (that are not as strong, or that are feeble or lame) be discouraged in their journey and be unable to continue. This we do looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith. He, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*<sup>(3)</sup>

We are to *BE* a true reflection of Jesus that the world so desperately NEEDS to see.”

We end our conversation as the plane lands in the Heathrow airport in London (Hillingdon), England. Thank you for riding along with us. =LW=

*Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG*

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

<sup>(1)</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:9

<sup>(2)</sup> Hebrews 12:1+

<sup>(3)</sup> Hebrews 12:1-2, 13 slightly adapted

## Getting Through

If you can't get through to God, ... you're never going to get through to people.

*Gehard Du Toit*

## 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.<sup>(1)</sup>

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."<sup>(2)</sup> He looked at the disciples and walked away en route to Bethany.<sup>(3)</sup>

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?**<sup>(4)</sup>

- 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.<sup>(5)</sup>

## 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

~ SUMMARY ~

**The Chief Cornerstone**



He was saying that there will be stewards who will **misuse** the mammon of unrighteousness in this world. And when their works or stewardship comes up for performance review and fails the test or is found to be comprised of wood, hay or stubble. They will fail of their reward, although their souls will be spared.

**Son of My Wisdom**



Most centrally, I'm hoping that as you read this that you could see the futility, the vanity of mans labor.

**Boot Camp**



The soul belongs to God. The soul is to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, characteristically. Our ethos is to be aligned with His Ethos. It is the only part of us that can truly be conformed into His image. Because ...

**Living Waters**



Here are a few expressions of this responsibility to "make His paths straight."

We all follow others through this life. Few, if any, of us really walk this road alone ... We're *all* tracking the heels of those who have gone on before us. Think about that.

~ SUMMARY ~

**Precepts in Practice**



**Five Baptisms Include:**

1. Baptism into the name of the Father
2. Baptism into the name of Jesus Christ – the Son
3. Baptism into the name of the Holy Spirit
4. Baptism into the Truths of God's Word
5. Water Baptism

**Journey to Intimacy**



Because, upon the threshold of our time is "another plague." A plague that will make us question everything we ever thought we knew about God ... His Son ... and our salvation.

**Love and the Truth**



1. We shall be judged by our fruit.
  - a. Fruit is an outward adornment that springs forth from an inward principle, which principle the Spirit of God is in those saved by grace.
2. The spiritual fruit borne in this life, will determine the magnitude of the glory of our resurrected (glorified) body.

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