

# **1 Peter 5.1-11 - Addressing the Shepherds of God's Flock**

02/04/2025

There is an economy in God's Kingdom that sits upon His perfect Order. This economy is of rewards - both positive and negative. 1Peter 5 is written to guide and encourage the Shepherds, reminding them of this economy

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# **The Dispensations of God's Covenants**

02/04/2025

As with the consequences of a literal vs allegorical approach to prophetic Scripture arrives at very different conclusions, so too are Dispensations and Covenants a great rudder to the eschatological ship.

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# **Scripture and Prophecy - Understanding, Error, and Its Effect on the Church**

02/04/2025

We remain on the cusp of His imminent next Act, without any further signs indicated

prior to commencement.

Maranatha!

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# **An Overview of the Historic Seven Church Periods**

02/04/2025

Jesus clearly addresses the seven distinct Churches in Rev 2:1 - 3:22. Additionally, our study is considering a comparative and possibly prophetic parallel to the Church Ages as well.

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# **Is the Bible you have today true to the original writings, or to the Spirit's Intent?**

02/04/2025

Is the Bible you have today an exact copy of the original writings, or more so, is It true to the Spirit's Intent? Perhaps a good answer is while not a flawless reproduction, it is by God's Volition, sufficient towards Salvation and edification.

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# 1 Peter 4:12-19 - Study Notes and Comments

02/04/2025

**<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; <sup>13</sup> but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.**

While Peter is addressing the believers in Asia Minor (Turkey/Türkiye) who are facing harm, the threat yet to come for the greater Church under Rome will be even more severe. The Ten great Roman Persecutions of the Church beginning in AD 6 through AD 310 sought to eliminate believers through most grotesque measures.

At the time of his writing, perhaps AD 64-65, the greatest religious/rebellion turmoil continued in Israel. The nation was a hotbed of revolt against the Roman occupation with a succession of replacement Procurators charged with keeping the uprisings of religious and political fanatics at bay. Self-proclaimed prophets would rise and gather followers who hoped for the coming of the Kingdom that would violently throw the occupiers out. The Romans would bring crushing force upon the groups often killing by the thousands and crucifying the leaders. Political treachery, bribery and assassination were employed by both the Procurator and appointed leaders. One faction of fanatical patriots called the Sicarii tasked themselves with the removal of political opponents by sly and unobserved public assassination with a dagger. The Sicarii murders were so frequent that no one felt safe as they even killed Jonathan the High Priest with the quiet approval of Felix (AD 52-60).

The Romans almost seemed to encourage rebellion so as to give excuse to kill the troublesome Jews.

*“The first rebellion against which Ventidius Cumanus, A.D. 48-52, had to contend*

*was occasioned by the coarse insolence of a Roman soldier. This man had the presumption at the feast of the Passover, when to maintain order and preserve the peace a detachment of soldiers was always situated in the court of the temple, to insult the festive gathering by assuming an indecent posture. The enraged multitude demanded satisfaction from the procurator. As Cumanus, however, attempted first of all to hush up the matter, he too was assailed with reproachful speeches, until at length he called for the intervention of the armed forces. The excited crowds were utterly routed; and their overthrow was so complete that, according to Josephus' estimate, in the crush which took place in the streets in consequence of their flight, 20,000 (!) men lost their lives."*

*Schürer, Emil. A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ (p. 314).*

Add to this climate of tyrants, zealots and rebels the appearance of the sect of Jesus. Amidst a parade of new prophets and patriots, Jesus had clearly demonstrated His legitimacy in miracles and teaching as the others could not. But to the leaders of Israel He was still yet another threat to the fragile power balance between Rome and Israel. It is no surprise that Saul was given rights to hunt down the followers of Jesus.

By the time of the writing of 1 Peter, Nero had burned down Rome and laid blame on the Christians, seeing many Christians executed in various gruesome manner.

**<sup>13b</sup>...so that also at the revelation of His glory (1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18) you may rejoice with exultation. (2 Corinthians 5:10 , 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, Hebrews 11:35)**

The Lord will meet us midway in the clouds at the First Resurrection, beginning the Tribulation. The Bema Seat Judgement of Christ will follow for the raptured Church Saints, where our works will be tested and rewards granted.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53** <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but

we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

**1 Thessalonians 4:15-18** <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**1 Corinthians 3:10-15** <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup> If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

**Hebrews 11:35** <sup>35</sup> Women received their dead — they were raised to life again. Some men were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection,

**<sup>14</sup> If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

*Luke 6:22-23 <sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.*

**<sup>15</sup> Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; <sup>16</sup> but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.**

In the tumultuous environment of Procurators, soldiers, assassins, patriots, rebels and zealots - do not be involved. But suffering as a servant of the Lord in this - for all that might mean - you will glorify God. (**2 Corinthians 12:8-10**)

*2 Corinthians 12:8-10 <sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

**<sup>17</sup> For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God;**

## **and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?**

With Israel's rejection of the Messiah, Jesus had prophesized that God would soon judge the nation and Jerusalem. (**Mark 13:1-2**) The city, the surrounding strongholds, and the Temple would be destroyed by the Roman Titus who would breach the last walls of Jerusalem on August 10 70AD. During the siege, three Jewish rebel factions inside the city fought each other ferociously while killing innocents in their path, even shortsightedly burning the common grain stores that the others wouldn't have it. Before this happened, the Christian community had fled Jerusalem "in consequence of a divine admonition" to the pagan city of Pella in Perea.

For about six months Titus' army used battering rams to push through the successive walls surrounding the city. By August 8 the final siege had begun; by the 10<sup>th</sup> the Temple was destroyed. Though Titus wanted to preserve at least the inner court of the Temple for Roman use, it was inadvertently set ablaze by his soldiers and was a total loss. The Roman slaughtered without discrimination, and the rest of the city was set ablaze. Two of the three Jewish rebel tyrants still holed up in the upper city continued to murder and rob. By September 8, the whole city was under Rome's control. The entire city was leveled to the ground except three gates and the wall on the West. The rest of Israel's strongholds would be subdued by AD 73.

With this began the dispersion of the Jews to the world until Israel would again become a recognized nation in 1948.

***Mark 13:1-2** <sup>1</sup> As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples \*said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" <sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."*

**<sup>18</sup> And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?**

The difficulty does not refer to perils faced in achieving Salvation, for this is secure in Christ. Instead, the difficulties are the trials that believers face that Sanctify or even threaten to destroy. All of these are under the administration of our Sovereign God (**Romans 8:26-28**), also see **Proverbs 11:31**. Conversely, those who would be damned, living without God and His corrective staff, may have ease now but will suffer immeasurably more in their punishment. (**Luke 16:24-25**)

***Romans 8:26-28** <sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

***Proverbs 11:31** - <sup>31</sup> If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth,*

*How much more the wicked and the sinner!*

***Luke 16:24-25** <sup>24</sup> And he called out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.*

**<sup>19</sup> Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God**



**shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.**

Jesus showed us how to suffer righteously under a Sovereign and loving God as He prepared to face His death.

***Luke 22:41-44** <sup>41</sup> And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." <sup>43</sup> And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup> And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

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**If you are new to a Saving faith in Jesus, this is written for you.**

02/04/2025

If, in a full belief (faith) you've said (prayed) to God that you know you've disobeyed (sinned) against Him, and you've asked Jesus His Son Who died and came back from the dead to forgive you, the Bible says God has now adopted you into His family.

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# **Berean Prophecy Study - Larkin & Benware**

02/04/2025

Our Men's discipleship group meets weekly to discuss our current study of the Word. We're considering Larkin's and Benware's thoughts on Prophetic Scripture and the Book of Revelation.

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## **What Did Jesus Do Between His Death and Resurrection?**

02/04/2025

Jesus' total domination and Authority given by Father would be settled. As He already demonstrated His being the perfect Prophet, and is now exercising the office of High Priest, we await His return as King of all Kings ushering in the end of the kingdoms of Man.

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## **Life Under Grace in Christ the Victor - 1 Pet 3:8-22**

02/04/2025

**1 Pet 3:8-22**

[1 Peter 3.8-22 - Life Under Grace in Christ the VictorDownload](#)

### Period of Grace - 1 Pet 3:8-9a

Peter concludes his instructions to Believers, explaining life in this present time of Grace. This period we're currently in following the Cross will continue until He retrieves (snatches up, **1 Thess 4:13-18**) His Church, beginning the time of Wrath. Until then, Peter explains grace towards others as we "were called for the very purpose that (we) might inherit a blessing." **1 Peter 3:9**

This blessing is the Holy Spirit given to us in Salvation, through faith - "...in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." **Galatians 3:14**

### Harmony with Others - 1 Pet 3:9b-12

Citing **Psa 34:12-13**, Peter explains how to employ a blessed and Saved life while we still live amongst sin, with a reminder that the LORD watches and hears the righteous and opposes those doing evil. The same is taught by James, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." **James 5:16b**

Paul wrote this same declaration to Titus:

*"<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, <sup>12</sup> instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." **Titus 2:11-14***

### Stand Firm under Christ, Suffer as He did - 1 Pet 3:13-17

Living in the reality of being reborn in God through Jesus - while still assailed by the sin that envelops us - Peter urges grace, grace, grace. Emulating the same Grace as Jesus when suffering unrighteousness, we like Him shall strive to tamp down wrath and make as much way possible for the Spirit to do the work only He can do. Our response should act in support of Him as we would be "ready to make a defense to

everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in” us, even patiently suffering wrongs against us “if God should will it so”. The whole of the equation in this Period of Grace rests in making the case for Christ to sinners and staying out of the way to let Him do His Work. When the Time closes, no one will be ignorant of the opportunity.

### Christ’s Work/Actions Between Bodily Death and Resurrection, Ascent - **1 Pet 3:18-22**

Christ’s Work on the Cross was not the end of His Work. What was seen on this side of the Creation:

*<sup>50</sup> And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. <sup>51</sup> And behold, **the veil of the temple was torn** in two from top to bottom; and **the earth shook and the rocks were split.** <sup>52</sup> **The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;** <sup>53</sup> **and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. Matthew 27:50-53***

On the other side of Creation unseen, while between His Body’s death and His Ascent to the Throne, Jesus in Spirit preached the Word to the most disobedient spirits in the underworld prison called Tartarus (**2 Peter 2:4**). These are not the fallen angels of Satan but the ‘sons of God’ in pre-flood Genesis 6 who fathered the Nephilim giants. They will be taken straight to the White Throne Judgement. (**Jude 6-7, Rev 20:11-15**)

The Gospel is vital and relevant to all, both the Quick (for Salvation) and the Dead (for Judgement). Jesus also preached to the disembodied souls of Hades (not the final place of eternal torment, the Lake of Fire) emptying the Paradise side (Abraham’s Bosom/Lazarus) to bring them to the Heaven that still awaits us who sleep in the grave before the Rapture. Post-Cross, the souls of the Saints proceed to the same place immediately to the Lord (**2 Cor 5:8**)

<sup>7</sup> *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.* <sup>8</sup>

Therefore it says,

*“WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.”* <sup>9</sup> (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?

<sup>10</sup> *He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)* **Ephesians 4:7-10**

Jesus’ total domination and reclamation of all Authority given by Father would be settled. As He already demonstrated His being the perfect Prophet, and is now exercising the office of High Priest, we await His return as King of all Kings ushering in the end of the kingdoms of Man.

<sup>17</sup> *When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,”* <sup>18</sup> *and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.* **Rev 1:17-18**

### Baptism in Allegiance to Him - 1 Pet 3:21-22

“Corresponding to that”, the chapter closes out with the reasoning for a Believer’s Baptism. While a physical act, it no more enacts a spiritual outcome than does fasting or a shorn head (**Acts 18:18**). Instead, it reflects an inner conduct of the heart that God recognizes. Baptism is a show of surrender to Christ the Lord. Fasting demonstrates a devotion to Him and a denial of the flesh to amplify the spirit’s focus. A vow is in devotion and obedience to God despite protests in ourselves.

The only Ordinances given by Moses - Circumcision and Temple Sacrifice - have been rendered obsolete and unnecessary by the New Covenant, entered through our death in Christ and so a release from the Law.

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# David R. Dick Eulogy

02/04/2025

The reason I've always believed Dave cared so much is because he knew the Care Jesus has for him.

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## **When Jesus Freed His Church of the Pope: The Evolution of the Church (1450-1648) - Gutenberg's Press, Luther's 95 Theses, The Reformation, The Peace at Augsburg, The Thirty Years' War, and The Peace of Westphalia**

02/04/2025

While studying Clarence Larkin's illustration - The Messages to the Seven Churches Compared with Church History - I noticed a milestone referencing the Peace at Westphalia. Not sure I had ever heard of this before, I dug deeper to discover an amazing part of God's governance over humanity and Christ over His Church.

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# **The Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia**

02/04/2025

Following Luther's 97 Theses on October 31, 1517 an unstoppable series of events would result in not only the Reformation, but also the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), ending with Peace at Westphalia of October 1648.

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# **True Worshipers are not Created, but Cultivated**

02/04/2025

Revelation 7:9-10

I believe we can expect to see something of God's overarching goals in Scripture. We've discussed before how the one thing He chooses not to violate, even as the Almighty over all things, is the sovereignty He allows us in asking for Salvation. He surely uses a variety of means to compel and convince us, but I don't think He has ever been shown to overwhelm our choosing His Saving Grace. This would make sense because it is on this same basis we will be judged for Salvation or Damnation. No one, neither the sheep nor the goats, will be able to say 'God ultimately made this choice for me without my consent'.

In a like manner, God also seeks to ultimately surround Himself with genuine worshippers, those who choose to venerate Him out of their own volition. No forced worship will ever be found around the Throne, once He has completed His plans.

These genuine worshippers cannot be created, but must be cultivated. Even though 'the stones would cry out' (**Luke 19:39-40**), we are made as independent personalities who have the aforementioned freedom of choice while under His absolute Sovereignty. These worshippers have been cultivated by His Intent and Grace to come to this conclusion.

The overarching theme of this began with the first Adam who was perfect and innocent. The second Adam offers rescue to Fallen people who understand the sin the first Adam couldn't know about until it was too late. The necessity of a Saving choice begins with a burden of sin. God chose not to create Adam and Eve as 'genuine' worshippers, but instead through the circumstance of sin, (God is not the Author of sin - **1 John 1:5**) He has undertaken the breathless task of calling us back to Him without violating the sovereignty of our choice to ask for His Grace.

Adam could not have been a grateful worshipper with the mud of prior sin on his boots - he couldn't until after his disobedience. We, however, come to Him from an endless variety of circumstances, necessarily aware of the sin we ask for relief from. In the end, these are the sort of genuinely grateful and sincere worshippers He will nurture to Himself.

He's really taken the hardest path, given that humanity now begins bent against Him in all ways, save our God-given conscience. And to Who is this credit due? It is true each child of God made that choice, but we know it is only because of Him we made the choice. We did not even know we sinned until the Law, says Paul (**Rom 7:7**). He provides His Spirit to convict us. He gives all faith to quicken us. He manages as the Almighty Sovereign God to guide each created soul to His conclusion - all without creating the choice Himself. He actually demonstrates this incredible act of *cultivating* true-choice worshippers without forcing His Sovereignty, but brings it about *through* His Sovereignty. This is a most amazing accomplishment, most worthy of our praise and His Glory.

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# **Larkin Revelation Table of Contents**

02/04/2025

Larkin's summary outline of all passages of Revelation, from his book, *The Book of Revelation: A Study of the Last Prophetic Book of Holy Scripture*

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## **Clarence Larkin - The Perspective of Prophecy, with Notes**

02/04/2025

The download at the bottom of this post is one of Pastor Larkin's illustrations explaining what each Prophet was shown, and the other is our current Excel lookup table placing the Scripture within a corresponding event column.

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## **Clarence Larkin Illustrations**

02/04/2025

Downloadable links of all of Larkin's extensive library of excellent illustrations.

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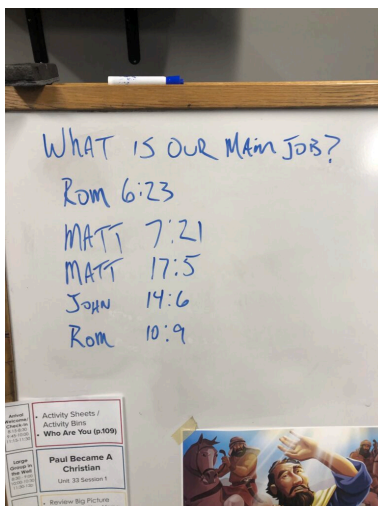
# What is our Main Job?

02/04/2025

This Sunday 5/26/24 at 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade Kid's Sunday School, we discussed our Main Job - to obey Jesus unto a Saving faith in Him.

I chose Scripture to discuss with the kids. Our discussions center around the Bibles in front of them as they look up the Verses on a whiteboard. We always begin with prayer to the Holy Spirit to guide us to the truth, and as we discuss the Scripture by them looking it up, reading it, and looking to explain what it means. Note: We should be horrified at pushing kids into anything concerning Salvation. A false conversion must be avoided with the greatest care. Our discussions always strive to be the truth and what they conclude on their own with our guidance under the Spirit's guidance.

Today, we talked through the following:



What is our Main Job?

## **Romans 6:23**

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

## **Matthew 7:21**

7 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

### **Matt 17:5**

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”

Here we discussed the summarized Ten Commandments, of which 1 of the 5 kids knew of and the others had heard of. Of all of the Commandments we included, they each agreed they had sinned.

Throughout our discussion we used an example of going to a restaurant, knowing we were very hungry. Seated by the hostess, it wasn't until the waitstaff came and heard our request that they would bring us the food promised. Being in the restaurant would not bring the food, nor being seated, nor knowing about the waitstaff and the kitchen. It is only when we ask the one who can bring the food they promise to serve can we expect our meal.

### **James 2:19-20**

19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.<sup>20</sup> But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

### **Romans 10:9**

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

### **John 14:6**

6 Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

I believe the kids had a firm framing of the discussion, and they confirmed. Asking if

anyone had any comments or questions (no), I asked if anyone had asked Jesus to Forgive and Save them (no). Then I asked if anyone was interested in doing so (4 no, 1 yes).

I affirmed them all, and asked the one child if he was ready, as three months ago he said so but decided not to proceed with his Dad present. He said yes, so I explained that I would ask his parents to join us and that this would be all on his own. He confirmed it again, so I explained how my simple prayer of confession of sin and asking Jesus' for His forgiveness as God's Son Who rose from the dead was what I wanted. I told him Jesus wants him and would not refuse, and he would belong to Him in this faith.

Both of his parents arrived and we cleared the room of the few kids and the leaders who were there to relieve me. We all sat down and I asked the child if he would still like to ask Jesus to Forgive and Save him (yes). With that, he prayed in my judgement a very sufficient prayer for Salvation. We congratulated him, and I told him that in this faith I could now call him a brother in Christ, then told him the next decision to work out with his folks would be his Baptism in obedience to the Lord.

This has been a tremendous day for all involved. Linda and I pray often that these children would come to a Saving faith, and today I believe we saw a child whisked to safety. This is the main reason we engage this Ministry, and I praise God for calling him.

Next time I see this child we'll have a Bible for him with a note from us. I'll give it to his parents to give to him with their approval.

Praise God for His Truth and Mercy in Jesus.

### **1 Corinthians 3:6-7**

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

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# Richard Hilgert Eulogy

02/04/2025

## Richard Hilgert Eulogy

March 25, 2023

Lucy, Chris & (Adrienne), Alyssa & Phil, Kevin & (Claire), Gabriella & (Anton), RJ, Jensen, and Russel - We share your hope in our Lord and His comfort in your grief. Thank you for the opportunity to share our love for Richard together. May the Lord bless and keep you.

If a Eulogy is a commendation of the character and services of a person, I believe someone like Rich would expect his Eulogy to include the evidence of Jesus's work in his life. There will rightly be much discussion about Rich and who he has been in our lives. But now, let's consider Who Jesus is in Rich's life and why it matters.

A Eulogy can be an occasion to testify, to examine, to consider and to challenge. See this person's life, look for the evidences of Christ's work in him, taste and see that the Lord is good, give an opportunity and reason to answer Father God's command to "Listen to and obey His Son" unto repentance and Salvation.

### **I'd like to tell you a bit about how I know Richard.**

A close group of us gather for a couple of hours each Saturday morning to discuss life in the Word, and the Word's direction for our lives. The Holy Spirit always provides something to unpack from the Word of God.

We want to be as the Bereans, those Jews who in **Acts 17:11** "*...received the Word (from the Apostle Paul) with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.*"

What does God think about our lives? How do we order our lives in accord with His

Word? How do we have His mind? What would Jesus do? These are the type of the things we've discussed together through the years.

We nurture a close trust and we share the details of our week as we've pondered and experienced God, where we've seen God leave behind His wake, and what's on each man's heart. We, with Rich, are Berean Brothers.

**I want to report to you, to testify to what I've seen of Rich and the evidence of Jesus in his life.**

I do this to give witness to Jesus, and to convey hope to you. I don't speak about Rich in the past tense, but the present tense. Do you know why? It's because our faith informs us that while Rich's body has died, his eternal soul has not. It cannot. That is how God has made all of us - with a soul that is eternal.

Listen to the Apostle Paul's assurance in **2 Cor 5:8** "***We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.***"

Our faith informs us that Rich's soul, the eternal seat of his person, is now **with** Jesus because of his faith and trust **in** Jesus.

**I'd like to share an example of another Jesus-filled person who faced death.**

Our group recently discussed a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Church father named Polycarp. He was a disciple of the Apostle John, and the Bishop of the Church of Smyrna. Hunted down by Rome, his captors found him and he welcomed them inside to eat while he prayed, before being taken to die publicly and brutally in an arena. They entreated him to embrace Caesar as God and deny Jesus, to escape a horrible death so late in his life. Polycarp's response is recorded as "*86 years have I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?*" With that, they murdered him.

Christianity has scores of reports of how followers of Jesus have faced death. The deaths of hundreds of Christians throughout history are detailed in Foxe's Book of the Martyrs. While the courageous response of these Christians is remarkable, I believe the book is actually more about the evidence of their spectacular faith shown through their actions. We are not to marvel so much at the martyrs' courage, but in

the manifold evidence of Jesus **in** them, the product of His Work being shown **through** them. The courage these people exercised was their unflappable trust in Jesus; it was God's gift.

### **So, why is faith so important, and what role should it play in our lives?**

Our faith, which doesn't come from ourselves but is a gift from God, is not meant to be lived in a vacuum. "***...Faith without works (actions) is useless...***" (James 2:20). Our actions are actually the product of the work of Jesus, Who is "***...the author and finisher of our faith...***". (Heb 12:2)

We are called to cooperate in the faith He gives us and nurtures in us. So, let's consider the evidence of Jesus in Rich's life and ask how we could also Walk with the same Jesus - the Author, the Cultivator, the Protector of our faith.

Rich was a sinner, hopeless, but for the cleansing Blood of the Lamb. Up through the end of his time here with us, he continued to strive as Col 3:9-10 says to "***...put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him***".

What we witnessed was the response of Rich and his family in the face of a rapidly developing disease ending in his body's death. How a person faces death, and how those around him respond, can offer a window into the heart, for Jesus explained that "***...those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart...***" (Matt 15:18)

### **So, how did we see the effect of Rich's faith in Jesus?**

Just a few short months ago, Rich arrived to breakfast with an oxygen tank and a new concern. This was the beginning of a rapid journey, and what we saw through it was evidence of his faith in his Lord.

It began with the shocking diagnosis and what it might mean, and Rich quickly shifted to his response as he understood what may lay ahead in transplant recovery or death.

We saw his response as the disease progressed faster than we expected, and his

openness to candid discussions about his circumstance and emotions.

We saw the love shared with his family as he found comfort and joy in their response, in their Walk with Jesus.

Now, Rich too had fears and anxiety. Towards the latter part of this journey, when I asked him how he was feeling emotionally, he told us that he was conscious that every breath was a task, and realized just how great the smallest graces from God actually are. I was later told that when faced with anxiety, Rich responded by singing hymns in Praise for comfort.

My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

We finally saw his faith as he had peace even in the hours before he was taken to surgery. Rich responded to Jesus' care as he knew Him through the Bible and through his experience. Richard was assured of His Savior.

### **These responses point to another reason for our hope and faith.**

We understand that faith must be informed and be based on truth, because faith in anything but God's truth is just folly; it's just wishful thinking. God's truth about Himself and His intentions towards us are reliable. And so, I encourage those belonging to Jesus to take heart. Richard, who we love, now experiences what we here currently hold among God's promises:

We can trust that Rich has joined the "***great cloud of witnesses***" in Heaven who surround us. (**Heb 12:1**) These witnesses are those who are forgiven in Jesus who have gone before us, already waiting in fellowship together.

We know that "***...neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate (Rich) from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.***" (**Rom 8:38-39**). In both life and death, believers are comforted and received by Jesus, and nothing can separate us from Him. Likewise,



**Rom 14:8** tells us “...for if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”

Rich always seemed to strive to live according to the truth.

Rich also believed along with the Apostle Paul who wrote “**For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**” (Phil 1:21), as well as “...in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Tim 4:8)

**Why did Rich have hope? What promise from Jesus would be a basis of his faith in Jesus?**

Perhaps it was Jesus’ words in the Gospel of John: “... **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”** Jesus obviously didn’t mean that Rich’s body would not die, but that Rich’s soul would reside with Jesus, “...not the lake of fire. This is the second death...” (Rev 20:14)

The Bible reads “**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**” (Heb 11:1) This faith in Jesus that Saves us, the faith that the Apostle Paul wrote about, the faith believers like Rich enjoy, offers us a view into God and the spiritual realm that is very much present that we cannot see. Paul likened it to making out some of the details while peering into a dim mirror or glass.

In the presence of Jesus, now that these things are seen, Rich’s faith is fully realized as he sees Jesus face to Face. While here, Rich knew Jesus dimly, but now Rich knows Jesus fully, as Jesus has always known him. (1 Cor 13:12)

**So how does our faith in the realities of Jesus help us when someone we love - who belongs to Jesus - has died?**

Consider this: Is there Joy on Easter morning for the person who loves Jesus? Why? Is it not the joy of Jesus overcoming Death and living again?

Does the reason for that joy, His defeat of death, also offer believers reason for that

same Joy? Shouldn't that Joy also be for those who belong to Jesus, who proceed us?

Our faith informs us that Richard, his eternal soul, is in the presence of our Lord even now. Jesus lives, and He has provided that Richard lives, with Him, as well. And in this, Jesus also comforts us.

**Someone might be wondering: How does Jesus feel when someone He loves dies?**

Do you know what I think is the shortest yet perhaps the most telling verse of the Bible? I believe it is **John 11:35**, "**Jesus wept.**" But what does this say about Jesus, and how does this assure us a measure of comfort?

Jesus arrived four days after His friend Lazarus had died. Lazarus' family and friends were greatly distressed not only in his death, but that Jesus had allowed it to happen. Lazarus' sisters had sent word to Jesus of his sickness, and upon His delayed arrival Martha even said to Him "**Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.**"

There was much sorrow everywhere, and Jesus felt the pain in their loss. He also felt the dismay of those He loved in that they knew He could have prevented it. But in obedience to Father's greater purpose, Jesus allowed Lazarus to die. The Bible tells us that when Lazarus' sisters sent word to Jesus, He said "**This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.**" (**John 11:4**). Jesus knew that His friend Lazarus would be revived, even only to die again, and then to meet Him again in Heaven, because Lazarus believed Jesus when He said "**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**" (**John 14:6**)

Richard has believed as did Lazarus, and has now met Jesus face to Face. But Jesus also understands the pain of death felt by those left behind. Jesus weeps with us, He comforts us, and He rejoices with those who believe Him. His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is here among us even now.

**You see, we have very, very good reason for our hope. (1 Pet 3:5)**

Hope in forgiveness and rescue through Jesus; Hope in a Jesus Who understands and

loves us; Hope in a genuine relationship with our living God; and yes, a defensible hope that our beloved Richard is with Jesus now, awaiting the rest of us who know Jesus.

### **Yes, we can have comfort in Jesus!**

Do we believe God's Word, the Bible? Does our faith inform us we will see Rich again if we personally know Jesus? Do you have faith that informs you that you personally know Jesus? That His Comfort is here for us even now?

Are you a believer, a follower of Christ? Be encouraged, be comforted. Are you not? Hear His offer of forgiveness, believe, and join us, join Richard, be joined to Jesus.

Kid's Church

Socrates: "I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think."

**PRAYER:** I thank you Father, we all thank you, for Richard in our lives, and Yours in his. We thank you that our faith assures us he has been gathered up to you, Jesus. We praise You Jesus for the manifold and tangible evidence of Your Work in Richard's life. We praise you for the impact You've made on Richard, and in turn made on us. We worship You for Your incredibly kind offer to belong to You. Please Lord, have mercy and bring us all to heed Your Call to put our faith in Jesus.

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# **Benware - A Comparison of Contracts and Covenants**

02/04/2025

The differences between a contract and a covenant are vitally important; See why.

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# **Benware - The Distinction Between the Events of the Rapture and the Second Coming**

02/04/2025

The next time Jesus returns for the Church is a very different event than when He appears back to the people of Earth.

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# **Benware - Summarized Chapters, Interpreting Bible Prophecy**

02/04/2025

The download is an abbreviated selection of Benware's Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach. It has been excerpted as a summary review for those who've studied the whole chapters.

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# **Benware: An Overview of Future**

# Events

02/04/2025

Benware's summary of the next and imminent events we wait for. A table of relevant Scripture aligned with the timeline is included at the end.

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## Cheryl King Funeral

02/04/2025

If you knew her, you certainly experienced grace from Cheryl, that echo of God. If you think her huge displays of grace were wonderful, then consider the magnanimous Grace of God in His offer of forgiveness. All you need to do is ask.

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## Benware: Views Concerning The End Times

02/04/2025

An summary excerpt from Dr. Paul Benware's [\*Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach\*](#)

**VIEWS CONCERNING THE END TIMES**

**CATEGORY ONE: Second Coming of Christ**

**AMILLENNIALISM:** Single event; no distinction between Rapture and Second Coming; introduces eternal state

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Single event; no distinction between Rapture and Second Coming; Christ returns after millennium.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Rapture and Second Coming simultaneous; Christ returns to reign on earth.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Second Coming in two phases; Rapture for church; Second Coming to earth seven years later.

### **CATEGORY TWO: Resurrection**

**AMILLENNIALISM:** General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming of Christ.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming of Christ.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Resurrection of believers at beginning of millennium; resurrection of unbelievers at end of millennium.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Distinction in resurrections: • Church at Rapture • Old Testament/tribulation saints at Second Coming • Unbelievers at end of millennium

### **CATEGORY THREE: Judgments**

**AMILLENNIALISM:** General judgment of all people.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** General judgment of all people.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Judgment at Second Coming; judgment at end of tribulation.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Distinction in judgment: • Believers' work at Rapture • Jews/Gentiles at end of tribulation • Unbelievers at end of millennium

### **CATEGORY FOUR: Tribulation**

**AMILLENNIALISM:** Tribulation is experienced in this present age.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Tribulation is experienced in this present age.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Posttrib view: church goes through the future tribulation.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Pretrib view: church is raptured prior to tribulation.

### **CATEGORY FIVE: Millennium**

**AMILLENNIALISM:** No literal millennium on earth after Second Coming; kingdom present in church age.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Present age blends into millennium because of progress of gospel.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Millennium is both present and future. Christ is reigning in heaven; millennium not necessarily 1,000 yrs.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** At Second Coming, Christ inaugurates literal 1,000-year millennium on earth.

### **CATEGORY SIX: Israel and the Church**

**AMILLENNIALISM:** Church is the new Israel, no distinction between Israel and church.

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Church is the new Israel; no distinction between Israel and church.

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** Some distinction between Israel and church; future for Israel, but church is spiritual Israel.

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** Complete distinction between Israel and church; distinct program for each.

### **CATEGORY SEVEN: Adherents**

**AMILLENNIALISM:** L. Berkhof, O. T. Allis, G. C. Berkhouwer

**POSTMILLENNIALISM:** Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, W. G. T. Shedd, A. H. Strong

**HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM:** G. E. Ladd, A. Reese, M. J. Erickson

**DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM:** L. S. Chafer, J. D. Pentecost, C. C. Ryrie, J. F. Walvoord



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# **Understanding End Times Prophecy - Paul Benware Chapter Two, Part One - Contracts and Covenants**

02/04/2025

Since controlling agreements are required to hold autonomous individuals with differing goals and mindsets, it can be supposed there is no reason for Covenants or Contracts within the Godhead. All three Persons are of the same perfect mind.

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# David Cranor, Graveside Funeral

02/04/2025

9/21/20

## **God is Good**

### **Psalm 27.13-14**

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed

That I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage,

And He shall strengthen your heart;

Wait, I say, on the Lord!

## **God is our Protector**

### **Isaiah 41.10**

Fear not, for I am with you;

Be not dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you,

Yes, I will help you,

I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

## **God is our Provider**

### **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

### **Assurance of the Resurrection**

#### **2 Corinthians Chapter 5, Verses 1 - 8**

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

### **Burial Rite**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Almighty God, who has knit together Your elect in one

communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of Your Son Christ our Lord: Grant, we beseech You, to Your whole Church in paradise and on earth, Your light and Your peace. Amen.

Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to newness of life, and that through the grave and gate of death we may pass with Him to our joyful resurrection. Amen.

Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that Your Holy Spirit may lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days. Amen.

Grant to Your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve You with a quiet mind. Amen.

Grant to all who mourn a sure confidence in Your fatherly care, that, casting all their grief on You, they may know the consolation of Your love. Amen.

Give courage and faith to those who are bereaved, that they may have strength to meet the days ahead in the comfort of a reasonable and holy hope, in the joyful expectation of eternal life with those they love. Amen.

Help us, we pray, in the midst of things we cannot understand, to believe and trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life everlasting. Amen.

Grant us grace to entrust David to Your never-failing love; receive him into the arms of Your mercy, and remember him according to the favor which You pour out to Your people. Amen.

Grant that, increasing in knowledge and love of You, he may go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service in Your heavenly kingdom. Amen.

Grant us, with all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, to have our consummation and bliss in Your eternal and everlasting glory, and, with David and all Your saints, to receive the crown of life which You promise to all who share in the victory of Your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Please, All Stand to Pray**

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God our brother David; and we commit his body to the ground;

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless  
him and keep him, the Lord make His face to shine upon him  
and be gracious to him, the Lord lift up His countenance  
upon him and give him peace. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be Your Name,

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind,  
live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

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# **Is Man's sin intended or unintended?**

02/04/2025

Is our sin intended or unintended? I believe it depends on the circumstances.

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## **Thoughts on Avarice**

02/04/2025

Avarice is to withhold and keep such things as thou hast, without rightful need.  
(Chaucer)

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## **On the topic of Atonement**

02/04/2025

Forgiveness must come from that Someone greater than me, or else it is just one thief forgiving his peer.

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# **The sinful Human Heart is a fortress**

02/04/2025

Perhaps we could consider the Human Heart - in its current, 'natural' state - to be a locked up fortress. Only the occupant can unlock the door and open it from the inside.

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## **Listen To Him!**

02/04/2025

In a time of world-wide chaos, are we doing our best to understand God's course, and learn to conduct ourselves as He commands, in concert and Faith? This is no time to be doubting or ignoring God; or mocking His prophets or trusting in chariots and horses.

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## **The Good and Beautiful Life, Chapter 7 - Love Your Enemies, Discussion Questions**

02/04/2025

The Human heart and the motives that proceed from it are powerful. In the Original, right way it was a force of Good that enjoyed the backing of the blessings and

resources of God.

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## **Reside in the Now**

02/04/2025

We do not fear because we live in the now and we focus on what has to be done today to defeat this evil upon us and we have an Anchor.

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## **A Tale of Two Perspectives**

02/04/2025

So, Brother, a tale of two perspectives. Are you, 'Bunker Boy,' stocking your MRE or 'Bunch of Baloney Boy,' taking it easy??

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## **Honing My Faith**

02/04/2025

In a world, gripped by fear, we need to step up and trust Him in trials and demonstrate that God does not relieve us of Challenges.



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# **The Good and Beautiful Life, Chapter 6 - Lying, Discussion Questions**

02/04/2025

Matthew 5:37 - But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

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## **Cover Her with Love**

02/04/2025

The absence of fear is not normal and simple contentment is not natural. Indeed, the Apostle Paul says that contentment is learned. (Philippians 4: 11)

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## **Thoughts in Considering Anger - Expanded**

02/04/2025

Anger is a difficult and potentially confusing topic for followers of Christ. It's especially problematic because, handled incorrectly, we can be unknowingly

committing sin. Anger is largely unavoidable, and in many cases it is right.

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## **A Marred Masterpiece**

02/04/2025

Our self-image, whether a bad one or wrong one, is in His hands and the enemy of self-image, satan, attacks our thoughts, polluting them with notions that deviate from God. The friend of our image, Union with Christ, restores and maintains the masterpiece.

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## **Posture Before God**

02/04/2025

Anything other than what He has said of us to be is a sin against His declaration, and a disservice to us. It disserves us if we run beyond His declarations of our responsibilities and station, and if we lag behind His declarations in self-imposed spiritual poverty.

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## **Is God at Fault for Bad Behavior**

# From His Church?

02/04/2025

A Christian or a Pastor who misrepresent God is in error, and the recipient will have to choose to judge whether the God they describe is fair or is unfair. If we simply accept any representation of the God we have not investigated ourselves, we're likely to be missing out on the most important issue any of us will face. It is always better to judge God first hand, for ourselves.

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# Know Your Place

02/04/2025

Of the difficulties facing society, social media has emerged as one of the main opiates of our vanity. Like anything else, it can be used rightly, but it's wrong exercise breeds all degrees of sin.

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# The Good and Beautiful Life, Chapter 4 - Thoughts in Considering Anger

02/04/2025

Anger is rightly expressed toward that which opposes God, to as far as we are responsible to judge. However, anger expressed outside of our responsibility, or outside of God's expectations, is sin.

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# Headwaters of the Generations

02/04/2025

Christ brought a New Covenant that requires us to die and be reborn in His Line. The only way we can be released of the Law as an Adamic descendant is to be spiritually removed from the original Covenant

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# The Good and Beautiful Life, Chapter 10 - Worry, Discussion Questions

02/04/2025

Worry is a difficult one, because the issues that lay seed to our worry are potent and numerous. The interesting thing about worry, though, is that it is always a concern for the impact of a future event.

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# What is Worry?

02/04/2025

We lack peace if we are afraid of the outcome under the Sovereign God - be it that we don't know what to expect from Him, or are afraid of His response, or believe

that He isn't paying attention.

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# **The Good and Beautiful Life, Chapter 1 - How to Ruin Your Life, Discussion Questions**

02/04/2025

The Holy Spirit is a living person, and He can be known in an increasing degree of intimacy. Since He is a personality, He can never be fully known in a single encounter. - AW Tozer

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# **The Good and Beautiful God Introduction, through beginning of Chapter 1**

02/04/2025

[2017.10.06.TGaBG\\_ReCap\\_Intro\\_Download](#)

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[\*\*The Good and Beautiful God\*\*](#)

Introduction, through beginning of Chapter 1

## Summary

Our new book deals with how we might move into a life of intimacy with Father. We acknowledge (read: Millennia of pondering) that Jesus did this with perfection – but what does this show us? His successful navigation as a Human is a banner for us to learn and follow. Perhaps His chief goal, after Salvation, is to help us understand how to live in the Kingdom of God, now. His reliance upon and trust of the Father He knows was His success – and should be ours as well.

## Key points

**Prelude** We usually strive to do the ‘right thing’ in the eyes of God, but why? The first answer should be to glorify Him, but who can’t say the notion of peace and success isn’t a motivator? Fair enough, because among the promises in the Word are our peace and success. [Matt 6.19-20](#), [Prov 3.3-4](#), [Rom 8.28](#), [Ps 29.11](#), *et al.* As well is our natural desire to avoid the opposite, pain and difficulty. And therein lies the issue – we might reason

1. God is good;
2. He is Sovereign;
3. He says He intends to bless us;
4. Difficulty comes;
5. We scramble to discover what we’ve done wrong, that it would be corrected, and the pain would go away.

## **Confliction about God (or at least what He might do next?)**

If we see things this way, it is not hard to come away confused and conflicted about God. The responses of God of the Old Testament compared to the Father Jesus tells us about can add to the issue. How to reconcile this while acknowledging both reports about God are true and of the same Person? This is what the author addresses by examining what Scripture says of Jesus’ understanding of Father, as He knows Him across

the Old and the New Testaments. Jesus shows us the full and true realities of the Father He knows, understands and trusts.

**Define failure and success** Aside from the 'world' that doesn't belong to God, ask a typical follower of Jesus to define success, and he will rightfully include peace and prosperity. But is this God's economy? Jesus was asked what was most important, and He answered in *Matt 22.36-38*: "*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?*" And he said to him, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. We are also told in Eph 2.10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* Father intends for us to put Him first, and will bring us to do so as He works on us.

When do we tend to draw unto God; in plenty or in need? Father intends us good, but will not suffer

being 2<sup>nd</sup> in our 'hearts'.

And, as mentioned at our meeting, we often find we are left more useful to Him - having a better understanding of Him - after trials test our faith and turn us to Him. Therefore, shall we call our peace success, or is a higher success shown as a deeper reliance upon God that results in true peace?

**Jesus threw in** Jesus fully threw in to the Human condition, except for sin. He navigated life following/relying upon Father through the same means available to us. His success is the Banner we must follow - but how? We must come to see, understand, and trust the Father that Jesus knows. We must grow into His Narrative, and thus our perception - and response to life - comes into line with His. This is how we are made like Him.

By all accounts, we are a lost cause.

Sin has warped us and made our intentions patently against Him. Our eyesight is incapable of seeing the Truth

without His intervention. What seems up is too often down, and vice versa. Enter,

Jesus. Our Savior not only won our

forgiveness, but He graciously demonstrated what life looks like in harmony with and in full reliance upon Father.

Furthermore, He personally attends to our schooling, making us ready to be received and stand perfected before Father on that Great Day.

**Big difficulties = bigger usefulness** We all know mature Followers, those who have better expression of the Spirit's Fruits ([Gal 5.22-23](#)) that show as godliness, wisdom, usefulness to the Body. How do they come to possess this? The answer is through a learned familiarity

with His Word and Its application. It

also hinges on a hands-on history of experience with God Himself, won through the slow process of seeking Him, drawing close, learning dependence - through knowing, understanding, and trusting Him.

And this is all by His design, under His Sovereign care of the very details and circumstances of our lives.

**Can't lead where you haven't gone** So, what might be an excellent use of the life God gives each of us?

Line one of the common Catechism states our Chief Goal is to 'glorify God, and enjoy Him forever'. The Great

Commission ([Matt 28.18-20](#)) includes making disciples and teaching them to observe Christ's

commands. Taken together, an excellent

life involves a more experienced soul helping a less experienced one. Therefore, our job is to cooperate with God's

teaching of us, growing in maturity, and helping others who have yet to embrace more of Him. This is our call to grow,

because who can lead where they haven't gone?



**Narrative is imperative** What we believe – that is, embrace, not simply acknowledge – resides in the ‘heart’. It is from here our actions play out, and is therefore central to who we are.

Scripture is replete with God’s references to our heart. Jesus said in *Matt 15.18a* “*But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart*”. And consider A.W.Tozer’s observation; “*Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question ‘What comes into your mind when you think about God?’ , we might predict with certainty the future of that man.*”

If our narrative is key, then it reasons that we must fight for an improving one. Who better to inform our narrative than the One who knows God best?

Jesus not only went to great lengths to explain Father and the Kingdom, but He also demonstrated the ties to the Old Testament, lived an example, provided the Words for the New Testament, and continues to craft and shape us even today.

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# **The Good and Beautiful God**

## **Chapter 6 - God Is Holy**

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**Chapter 6 - God Is Holy**

## Summary

God's Holiness cannot be underestimated or underemphasized. This (RE)Cap installment will not be an attempt to consider God's Holiness, but instead thoughts on why reconsidering His Holiness is imperative.

It is a mistake to see God's love as the foundation of Who He is, for God's Holiness is the foundation.

Misplacing these two results in a theology very different than His. Compare these two viewpoints:

God's Foundational attribute is love, followed by His Holiness: God intends me to worship Him for His love, to become increasingly loving, and I will escape Hell as a receiver of Christ's standing in love before God. It is through His Holiness that He will bring me to this outcome.

God's Foundational attribute is Holiness, followed by His love: God intends me to worship Him for His Holiness, to become increasingly holy, and I will escape Hell as a receiver of Christ's standing in Holiness before God. It is through His love that He will bring me to this outcome.

At our last meeting, we discussed the Author's approach to God's Holiness, and found his treatment lacking. This month, rather than backfilling his thoughts, let's consider this Bedrock Issue of God and His Person.

## Key points

### **A thought about God's Glory**

If on a warm summer's day, perhaps we could consider that the searing nuclear source of the Sun is like Father God, and the warmth and the Sun's effect is like the Holy Ghost. The One who offers sunscreen, sunglasses through which we may look safely into the Sun,

Who explains the Sun to us and shields us from the destroying radiation if we were to stand right in front of it - is Jesus.

We rightly enjoy the warmth of the Sun and the good it brings. We rightly embrace the loving offer of Jesus and all of the priceless and incredible benefits He offers. What of our pursuit, recognition, worship of God's Holiness? God's Glory, His Holiness, is *the* consuming force behind all things seen and unseen, proceeding and outlasting Creation. If Holiness is central to His Person, how do our priorities compare? What if we ask to enjoy the warmth but not the Sun? What if we focus on the sunglasses or the benefits, but not the Sun? The warming effect, our Friend Jesus, the Sun in the sky - all are to be taken together. Fixating on one at the expense of the Whole is our loss, and it is not what He expects from us.

## **God is Holy**

How much human effort has gone into considering and writing about God's Holiness? Any honest treatment on an attribute of God demands volumes of thought.

In fact, as vast as God is, it can be argued that our efforts to capture a full understanding will fail, as we are mere dust, mere fallen creatures veiled from seeing Him.

"For now we see in a mirror, **dimly**, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."

**(1 Cor 13.12)**

Yet in an effort to understand - which He endorses us to undertake - consider John Piper's definition:

*God's holiness is His infinite value as the absolutely unique, morally perfect, permanent Person that He is and Who by grace made Himself accessible — His infinite value as the absolutely unique, morally perfect, permanent Person that He is.*

Jesus was sent to us as one of us, that we might grasp the enormity of God through a Person Who took on our form. Yet even the God-Human Jesus revealed the brilliance of His Holiness on the Mount as Peter, John and James looked on:

As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. // But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. (**Luke 29.29, 32**)

### **God's greatest Attribute**

God's expression of love is the greatest aspect we currently see, in Christ. According to His Word however, this is not His greatest attribute, but it must be His Holiness - the ultimate seat of His Person. Consider John's reaction to Christ's revealing Himself in John's vision.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this." (**Rev 1.17-19**)

John's reaction is not to Jesus' love, but to His Holiness. Also, consider the four living creatures attending to Father's Throne, who say "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is

and is

to come!” (**Rev 4.8**), and, the twenty-four Elders seated around His Throne, who John observed “And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God”. (Rev 11.16) Jesus shows us the God Who is Love, but this Message of love is built upon the truth that His Love could not be perfect without His underlying Holiness.

Yes, His love is most excellent.

Yet, we err if we conclude His love is the center of the God we are to pursue.

Or do you

presume upon the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? (**Rom 2.4**)

He calls us to repentance to His Holiness. The reason to trust His Person *is* His Holiness. His intent, His ability, His guidance, His grace, His Son, His Salvation, His promises, even His love - all of these rely and rest upon His Holiness.

**We are His Workmanship. He trains us into Holiness.**

As God values the prayers of the Saints, Peter tells us our adherence to His command to be Holy effects His hearing of our prayers. And what of our growth in submission to His Holiness? When do we often find ourselves calling out the most to Him? Christians are pitched into learning to navigate a relentless struggle between our nature of sin and His demand of holiness. Don’t we each soon forget God when we are at ease, then cry to Him again when need arises again?

Remove falsehood

and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches - Feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, “Who is the

Lord?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God. (**Prov 30.8-10**)

If this is true - that we forget God, and that He intends to continue our training in holiness until our time here is done - can we deny His allowance of a steady diet of new challenges specifically tailored to address where He sees we need to grow in Holiness?

We have an endless need to grow in holiness and reverence. Yet our pride, our misconceptions of Him, our fears, our wrong use of reliance upon ourselves and others and objects - all of these He commands against. Our better grasp of His Holiness offers answers to all of these sins. As He sees fit, He crushes and He uplifts - all under His Holy Throttle - to press out our sin and extract the wine of Holy Worship. We cannot afford to not grasp His Holiness, and fortunately, He will not allow it.

We tend to learn more of God's Character when we are pressed into trials that compel us to turn to Him for relief.

Our desire for rescue brings us to consider our sin and His response. His response deepens our understanding of His Character and value.

This better understanding drives our worship further as we realize His Holiness, love and care.

And what is promised to those who overcome, who succumb to the training and overcome sin, embracing holiness?

To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

(Rev 2.7)

He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

(Rev 2.11)

To him who

overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it. (Rev 2.17)

And he who

overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations (Rev 2.26)

He who overcomes

shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Rev 3.5)

He who

overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. (Rev 3.12)

He who overcomes

shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (Rev 21.7)

And this is rooted in pursuing Him and learning holiness through the direction of His Word.

Behold, I set

before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. (**Duet 11.26-28**)

**Shall we sin, neglecting Holiness, so that grace and love abounds?**

God loves us, and we are invited to flee to Him and His rescue through Jesus. Jesus' offer and Work is the means to the end - our journey does not end at the Cross, but instead begins the road to holiness, the road to overcoming sin, free of condemnation for our mistakes and disobedience. He beckons us first to the Cross, and next He says 'Follow Me.'

To loosely quote Spurgeon: Are we no longer accountable to His Standards of Holiness? We under Christ are no longer under His Law, but under grace (Rom 6.13). Jesus said not a jot or tittle would pass away, so the Law remains - but for what? Under the Blood, the punishment for disobedience - death - is quenched, but not the command to follow it, nor the benefits that obedience to Holiness brings. The Law reflecting His Holiness has been shifted from the outside of our rebellious hearts and moved, written on a new heart of flesh desiring to follow Him. The Law is there to become instilled, soaked through, to increasingly become the controlling factor in the believer's heart. It is His living command, the right road to a Holy life. The promise from our Holy Guide 'involves lifelong security: Salvation at once, guidance unto our last hour, and then endless blessedness'.

### **This affects how we view, approach, respond to, and pursue God**

Beware of simply making God's kindness to us as the seat of our Worship, for this aspect of Him is not the source of Who He is. True, this is an essential part of Him, but it is fully and absolutely His Holiness that exceeds all else. The Apostle John, who dwells on God's love extensively, first confirmed of His Holiness, upon which he built his Epistles. For if we rest finally on God's love, and mistake it for His final and defining thought towards us, where



will we be when He rightly decides to correct us? Will we, in the worst of experience, question

Him and Who He is? Will we question His

love, even His existence, if we conclude the outcome He conducts is not

loving? Yet, if we conclude His outcome

is Holy, we stand on firm ground.

Consider Job and how he settled this issue, following his great loss -

he praised God for His Holiness, and as that was the unquestionable basis of

his worship, Job was clear to give thanks to God for both giving and for taking

away. Job valued His Holiness.

“The Lord gave,

and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.” In all this Job did

not sin nor charge God

with wrong. (**Job 1.21a-22**)

This also affects our stance on the teachings and Worship music we sit

under. Are we fed a constant diet of His

kind treatment towards us, or are we exposed to a Biblical proportion of the

High Church sort, of His Glory, Honor, Holiness? Singing week after week about

our woes and

how He loves us is a poor nutrient by itself.

But including the right portion of His unquestionable worth, glory,

majesty keeps us in a right posture towards the unseeable, otherwise

unapproachable God. It is then, knowing

more of our utter lowliness, that we can rightly value Christ in His bridging

this incredible gap.

Jesus left a greater position to stoop down and become flesh. Yes, His Labor at Calvary was magnificent,

His Work pure and sufficient. It was out

of the vault of Father’s Love and Glory that Jesus was sent to us on loan.

Consider too, Jesus’ appearance was normal and typical, “He had no form

or majesty that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him.”

(Isa

**53.2a)** Yet at the

Transfiguration on the Mount, he allowed His burning Glory - His Holiness as God - to be seen. Jesus revealed the core of the true God, a Holy Glory otherwise unbearable without Jesus as our Shield and Reconciliation to the Holy God.

He certainly accomplished the utmost more than any son of man could, because none of us could ever qualify as the sinless Lamb nor bear the burden of the Cross. However, this gargantuan Love cannot be God's greatest attribute. It must be what undergirded His ability to carry out this Task - it must be first His Holiness.

God shows us a Holy God first, followed by holy Love:

"Teacher, which

is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> And he

said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and

with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This

is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a

second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On

these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." - **Matt 22.36-40**

I am

the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of

the house of slavery. You shall have no

other gods before Me. - **Exod 20.2-3**

Honor your

father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that

the Lord your God is giving you. - **Exod 20.12**

Both passages demonstrate the order of Holiness first, followed next by

love. In the Ten Commandments, the first

half are of the Holiness of God, the second half of loving others.

## **The Pendulum Swings?**

Many of us have been exposed to 'Fire and Brimstone' ministers who almost exclusively focus on God's Wrath (attached to His Holiness) and the need to repent. Perhaps we've also been exposed to the 'Love and Grace' ministers who almost exclusively focus on forgiveness and peace (attached to His Love).

For those who have experienced a lopsided diet of either, predictable problems arise - that God is impossible to satisfy and I will likely be lost (heavy on Holiness), or, God winks at my sin and has no expectations whatsoever (heavy on Love). In fact, both halves have truth in God's character, actions and intent. But of course, one half of the ingredients won't make a cake. A Biblically proportioned view of His Holiness - expressed in Love - underlies the entirety of His Word to us.

The obvious solution is a clear representation of the whole truth, as God tells it. Ministries that have taken this tact have predictably flourished. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

But it's not. The Heart is tricky (The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? - **Jer 17.9**); Accordingly, our motives and understanding are flawed (Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. - **Prov 3.5**); It is therefore easy to misrepresent God, Who holds leaders to a high standard (Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is

a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. - **Jas 3.1-2**), and Who takes the issue very seriously (For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. - **Rev 21.18-19**)

Coming off of the recent swing of 'Fire and Brimstone', it is argued that we've fled to the 'Love and Grace' side to appeal to an injured or perhaps more stiff-necked public. Yet, in considering how Jesus would approach this question, we can conclude He would take it on the whole, straight down the middle.

As we read the Gospels, we see that is exactly what He did. Yes, He was killed for it, but none the less,

He accepted Father's driving Holiness to be tantamount, and refused to swerve to the left or the right. Father called this good and accepted His Work.

Thanks and praise to a Holy God, Who loves us relentlessly.