

The Bible Guys

Feb./Mar. 2010
of Yesterday and Today

**God:
His Word,
His Will
and His Way**



705 S. Cedar Street
P.O. Box 119
Paden, OK 74860

Phone: (405) 932-4583
E-mail: dmcnabb@tpot.org
Internet: www.tpot.org

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PUBLISHER

C. Elden McNabb

MANAGING EDITOR

David M. McNabb

WEBSITE EDITOR

Larry G. Danko

CIRCULATION MANAGER

David E. Allen

Circulation: 62,000

Other Contributors:

Paula Allen, Melissa Danko, Virginia Lavery,
Letha Ketcherside, Randy Ketherside, Arturo Linaldi,
Delvin McClendon, Jennifer McClendon, Joel McNabb,
Lyudmila McNabb, Richard McNabb, Zena McNabb,
Thomas Smith, Traci Smith

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The Bible Guys is a complimentary, monthly publication of



The People of Truth
A Holy Nation

To be like Jesus

By David M. McNabb

"To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus; All I ask – to be like Him! And through life's journey from earth to glory, All I ask – to be like Him!" Ah, the words of the old song fill our hearts and ignite a desire to seek a closer relationship with our Lord. New songs echo the sentiment, "I want to be more like you, Jesus, I want to be more like you; I want to be a vessel that you work through, I want to be more like you."

These songs, and others like them, express an inherent desire that appears in the heart of one who believes on the Son of God and repents of his or her sins. Then, the born again child of God begins a journey of faith, and a constant pursuit of Christ-likeness, bringing his or her footsteps ever closer to those of our blessed Lord.

Any Christian would gladly acknowledge their desire to be more like Christ. He was our example in every way, and had so many traits that we would love to have characterize us as well.

Look at Jesus. He was forgiving, loving, faithful, honest, obedient, zealous, and just. He healed the sick, and preached to men and women of all social standing, including the poor and despised elements of society. He was wise, brave, caring, kind, and friendly.

He was the pinnacle of the human experience. While millions believe on Him as Christ the Lord, the Son of God, millions more acknowledge that He was at least a holy man or enlightened being, revealing divine truth to humanity. To have so many desirable characteristics, and to have the admiration of billions even 2,000 years after your life on Earth has ended, what part of that would one *not* want to emulate?

Do you want to be more like Jesus? Do you desire to walk in the steps of the Savior? Do you want to emulate Him in every way, or only in the elements that you have chosen?

You may be asking yourself, "What was that last statement supposed to mean?" In many churches around the world, statues and icons representing the Lord, the patriarchs and the saints have been fabricated to depict an interpretation of their character and personality. Likewise, artistic interpretations of those holy men and women of old, and even Jesus himself, have been seen in various films and dramas. We have seen man portray Jesus as He is imagined to be, but is that an accurate depiction? The Jesus you wish to emulate, is He the Lord described in the Scripture, or is He the Jesus you have seen in statue and film?

I am not saying that every artistic depiction is wrong, I am only pointing out that it may not be right. Did Jesus walk the Earth with a persistent glow, long hair, and a pious look? If you had lived in those days, would you have seen Jesus as a holy man, or an "average Joe?"

I have heard it said, "I don't believe a loving God would create a hell and send anyone there," or "My Jesus wouldn't" do this or that? We are prone to develop an image of the Savior, and though it may not be graven with hands, it is often graven in our hearts, and we hold that image to be true.

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See *To be like Jesus* Pg. 4

God: His word and His will and His way

By C. Elden McNabb

For almost two thousand years, God has blessed the world with multitudes of sincere, dedicated, well-meaning ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, thousands of which were active in the first century A.D., bringing the fledgling Jewish Church to its fullness, and then launching the new generation of Christianity among the Gentiles.

About seven years after the "ascension," near the time when the Twelve Apostles ordained "The Seven" (Acts 6:1-8), Jesus made a special trip back to earth, and, among other things, appointed Paul to be "The Apostle to the Gentiles" (Acts 9:1-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-8). Paul boldly went about that work, fulfilling the volume of prophecy which Jesus had assigned to him: "A light of the Gentiles... for salvation to the ends of the earth" (Col. 1:25; Isa. 49:5-6; Acts 13:46-47).

The gospel spread among the Gentiles, and it was not long until some of the Jewish believers began to insist that the Gentile converts be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, or they could not be saved. The contention was so great that they decided to go to Jerusalem, to the Apostles and Elders to settle the matter, and help to maintain the unity of the faith (Acts 2:42).

The council was called and there was "much disputing." Then Peter gave his testimony of the events concerning the house of Cornelius, and Barnabas and Paul added their testimony. When the multitude quieted down, James, who was the judge among them in those days, summarized the matter. Then he said, "My sentence is that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from *Pollutions of idols*, and from *fornication*, and from *things strangled*, and from *blood*" (Acts 15:12-20).

God had His way, and only four "necessary" rules were laid upon the Gentile believers (Acts 15:1-32). It was this example of the "new

Priesthood" in action which created a condition that would allow the Gospel of Redemption to survive unto the coming of the Bridegroom (Heb 7:11-12). God had nullified the law, as it pertains to justification, by the death of Jesus on the cross (Rom. 7:1-6). "The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:38), as God threw open the "Holy of Holies" to show that we would all have access to God by the Holy Spirit, and every man give account of himself to God. And Paul said, "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace*, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Jesus became our high priest, ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father. And "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:11-12). So when Jesus returned to His Father, the priesthood of Aaron with his two sons, and the three sons of Levi, had to forfeit the Priesthood to Jesus with His two: Apostles and Prophets; and His three: Evangelists and Pastors and Teachers.

Yet God retained the Law of Moses, as Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). From that time forward, it was the fulfilling of prophecies which was the basic identifying mark of every move of God. Almost all, if not all, of the things which were mentioned in the New Testament had been written before in the Law and the Prophets.

Amos expressed the point, saying, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). And Jesus put it ever so beautifully in Matthew 11:13, saying, "***All the prophets, and the law prophesied until John.***"

That is The Word of God, by Jesus Christ.

As time progressed, sectarianism developed among those who believed the Gospel, with its divisions and sundry doctrinal variations. God knew that would happen, and He set the very essence of simplicity in the process of redemption and living a life in Christ Jesus, saying "A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall

be called The Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8). And by Paul he said, "Now the end of the commandment is *charity out of a pure heart*, and of *a good conscience*, and of *faith unfeigned*: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. 1:5-6). Today, anyone who is born again, if they will keep their heart pure, their conscience clear, and their faith real, will retain their redemption, and have hope of the resurrection of the dead.

Numberless, dedicated, born-again ministers, Gentile and Jew, labored through almost two thousand years of persecution, sacrifice and death to bring the light of the gospel to the ends of the earth. We are there now, at the very end of the Grace Age. "*Repentance and remission of sins*" has now been "*preached [in the name of Christ] among all nations*" (Luke 24:44-48), and the time of the end and great change is upon us. This is good news! This is great news! Jesus is coming soon!

When God sends Jesus back here for His marriage, and to rule the world for a thousand years, He will leave the right hand of His Father, and leave His work as the mediator between God and man. He will not be "prophet, priest, and king." He spent three and a half years being the Prophet, and almost 2,000 years "at the right hand of God exalted" (Acts 2:33), being the Priest of the Most High God. Jesus will come again very soon, according to prophecy, and, being exalted even further, shall sit upon the Throne of David, "King of the world" (Heb. 12:1-2). When He does, He will have a priest at His right hand, just as His Father has. As Jesus prophesied, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

God did not quit working when redemption and justification by faith had been instituted. The emphasis simply shifted to a spiritual level. The apostles and prophets of Jesus became the foundation of the New Testament

Temple, and the Church became that Temple; a holy habitation unto the Lord, according to prophecy (Eph 2:13-22). It is time now for the redeemed among the Gentiles to fulfill their volume of prophecy in the Old and New Testaments, and finish the work of building the spiritual Temple of God, for which Jesus and Paul laid the foundation (1 Cor. 3:9-11).

Somewhere between A.D. 33 and today, some of those sects, in direct contradiction of Jesus, began to erroneously promote that “One third of the Bible is prophecy, one third of the Bible is history, and one third of the Bible is poetry,” or some similar numbers. What He said, in Matthew 11:13, was, “All the prophets and the law prophesied until John (the Baptist).” So today, we have the option of believing that the words of Jesus are true, or miss out on most of the prophetic truths which the entire Bible embodies.

The Law of Moses will ever be with us, until it is all fulfilled (Matt. 5:18). For Jesus said, “Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35). The truth is, Jesus never said anything except that which His Father told Him to say, and God cannot lie (John 8:26-29).

Prophecy yet unfulfilled is the reason that Jesus has not yet come back to receive us unto Himself. Some sects insist that Jesus can come back at any time. The problem with that is that Peter told us, “God ... shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, *which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*” (Acts 3:20-21). And we who believe can, and will, know what those prophecies are, sometimes even before they are fulfilled. For that is the hallmark of God’s Church with Apostles and Prophets, unto whom only it is given to be able to search out the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:1-5).

John made that point so very clear in his introduction to “The Vision of All,” The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Isa. 29:11-18). John began the book with these words, “The

Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, *to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass*; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. (He did that, not only so the apostles and prophets would know what it is before it happens, but, also, so they can deliberately fulfill some of it.) Blessed is he that readeth (explains), and they that hear (understand) the words of this prophecy, and keep (fulfill) those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:1-3).

We have at least three such events related to us in the Acts of the Apostles. The first one is the deliberate fulfilling of Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8 in the replacement of Judas by Peter with The Twelve (Acts 1:12-26). Another one is the ministry of Paul and Barnabas going to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-47).

We have come to the brink of the end of the Grace Age, and to the time for the revelation of Jesus Christ to be understood. Whereas, God gave Israel 430 years from the promise of Abraham to its fulfillment (Gal. 3:17), our promise was given in the narrative of Noah and the Ark. “The Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:1-3).

In Nahum 2:1-4, with Rev. 2:26-27, we are told that a man will make the preparation for the second coming of Jesus in the days of automobiles. And He told us what we must do when we see that time arrive, saying, “Keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily.” That is to say, ***Prepare for the battle*** (Joel 3:9-11). As the Grace Age ends, we must stand against the Beast with the mark, and ***watch the way of Holiness***, so we will not lose the favor of God, and ***gird ourselves with the word of truth*** (Isa. 33:6) for stability and strength, and to ***fortify ourselves more fully with the power of the Holy Ghost*** (Acts 1:8) more than we ever have before.

Charles Duryea marked the approximate beginning of that 120 years when he began to market his automobiles in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1893. Another 120 years would place us very close to 2013,

and if I use the term “about 120 years,” as Luke did in Acts 1:15, we can conceive it being even a year or two closer than 2013.

As I said before, we have come to the brink of the very end of the Grace Age. I am not positive how, or in what order, all of the details will play out, but when Jesus leaves the Throne of Grace, He will not be dealing with sin and redemption anymore. He will come when the Bride has made herself ready for the wedding, and will not engage in work or war for a year (Deut. 24:5).

Let us take the challenge in 2 Corinthians 7:1. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Some group of believers will take that challenge. It is called The Bride, the Lamb’s Wife. And unto her shall be granted “*that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints... Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.*” And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” (Rev. 19:7-9).

“There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. *My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.* Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” (S. of S. 6:8-10).

It will be a glorious time for all who are blessed to be there. And if you will work at it, one of them just might be you. 

To be like Jesus

Continued from Page 2

We read the accounts of the kindness of Jesus as He rebuked the disciples and told them to let the children come to Him. We see the mercy of Jesus as He spoke a word and the adulteress’ accusers dropped their stones and left her alive. We see the tenderness of Jesus as He wept for

His dear friend Lazarus. We see the wisdom of Jesus as His opponents were stymied by His parables. We see the love of Jesus as He laid down His life for the salvation of mankind. These and many more occurrences in the life of Christ inspire us to be more like Him because we like these things about Him. We think that, should we have lived in the days of Jesus, we would have doubtless fallen in love with Him and followed Him to the bitter end! Yet, there were very few who actually did in those days, and, as Jesus hung on the cross at Calvary, only one disciple remained there with a few women. This man of Galilee was rejected and despised all the days of His ministry! Why? He was rejected by the Gentiles, by His countrymen, even by His own brothers! He was opposed by religious and secular leaders.

He did not establish a megachurch, as many do today. I often ponder the day Jesus fed 5,000 men plus women and children. Imagine the disciples. They know that Jesus is the lamb of God, that He is the Messiah, and they desire for all Israel to see and embrace this wonderful truth. Knowing who He is, they see Him turned away time after time, yet still they know that one day, Israel will accept Him as their Savior. Now, as they look out on the crowd of many more than 5,000, they must have presumed that Jesus' time had come. The tide was turning, and the eyes of Israel were opening. The Jews were going to finally embrace their Messiah!

Then Jesus performed a great miracle, taking five loaves and two small fish, and fed the whole crowd and had food leftover! At this point, it is easy to picture the ecstasy of the disciples, now surer than ever that the crowd would be convinced that Jesus was the Christ. After the meal, Jesus began to preach, and He told the multitude, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,

dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:53-57).

The disciples' bubble burst. They said to one another, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Truly, many Jews were offended at this saying, knowing that eating man's flesh is not kosher. Many left and never followed Jesus again. Moments earlier the disciples could see the light at the end of the tunnel: the acceptance of their leader by the children of Israel. Now, all of that was over, and they were back down to their handful. Jesus saw their dejection, and asked if they would also leave Him, but they replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:60-69).

I can hear the disciples afterward saying, "Why did He have to preach *that* sermon? They weren't ready for that yet. He could have said it differently." Let us be honest with one another: if Jesus had wanted all Israel to believe in Him, could He not have arranged that? The Scriptures agree, saying, "But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him ... they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (John 12:37-40). Jesus' true identity was purposefully kept secret from the multitudes that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. As Paul also said, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:7-8). Jesus Christ was sent on a mission that, had He been accepted of all men during the time of His ministry, He could not have fulfilled. Jesus had to have suffered and bled and died on the cross to redeem sinful man back to the Father. Had He not

been despised of men, that would not have happened.

The disciples did not fully comprehend the work of Jesus as they followed Him, and only after the Lord's death and resurrection did they begin to realize the purpose of His life. No doubt, until they came to that full understanding, they were disappointed at the apparent lack of success in gaining the favor of the masses.

Do you still want to be like Jesus? Is that the Jesus you want to emulate? From this one story, you can see that He was misunderstood by design. His mission required Him to endure shame, while having to remain silent unto His own defense. The devil tried to tempt Him to pursue a course of wealth, fame and acceptance, but Jesus rejected it, choosing rather the shame of the cross for the glory of God.

And what about the time that Jesus was so moved with zeal for the holiness of the house of God that He fashioned a scourge and beat the moneychangers and drove them out of the temple court? You want to be like Jesus; which part do you want to portray? Are you willing to be like Him in every way? If you were to do something like that today, you would be deemed un-Christian, yet our very Example did it! Do you ever get so disgusted with the merchandising characteristics of modern Christianity that you would take these thieves to task?

What would Jesus do? Well, He would openly rebuke many of today's so-called Christian leaders and call them vipers and hypocrites. That's just what He did to the Pharisees and Sadducees of His day. If you were to do it, people would say that you were not behaving like Christ, when in fact you very well would be.

Are you prepared to be like Christ in every way? Are you ready to walk the narrow road of love, obedience, honesty, zeal, justice, submission, forgiveness, boldness, suffering, loneliness and rejection? Will you stand for what is right, despite whom you may have to oppose? Will you remain silent in your own defense when it is God's will you do so? Will you be just in your dealings with people,

even if that means your own friends or family members are offended that you did not automatically take their side? Will you risk being branded a heretic by other believers, because you have chosen to believe every word of God, and not just those that fit your theology?

A certain man, having found Jesus, quickly told Him, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus gave him an immediate reality check, saying, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

The path of righteousness is not all roses, butterflies and puppy dogs, but it leads unto life, and a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:21-25). 

My life is an open book

By Joel McNabb

"The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah" (Psa. 87:6). The day that God created Adam, He summoned some of His angelic scribes to write a new book in heaven, called *the Book of Life*. Many people think our names are written in this book when we repent of our sin, but the following verses show that it existed in Moses' day. "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him

will I blot out of my book" (Ex. 32:31-33). King David also cried out for the Lord's adversaries, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Psalm 69:28).

From Adam until now, all human beings, as they breathe in the breath of life and become living souls, have their names written in that book. Their lives are then recorded, and everything that they do or say is written down. Jesus even said, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). Seeing this passage more clearly gave me great concern and made me more aware of my speech and actions. I am in my fifties now and have spoken many idle words since the time of my birth. I can see the need to pray in the manner that Jesus taught: "Forgive us our debts" (sins). Can you imagine the volumes of books that there are in heaven now from the creation of Adam? The Library of Congress could not even come close to God's storehouse of books in heaven. King Solomon even said, "Of making many books there is no end" (Eccl. 12:12). Everything we say or do is recorded. Take a few minutes and let that soak in. I thought of what James said, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). I want to have a closer relationship with the Lord and not offend Him in anyway. I know that we are not perfect yet, but we should be aware that God is listening, and there is a record being made. When we come face to face with our Maker, and the books are opened, how will our life story read? The thought that God was placing our names in the Book of Life the day we were born never really occurred to me, until I saw that there were other books that are mentioned in the Bible, and you could find your name in those books also.

Since childhood, I was taught that God was going to send Jesus back to judge the world. If I believed in the Son of God and that He died for my sins, my name would be automatically placed in *the Lamb's Book of Life*. Before Jesus paid the price for

our sins on Calvary, He sent 70 men out to every city and place where He would go. On their return, the 70 thought it was great and rejoiced that devils were subject to them through Jesus' name. His response was, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). Jesus' statement here tells us that their names were already written down, though His blood had not yet been shed for sin. So, if our names are written in the book of life on the day we are born, what did Jesus dying on the cross do for us? We are all familiar with what Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nicodemus did not understand. Jesus was comparing a spiritual birth to a natural birth. After His resurrection, Jesus came to His disciples. That night, He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and they came alive spiritually (John 20:22), just as God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

We become new beings – new creatures in Christ Jesus – when we are born of the spirit. When this occurs, God has our names written in another book called the Lamb's Book of Life, because Jesus is the Lamb that was slain to take away the sins of the world. At our natural birth we entered the world and inherited the sinful nature because of Adam's sin; yet God wrote our name down in the Book of Life. Sin is the enemy that can take our names out of the Book of Life. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). We may have sin and still be alive until it has taken over the whole body and death comes. If sin runs its course, our names will not be found in the Book of Life. The Lamb's Book of Life gives us access to God, which was lost when Adam sinned. Jesus, the spiritual Adam, has shown the way of life without sin. He came that we might have life: more abundant life. Now, what we do as spiritual beings is also recorded. For 6,000 years, the angelic scribes have been busy recording all that mankind

has done, filling the heavenly library with an untold number of books waiting to be read on the Day of Judgment.

Once you are born again, the Lord's recorders are busy listening; they are paying close attention as there is also another book being written: *the Book of Remembrance*. "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. 3:16-17). Jesus spoke that the kingdom of heaven was like a treasure hid in a field, which a man found, and for the joy of it he went and sold all that he had, and bought the field. The Lamb's Book of Life is for whosoever will accept Jesus as their Savior. The Book of Remembrance is for those that have a love of the truth and search the scriptures with one another to find out more about the Lord and His will on Earth. Jesus came and His blood was shed for many (the field), but what He was really looking for was the treasure: His Church. Paul told the husbands to love their wives, as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it; so He could sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word. "That He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). Yes, this is a faithful saying, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, but the idea that being born again automatically makes you the wife or bride does not leave room for The Book of Remembrance. Being born again gives us the power to become the sons of God, and to see and enter the kingdom built upon the foundations of Apostles and Prophets, the precious stones that are the city: the Bride in Revelation 21. If you have gotten together with other saints and searched God's word often, your name may be in this book, and God will also write your name in another

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book called *the Book of the Holy City* (Rev. 22:19).

The Day of Judgment is coming and all will have to give account of the deeds done in their body. To say that anyone who doesn't accept Jesus Christ will go to hell, is to say that God is unmerciful. If all it takes is to be born again to get your name in the Book of Life, why did God wait so long to send Jesus to the earth? During the 4,000 years before Calvary, did anyone have a chance at eternal life? What about those who lived before God gave the Law to Moses? Jesus said, "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" (Matt. 8:11). These men were not born again, yet Jesus knew they were going to sit in the Kingdom. Their faith was counted as righteousness. Also, all those who have tried to live to the best of their conscience, and as righteously as they knew how, will be judged accordingly. Let us not confuse the words "righteous" and "holy." Abraham was counted as righteous, but this did not mean he was holy. And what of Noah, who was perfect in his generation, and a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5). None of these had the atonement of the blood of Christ, but God called them righteous. Abimelech, king of Gerar, was given a dream from God when he took Sarah (not knowing she was the wife of Abraham). Yet this king was so righteous, that God kept him from

sinning by taking another man's wife (Gen. 20:1-6).

The way of holiness can only be attained by the blood of Jesus Christ and a wayfaring man though a fool should not err therein, for it is a free gift. Time and chance happens to all men. While those who were born before Jesus came to earth were not necessarily all lost and sentenced to the lake of fire, this free gift of salvation allows us access to, and assurance of, eternal life, our sins having been forgiven by Jesus' blood. King David, a man after God's own heart, was not born again, but will be there at the Day of Judgment, seeing the fulfillment of God's promise to him, when Jesus sits on his throne in Acts 2:29,30.

This Day of Judgment is the thousand years that Jesus reigns on the Earth. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3:8).

But Peter also said, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:17-18). We must make our calling and election sure, and the only way to do that is to be sure our name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, having our hearts covered in his blood when we

appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Those that suffered and died as martyrs before we had access to redemption from our sins, did so that they might obtain a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35). They believed, and it was counted as righteousness, and they will have a reward. Their names will be found in the Book of Life, even though not in the Lamb's Book. When Jesus comes back, the books will be opened. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:9-10). This is at the beginning of the 1,000 years, when Jesus sits on the throne of David. The term "cast down" here does not mean "destroyed," but rather "established," where Jesus can sit in judgment till He has put all things under His feet. See 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

There are two resurrections: the first, at the beginning of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, when the dead in Christ shall rise (1 Thess. 4:16 & Rev. 20:5-6). Those who get up at this first resurrection will not be judged at the second resurrection for they are blessed and holy. This includes those who suffered persecution and were

beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God. Rev. 20:6 is very clear: the second death has no power over them, and their reward is secure. After the 1000-year reign ends and Satan is destroyed, it will be time for the great white throne of Judgment when ALL the dead shall rise. Every man will be judged according to his works and the books will be opened. We see no mention of believers in Jesus here; only those who had not gotten up in the first resurrection. If their names are not found in the Book of Life, the sentence will commence and to the lake of fire they shall go.

The time is coming to give account of our lives. Very soon, Jesus will sit on His throne and command that the books be opened. First, He will open the Book of Remembrance and find the names of those who have diligently sought and feared him, who make up His sanctuary on Earth. "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev.22:7,12). If your name and life story is in that book, it is because you have believed and done the will of the Father.

Life and life in Christ are free gifts. What you do with these gifts after you have received them will determine how God will reward you.

After that, Jesus will look at those before His throne, and call for your book to be opened; this is the time

your life's story will be read, for "we spend our years as a tale that is told" (Ps. 90:9). What you have done with the knowledge that has been revealed to you will determine what books your name will have been written in. As a human being, if you have heard of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and repented of your sins, your name will be in the Lamb's Book of Life and you will be assured of life everlasting. Do you have the confidence today that your name is in one of these books? If not, I would encourage you to take a good look at your life. Look at what you have done with what you know. The old hymn comes to mind, "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine." I want to be able to stand before the throne of the King and hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord. I see your name on the list. You may enter." (See Matt. 25:21.) May the Lord give you this blessed assurance. Paul said, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27). By the grace of God I shall stand and be counted. May you do the same in Jesus' name. Amen! 