

- THE WORD OF GOD -

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being.

"THIS IS MY BELOVED Son"

And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only

In Whom I Am

Well-pleased (Matt 3:17)

aying, "This word I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me. For of His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (John 1:1-18)

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In the beginning with God
 I have seen God at any time
 who is in the bosom

"THIS IS My BELOVED Son"

In Whom I Am

Well-pleased (Matt 7:17)



The Word of God

“For the Lord will execute His word on the earth, thoroughly and quickly.” (Romans 9:28)

“‘Is not My word like fire?’ declares the Lord, ‘and like a hammer which shatters a rock!’” (Jeremiah 23:29)

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” (John 15:3)

“He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions.” (Psalm 107:20)

“He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.” (John 8:47)

“As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.” (Psalm 18:30)

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” (John 6:63)

“But it is still my consolation, And I rejoice in unsparing pain, That I have not denied the words of the Holy One.” (Job 6:10)

“The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all).” (Acts 10:36)

“O land, land, land, Hear the word of the Lord!” (Jeremiah 22:29)

“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.” (Matthew 7:26)

“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.” (Psalm 33:6)

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.” (Matthew 7:24)

“But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.” (Ezekiel 2:7)

“The words of the Lord are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.” (Psalm 12:6)

“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”’” (Matthew 4:4)

“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book.’” (Jeremiah 30:2)

Jesus Declares His Father

By Nathan Warner

*"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has declared Him.**"*

(John 1:18 NKJV)

"For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure." (John 3:34 NASB)

From the beginning of creation, Jesus has always declared His Father (or explained, or made Him known) – He is the declaration of God's will. As God's Son, Jesus makes known the thoughts, desires, and intentions of His Father.

To declare is "to say or state (something) in an official or public way" (Merriam Webster) and "to announce something clearly, firmly, publicly, or officially" (Oxford Dictionary of the English Language). This is why Jesus is called God's Word. He firmly states the will of His Father publically. Jesus is the spokesperson of the Trinity (someone who speaks for another or a group), and the Holy Spirit is the "breath" of God that carries the Word into all creation. Because Jesus is God's Son, the creation sees and hears God the Father when they see and hear God the Son. This is why Jesus said, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9b), for *"you have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form"* (John 5:37b).

Jesus Declared His Father from the Beginning

Before the New Testament, Jesus was not an unknown spectator in the shadows. From the beginning, He has always declared His Father's will in Words of power. The first recorded Words He spoke caused the creation of the Universe: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without*

Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3 ESV). *"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible"* (Hebrews 11:3 NASB). Jesus officially and publically spoke the commandments of His Father that brought everything into being: *"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light"* (Genesis 1:3). In like manner, Jesus explained thousands of years later, *"The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works"* (John 14:10b).

From creation on, "the Word of the Lord" came mostly to individuals who were instructed to act on the Word or make it known to their fellow man in turn. In this way, the Word of the Lord came to Noah, Abraham, and Moses (to name a few). Just as God let His Son speak for Him, so the Son let men and women of Faith speak for Him, officially declaring the Father's will to the nations. Over a thousand times in the Old Testament, "the Word of the Lord" came to someone, or the Lord "declared" something to mankind through a Prophet who declared, "Thus says the Lord" to their neighbors. Each and every time, the Words that were delivered were made known by Jesus on His Father's behalf, and the Prophets wrote the Words down by the will of God, guided by His Spirit, so there would be a permanent record of God's declarations. But the Father was going to use His Son in a new way to declare His will.

Jesus Declared His Father in the Flesh

In the fullness of time, the Father sent His Son and spokesperson physically to earth, to declare His will in person. *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). Now God would declare more about His nature and character in the life lived by His Son as a man in the world. Jesus came to preach the Good News of reconciliation to His Father through His own death and resurrection.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19a). Everywhere Jesus went and whomever He was with, "He was speaking the Word to them" (Mark 4:33b). These Words were not lost, nor just for the hearers in Israel, for just before He went to the cross, Jesus told His disciples, "the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:26). "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27).

Believers Declare Jesus in Turn

The Words Jesus declared on earth, would be written down as Scripture by the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, just as the Old Testament declarations were, so that there would be an eternal record of God's will to mankind: *"Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth*

which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, but at the proper time manifested, even His Word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior" (Titus 1:1-3). God "has committed to us the Word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19b). Just as Jesus declares His Father's will, we are entrusted to declare Jesus' Word to the world. Therefore, we are to "preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction[...]be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:2&5).

The Holy Spirit Breathes the Word

But Believers today cannot literally hear Jesus speaking, like the Apostles could. Speech is much more effective at conveying meaning than written words. So have we lost the meaning of the Word? Absolutely not! *"For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). God's written Word, the Scriptures, can be "heard" and understood, through the inspiration (or breath) of the Holy Spirit as Christ's mind in you. Elihu rebuked Job's friends rightly when he observed, "I said, 'Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.' But it is the Spirit in man, the*

COMMIT WHATEVER GRIEVES THEE
INTO THE GRACIOUS HANDS
OF HIM WHO NEVER LEAVES THEE
WHO HEAVEN AND EARTH COMMANDS
WHO POINTS THE CLOUDS THEIR COURSES,
WHOM WINDS AND WAVES OBEY,
HE WILL DIRECT THY FOOTSTEPS
AND FIND FOR THEE A WAY.

--PAUL GERHARDT, GERMAN HYMNIST

Ginny Larsen

By Ginny Larsen

Love the Lord
your God with All
your Heart



breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand" (Job 32:7-8 ESV). When it comes to God's Word, it is not education or experience that makes us understand but the Holy Spirit of God. We see in God's Word that breath most often signifies life from God, and *"all Scripture is inspired [God-breathed] by God"* (2 Timothy 3:16a). God's Spirit breathed His Life-giving Word into the Prophets and Apostles to write it in the Scriptures, just as He breathes it to Life from the Scriptures into Believers by His Spirit.

Just so, you must be "in Christ" to have understanding of His Word: *"by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God"* (1 Cor. 1:30a). Jesus told the Pharisees: ***"He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God"*** (John 8:47). He spoke this to the teachers of the Scriptures, who read them daily, but they could not "hear" the Words of God, because they were not "of God." You must "be of God" to "hear the Word of God." This means you have His Spirit in you – you are born-again, changed into a new creation by the Holy Spirit through the Salvation in Jesus Christ: *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches"* (Revelation 2:29). Anyone can read the Scriptures, but without the Spirit of God they cannot understand it. This is why *"the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Jesus promised the Spirit to His disciples: *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you"* (John 16:13-15). Jesus declares His Father's Word and the Holy Spirit breathes the Word to Life in those who know Jesus.

Jesus Reveals God Intimately to the Church

"The Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word that was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:25). Jesus has been, is, and always will be God's revelation of Himself to all creation. Through Jesus, God reveals Himself more and more intimately to mankind.

Through Christ's atonement, the Believer is adopted as a son of the Father, *"born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God"* (1 Peter 1:23). *"Beloved, NOW we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we WILL be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is"* (1 John 3:2).

Yes, God will reveal Himself even more to us in Jesus. Now we are betrothed to Jesus as His Bride (the Church), *"so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word"* (Ephesians 5:26). But we are physically apart from Jesus until He comes to take His Bride away to her heavenly wedding (Revelation 19:7) when we will see Him face-to-face and never leave His side, *"and so we shall always be with the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 4:17b). We will know the Word of God intimately and become one with Him, even as we are spiritually one with Him now. Jesus prayed, *"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me"* (John 17:22-23). *"By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit"* (1 John 4:13), for *"the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him"* (1 Cor. 6:17).

Therefore, while we watch for our Lord's return for us, *"let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God"* (Colossians 3:16). Even so, amen.

The Word and the Holy Spirit

By Betty Harstad

After I became saved, I began to learn that it was the Holy Spirit Who illuminated the Word to me. Used as an adjective, the word **illuminating** means to “help to clarify or explain (a subject or matter): *a most illuminating discussion*” (New Oxford American Dictionary). The Scripture revealed to me that I had no righteousness of my own. Upon believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the righteousness needed for salvation was imputed to me by the Holy Spirit. I continued to read Scripture over and over as I begin to understand that it would reveal more glorious truth pertaining to me as a new Believer in Christ.

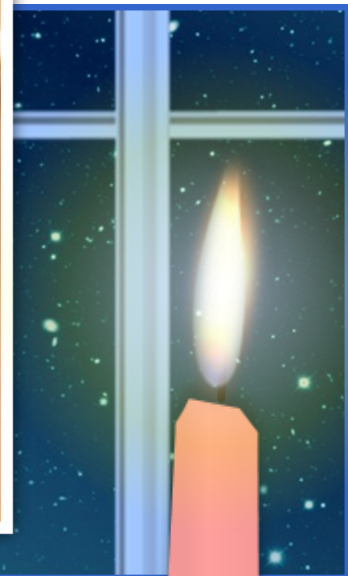
The Lord led me to John 14-16 to see what the Holy Spirit indwelling within us would mean after becoming new creations by believing in the Gospel. There is too much in those chapters for me to relay, but we should all take the time to read those chapters, especially whenever we get bogged down in miry clay.

So how do these chapters relate in bearing

the fruit that God requires? Are we to write down rules for ourselves to look at each day expecting to fulfill them in our own strength? Do we form accountability groups to spur one another along? Do we pray for a miracle so that we will “automatically” bear fruit? No, I came to believe that the Holy Spirit will sanctify us as we apply Scripture for cleansing and sanctification: *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you”* (John 14:15-18 NASB).

“Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 ASV). Do you need peace? Courage? Direction? Look to the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit Who always glorifies Jesus Christ.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said



By Ginny Larsen

to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:26-27 NASB).

As we linger in this Word, we learn to know and to expect that it is the Holy Spirit, Who works the changes in our hearts and gives us the power to bear good fruit. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof” (Galatians 5:22-24).*

We see in the New Testament that after Christ’s death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit did bring to remembrance all that Jesus Christ spoke while on earth. The Apostles began to preach the Gospel to Jews and later to Gentiles. Several also wrote the Word down so we all could read, ponder, believe, and bear fruit through the Holy Spirit. We are inspired to bring the Gospel to others as the Holy Spirit directs us in Scripture. We are encouraged to ask God for sinful hearts to be opened and to be made ready and eager to hear and believe the Word. We see in His Word that we may safely trust and follow Jesus Christ wherever He leads us.

“I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you” (John 16:12-15).

Looking in the Mirror

By Ginny Larsen

The first thing in the morning I usually do after I get up is to look into the mirror and see what I need to deal with for the day to prepare my outward appearance in a way that I will be able to present myself to the Lord for His service and to others who have to spend any time with me. Sometimes when I get up it looks pretty challenging! The damage of the night is evident! I can choose to ignore what I see and just walk away from that mirror as I am and say, “Who cares?” I don’t want to bother with it, but that is pretty disrespectful to both God and those I am in contact with. Or I can say to myself, “I belong to the Lord and I am to love others as I love myself, so I need to present myself as I perceive the Lord and others would have me best do to bless them.”

There is another kind of mirror that is a mirror of our soul that we have been given. It is the Word of God. It shows us the hidden things of the heart when we look into it, if we do so honestly in humility before God. We can treat that mirror view of our hearts in many different ways as we look at the reflection we see there. *“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:12-13).* *“Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing” (James 1:21-25).*

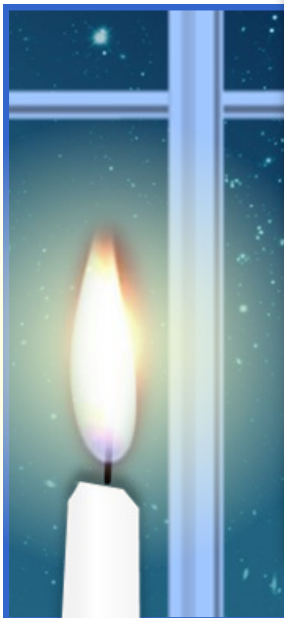
Ancient mirrors were made of polished

brass or other metals; they were not clear and gave a dim image to the one who looked into it. Just so, we only see all that God has for us in eternity very dimly, as a dim image of what is to come. We don't see everything perfectly, though His Word gives us all we need at this time for life and godliness. But when that day comes that we are standing before Him and receiving our full redemption, we will then know fully, just as we are even now fully known by Him. What a glorious day that will be! We will have been perfectly conformed to that perfect image of the Son! This is even now what the Lord is doing and what He has called us to: to be conformed to the image of His Son. Everything that comes into the life of a believer is to that purpose. *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers"* (Romans 8:28-29).

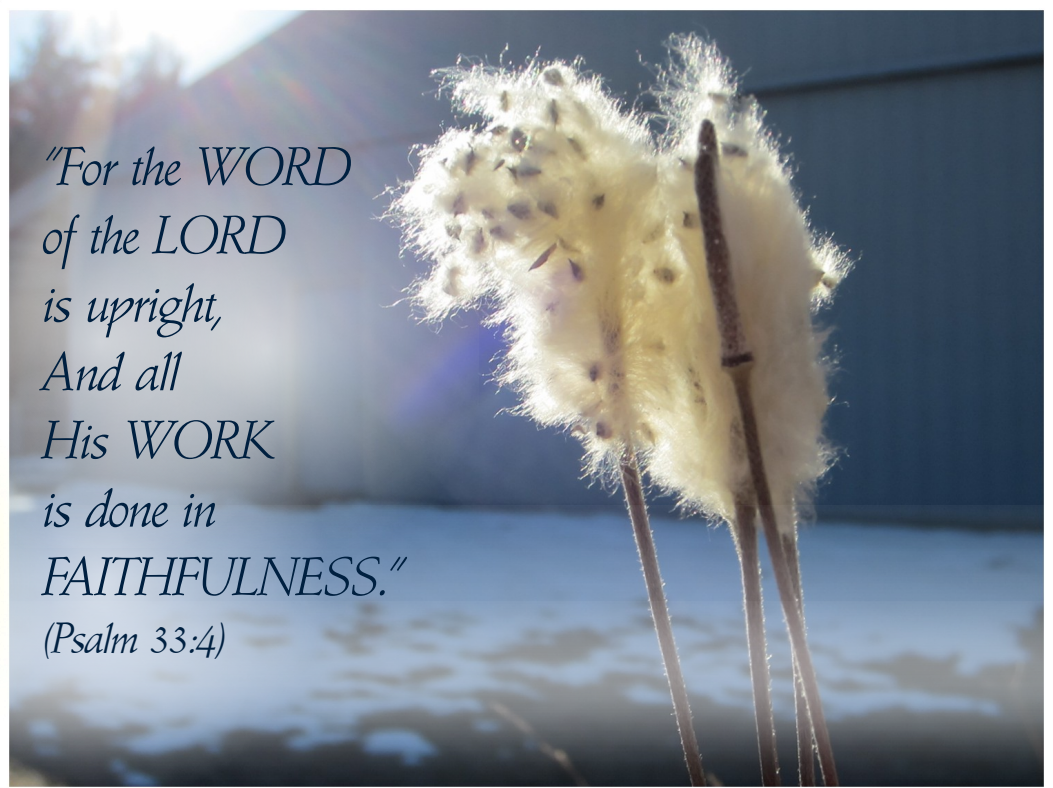
But He gives us the mirror of His Word that we might look into it each day in order for that work of being made into His image to be done. It both shows us His image that we are to walk more and more according to

and which we are being made into. It also shows us an image of ourselves, which tells us how far from His image we have come. It exposes the hidden things of our hearts and contrasts our sinful nature to His perfect divine nature. As we gaze more and more into that perfect reflection of Who He is, we begin more and more to walk by faith according to that, and it is more and more reflected in our lives.

But as James says in James 1:24-25 above, we can also walk away and forget what we've seen and be hearers of the Word but not doers. The Lord has been showing me lately even as I perceived myself as a "doer" of the Word, that there are many ways I need to newly apply that Word to my daily life that I've overlooked in reading it, as I face a new challenge and a new trial in my life. Sometimes the road ahead seems impossible, and we don't want to face it. We want to just look away, hope it isn't true, and hope it will not be something we have to truly face. But as the plaque I have on my living room wall says, "If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it." Just as in past trials, I have gone to the Word to find my strength and comfort and counsel, I must now



*"For the WORD
of the LORD
is upright,
And all
His WORK
is done in
FAITHFULNESS."
(Psalm 33:4)*



as well face this challenge, be obedient to the Word, apply it in every aspect to my life in faith, and trust the Lord, even as I feel I do not have what it takes to do so or the strength to do so. To me it seems impossible, but with God all things are possible, and **He** makes the way. The Word is not only my mirror, but it is my road map, my counsel, my guide on the path that the Lord already has prepared for me to lead me through this “red sea” I must face, even as I trust Him alone to part the waters and lead me through it. As I read it, I am convicted of my lack as well as His provision, and I am strengthened in faith to act on it.

One small example happened to me as I was reading Romans 12:12 recently, which I have made my verse for the day to memorize and hopefully practice more each day: *“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”* I am also focused on the next verse: *“Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord”* (Romans 12:11).

We “serve” the Lord by our faith in His Word which brings obedience. Through these little verses, I saw so many ways I was letting my flesh overcome in me and cause me to be ineffective in big things as well as little things daily. I looked up the word “slothful” as well as “fervent.” Lately I have been more weary than usual, and it is so easy for me when I am weary, both physically and emotionally, to be slothful in putting off doing things that need doing spiritually, in prayer for others, or in doing things for my own family. The anxiety of being overwhelmed and weary causes me to procrastinate or even to neglect doing certain things, and the weariness is the opposite of being “fervent.” I can let the foreboding of life ahead take away all the energy for life now today and let it rob me of joy as well as strength.

I read these things thinking I need to be a “doer” of the Word, not just read it, agreeing, but then forgetting to practice. I need to rejoice **in hope**, as it is a command of the Lord as well as something I can trust in – that I do indeed have hope in the Lord and promise for the future. The Lord is pointing out to me daily where I need to “practice,” “apply,” and

be a “doer” and not just a reader! So, I need to be **trusting Him** to make me aware throughout the day, as I go along, as that’s when it’s easy to forget. Sometimes when trials and challenges come, it quickens us to the need to be more of a doer, a “practicer” of each of the things we read in His Word that otherwise may just escape our notice.

Fervent from Vine’s NT: C. Verb. zeo (G2204), “to be hot, to boil” (Eng. “zeal” is akin), is metaphorically used of “fervency” of spirit, Act_18:25; Rom_12:11.

This is so opposite of weariness of spirit! I cannot let myself grow “weary in well-doing.” No wonder Paul said to *“rejoice always; again I say, Rejoice”* (Philippians 4:4)! His joy is our strength, and when we allow depression over our circumstances to set in (and who had more reason to be depressed than Paul?) then it robs our strength. We need to present ourselves to Christ as a living sacrifice and look to Him, knowing He lives in us as Believers, and that “I’ve been crucified with Him and risen with Him and the life I now live I live by faith in Him.” I can by faith put on Christ and trust in His resurrection power in me. My eyes will have to be on Him as He daily continues to conform me to that image. If I tried to overcome in myself and with my eyes on me, I would faint in despair! I would only become more weary! But as I look into that perfect image of Christ in His Word, that Word works in me to conform me to His image even as the Spirit He has given me takes that Word in power and makes it effective in me.

I can rejoice in hope because that hope is very, very real – a real and living hope! It is a sure hope. I will see the glory of the Lord in all He allows or brings into my life. His Word is powerful and effective to bring about all that He purposes it to. What a joy that we are called according to that purpose and are being made into His image through it! What a loss if I fail to trust it, agree with it, and obey it!

Written For Our Instruction

By Jane Titrud

Something I have come to appreciate about the Word of God over the years is that it contains multiple layers of revelation, all of which work together for our instruction. These layers are one reason a person can spend a lifetime studying God's Word and never quite comprehend it all.

Take the first book of the Bible. Genesis contains details about the creation of the universe and the early history of mankind which could never be known apart from special revelation. Yet, it only offers a few such details. It does not tell us everything we might like to know, for example, about the creation of the stars, galaxies, and far reaches of the universe. Much more is written here about the origin of man than the creation of the starry heavens. But even at that, Genesis only provides a select history with respect to mankind as well. It tells us about the creation of the first man and woman, the origin of marriage, the fall of man, the multiplication of evil on earth, Noah's flood, the scattering of peoples over the earth, and God's promises to the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, a lot of extraneous information is obviously left out. That is because what has been revealed here was given for the purpose of teaching truth. That is, it was written for our instruction. It was never meant to just satisfy man's curiosity about the beginning. Genesis provides important background information necessary for understanding man's problem and God's solution. But it is much more than just a listing of facts.

Written in story form, Genesis tells us about real people and historical events that happened long before the Law was given to Moses. Some of the people mentioned here believed God and followed Him during particularly dark periods in human history. Enoch, for instance, walked with God, and God took him (Genesis 5:24). Noah likewise believed God and, by faith, built an ark to save himself and

his family from coming judgment (Genesis 6:5–22). But, one can clearly see that by Noah's day the world had already become so engulfed in violence and the wickedness of men that God had to destroy the world by sending a worldwide flood. In other words, the fall of man and the resulting sin had already become a tremendous problem for humanity. Left to himself, man would destroy himself completely. Thus, God had to intervene in order to save His creation. He did this by choosing to work through the faith of Abraham to bring blessing and salvation to the world (Genesis 12:1–3). This is the basis of the Gospel of grace through faith that we believe and teach today. Of course, the Gospel is explained in much greater detail in the New Testament. Nevertheless, the writers of the New Testament were able to draw upon the revealing stories in Genesis in order to establish and confirm the Gospel. The following excerpt from Romans 4, as it pertains to Abraham, is especially revealing with regards to the subject at hand: *"Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore also IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead"* (Romans 4:20–24 NASB).

Amidst the facts and stories provided in Genesis, another layer of revelation exists here as well. That is, some of the details recorded in Genesis have a hidden significance beyond just themselves. This level of revelation exists in the form of "types and shadows." Types, for instance, are Old Testament phenomena that can involve people, objects, facts, or events that actually existed and had meaning within their own timeframe but which also refer to some aspect of future truth. Most types and shadows either foreshadow something about Christ or some element of the Gospel. Since they prefigure things in the future, such phenomena constitute a form of prophecy.

Yet, their hidden nature means they were generally not recognized for what they were during the Old Testament time period. Most Jews still do not recognize them because they are primarily revealed and explained via New Testament revelation, and most Jews do not accept the New Testament.

A good example of the phenomenon of “types” is the fact that Adam was a type of Christ. We know this because the Apostle Paul called Adam the “first man” and referred to Christ as the “last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45–47). In addition, the New Testament seems to indicate that Adam was given a special representative headship over the entire human race similar to that of Christ. This is explained in Romans 5 where Paul talks about original sin and the resulting death that spread to all mankind: *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come”* (Romans 5:12–14). In other words, people died even before the Law was given to Moses because when Adam sinned, he was acting on behalf of the entire human race—that is, “all sinned” *in Adam* (v. 12). But, when Christ died on the cross, He too was acting on behalf of the entire human race. Thus, there is a correlation here, albeit in a negative sense. Paul explained this when he went on to compare the result of Adam’s one transgression with what Christ accomplished in His one act of righteous on the cross: *“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men”* (Romans 5:18). This correlation is at least part of what makes Adam a “type of Him who was to come” (v. 14).

“Types and shadows” are not limited to the Book of Genesis. It is just that Genesis is particularly rich in them. Hebrews 11, for instance, explains that: *“By faith Abraham,*

when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, ‘IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.’ He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type” (Hebrews 11:17–19). Thus we see yet another example of typology in Genesis. Hebrews 11:17–19 implies that the story found in Genesis 22, about Abraham offering up his son Isaac, is ultimately a foreshadowing of the future sacrifice, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In particular, when Isaac was given back to his father alive, he became a type or foreshadowing of the resurrection of Christ.

I find these phenomena particularly fascinating in the way they underscore the fact that the Bible is truly the Word of God. Just think, “types and shadows” were incorporated into the Old Testament by writers who did not even recognize their existence at the time of their writing. Since they were not explained until the New Testament, they could hardly have been the invention of men. Indeed, just how would one go about trying to fake something one could not even perceive?

Of course, direct prophecy occurs in the Bible as well and is yet another form of revelation. There are two basic kinds of prophecy: 1) speaking *forth* from God and 2) *foretelling* future events. The fact that prophets spoke forth from God is how we got the Bible in the first place (2 Peter 1:20–21). And as far as foretelling goes, this basically tells people what to expect. There are over 300 Old Testament prophecies, for example, that pertain to the first advent of Christ alone, and some of these are remarkably detailed. Their fulfillment proves that Jesus is the Christ. Similarly, prophecies pertaining to the Second Coming and end-time events teach us what to expect.

Other layers of revelation concern the multiple ways God instructs His people about the requirement of holiness throughout His Word. God, for example, used His people Israel to reveal His righteous requirements by giving them the Law of Moses (see Deuteronomy 4:5–8). This Law included commandments, ordi-

nances, and statutes, which were intended to reveal God's will, define sin, and specify what was required for man to approach a holy God. Yet, He also used the Israelites themselves to illustrate the tendencies of man's fallen heart to rebel against God. Hence, the Word teaches by example and not just by written law. Indeed, Paul tells us that the Old Testament example of the Jews is still meant to teach us today: *"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come"* (1 Corinthians 10:11). Obviously, God's intention here is that we learn from the mistakes of the Jews so as not to repeat them.

Finally, the revelations of God through Jesus Christ as recorded in His Word make up especially important layers of revelation. For one thing, certain facts about the person and work of Jesus Christ are absolutely vital to achieving a proper understanding of the gospel. But the nature of Christ and His teachings are important as well in that they communicate the true nature of God unto man. I believe this is one reason why Jesus Christ is called "the Word" in the Gospel of John (John 1:1&14a). Ordinarily,

words exist for the sake of communication, and the same is true with respect to Jesus Christ: *"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature"* (Hebrews 1:1–3a). See also John 14:6–10 where Jesus said to Philip, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* (v. 9)

"Your WORD is a LAMP to my feet And a LIGHT to my path."

(Psalm 119:105)



The example of Christ is yet another level of revelation. It teaches us how to live and be like Him: *"Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, 'THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED THEE FELL UPON ME.' For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Jesus Christ; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God"* (Romans 15:2-7). The point here is that we cannot just live for ourselves if we claim to belong to Christ. Living the Christian life is not always easy. We are not to condone sin or falsehood. Yet, we must sometimes endure the reproaches of others, as did Christ, and exercise love and patience if we are ever to be of the same mind with one another.

The example of Christ moreover encourages us with respect to the endurance it takes to "run the race" of salvation successfully. We have the example and witness of multiple believers in God who preceded us as well. Hebrews 11 lists several champions of the faith. But in Hebrews 12, Jesus is said to be the "author and perfecter of faith" (v. 2): *"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin"* (Hebrews 12:1-4). *"Therefore, strengthen the hands that are*

weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" (vv. 12-14).

Everything Christ did He did by faith and the power of the Spirit. When Hebrews 12:2 refers to Christ as the "author and perfecter of faith," the context shows that this is referring to His example. The word "author" is used here in the sense of Christ being our "leader" in that He demonstrated the kind of faith we are expected to exhibit as well. When we actually do follow His example, faith is "perfected" in us because it produces fruit of the Spirit.

This is not an exhaustive list of the multiple layers of revelation that exist in the Word of God. Nevertheless, those cited show the great wisdom and foresight of God in repeatedly instructing and guiding us towards a full understanding of His truth.



Rejection of Biblical Inerrancy Equals All Kinds of Heresy

By Jesse Larsen

I want to start out this article by stating I am well aware of the fact that defending the Bible as a full authority is an unpopular position today. However, the fact that it is so unpopular brings me to remember something that Jesus Himself said about the way which leads to life: He said that it is a **narrow way**, and that there are **few** who find it (see Matthew 7:13-14 and Luke 13:23-24). Since Matthew 7:13 also says that the broad way leads to destruction, and there are **many** who go in by it, I think this is a pretty good indication that the popular position of rejecting Biblical inerrancy is overrated. Just because the majority believes a lie does not make it true, but it just confirms the Bible's claim that mankind has a deceitful heart (See Jeremiah 17:9-10). And I think it is safe to say that the majority believes that the Bible is not infallible. With all of this being the case, it is no wonder that the Bible warned us twice that *"there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death"* (Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:25).

Among the popular positions which deny the Bible's inerrancy, one view is that the Bible merely contains God's Word but is not entirely His word. For someone to hold that position after reading through the Bible, they would have to reject the Bible's **claim** to be fully inspired by God in the following passage: *"**All Scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped** for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

I have decided to write this article mainly to explain why rejecting the above passage is a very serious error which often leads to even more error. First of all, since we do have a deceitful nature (as I noted earlier in this article), it is not up to us to decide what is inspired by God and what is not. One person that I de-

bated this with said, "God doesn't need a book to guide us," but I never once said that He does. This person was simply missing the point. What I am saying here is not about what God needs but about what He wants. I believe that God could speak to us with an audible voice whenever He wanted to (would we really believe that it is Him though?), but He has made it clear through the above passage that He has chosen to communicate to us through written words. It is rather significant that He chooses words to bring us to faith in Him, as the following passage indicates: *"faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17). One reason it is so important to understand that is because we are *"born again...through the word of God"* (1 Peter 1:23). We are not born again by emotional experiences or by what seems right to man but by the word of God.

Many people today mistake what seems right to them as "hearing from God," but He has made it clear through the above passages that He brings us to faith in Him through words. Just like with any person, you cannot know God without knowing the words that have come directly from His mind. To suggest otherwise only makes things more complicated than they need to be, and it may leave some people embracing the post-modernism that is found in the Emerging Church because of the uncertainty of whether or not they are truly hearing from God regarding certain issues. However, once someone believes that 2 Timothy 3:16-17 is true, there is no longer a basis for them to believe in post-modernism, because it removes any uncertainty of whether or not certain passages are inspired by God. In that case, the view that passages are inspired by God is no longer based on human opinion or speculation. For God to leave us with a book that **claims** to be fully inspired by Him but is only partially inspired by Him would leave us in a state of confusion and uncertainty. Can you think of any logical reason why He would do that, since He is *"not the author of confusion"* (1 Corinthians 14:33a)? I certainly can't. But I find it very telling that those who deny the Bible's **full** authority often

embrace many other false teachings as well. The Emerging Church movement is just one example of that. Another example of that is the Seventh Day Adventists.

A friend that I had who broke contact with me this year has recently started to deny the Bible's full authority. Around the same time, she also started to believe the doctrine of Annihilationism, and both of those views happen to be held by Seventh Day Adventists (although I am not sure how much of their views she has bought into). While apparently believing herself to be more spiritual than she was before embracing these views, I only started to see a pride in her words that I had never seen before. It seemed like she no longer cared about what I had to say at that point, because she was not listening like she did back when we first met (in 2006), and I just started to see a cult mentality in her that she did not have before embracing these views. I wanted to end a discus-

sion that we were having about the new views she embraced after it became clear that she was not listening, so I tried to make it clear that I was concerned about a prolonged discussion of the subject driving a wedge between me and her. But she just got defensive, missed the point of why I wanted to end the discussion, and broke contact with me. Her final response was not exactly nasty, but the defensiveness of it just made me feel like she only cared about getting the last word at that point, even though I was no longer trying to argue with her. She seemed to think I was, but that only made it obvious that she was still not listening at that point.

I am sharing this experience because it was a reminder to me of how deceitful our hearts can be when we turn from **fully** relying on the



If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (John 13:17)

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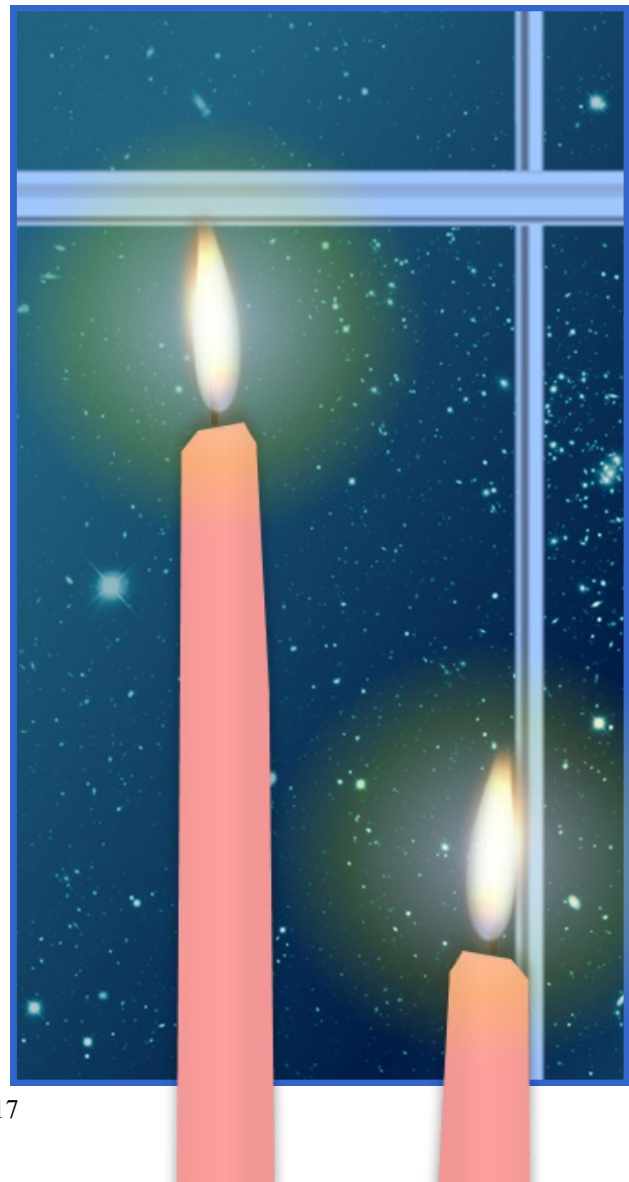
By Ginny Larsen

light of God's Word to expose what is really in them. That is something that I continually need myself. I am certain of that since I was very deceived until God's Word revealed what was truly in my heart. Since then, His Word has continually revealed hidden selfish motives in my heart that I did not know were there, and they are motives that I am sure I never would have discovered without His Word speaking to me. I would have gone on remaining prideful **without even realizing that pride is my true motive.** So please understand that I am not sharing any of this to exalt myself but to point people to the true power of God's Word, and its distinction from what seems right to us.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your **own understanding**; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."* There is a huge difference between trusting in the Lord and trusting in a feeling that certain teachings are from Him. This is why the next verse says, *"Do not be wise in your own eyes"* (Proverbs 3:7). For those who believe that the Bible merely contains God's Word, they are left to their **own understanding** to figure out which passages are inspired by God and which ones are not, and I believe that is one example of being wise in your own eyes. Whether or not people realize it, the popular view, which implies that it is up to us to figure out what is inspired by God and what is not, is exactly what the above Proverbs warned against.

I have given some examples of how rejection of Biblical inerrancy leads to more heresy (such as the Emerging Church Movement and the SDA teachings), and I hope it is now clear why it leads to more heresy. It is because it leaves us leaning on our own understanding. When we are leaning on our own understanding, it is very likely that heresy and erroneous judgment will be the result, and that is why this rejection of Biblical inerrancy is not something to be taken lightly. I have seen over and over how rejection of the Bible's full authority is embraced by those who embrace many other heresies, seemingly as the result of rejecting the Bible's full authority.

When 2 Timothy 3:16-17 claimed that **all** Scripture was given by inspiration of God, it also stated *"that the man of God may be **complete**, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* So this is not an issue that I am raising for my own person gain but for the gain of others. The fact of the matter is that people will not be *"complete"* and *"thoroughly equipped for every good work"* if they reject any part of what God has given them for that purpose. If someone thinks that there are certain passages of the Bible that are contrary to God's nature, then it simply means that it is **their understanding** of those passages that is contrary to His nature. It means that they need to trust God to reveal what it is saying rather than leaning on their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-7).



Sand Dollars

*The winter I walked along the coast
The waves left shallow pools of shells and rocks
Where the sand and saltwater meet
So I left my bicycle in the sand and rolled up my pants
And walked from one tidal pool to another
Watching and listening to the rumbling waves*

But soon my attention was on the quest for sand-dollars

*I wanted to find sand-dollars for friends
Because imprinted on them is a sign of God
(just one) for His eternal power and divinity
Have been seen since the creation of the world
Being understood through what has been made*

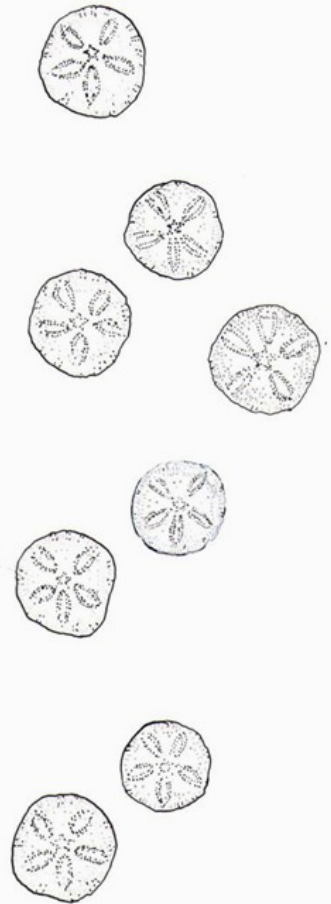
*Even so is the coming of Jesus understood
For clearly seen are the preparations
Both the world and His Bride are making
For His appearance to the children of men*

*Suddenly, I looked up in alarm
For I was thigh deep in a high wave
And drenched in the fine spray*

*Let us watch and listen
So that we are not alarmed or suddenly overwhelmed
By ignoring the waves that appear
While we are busily searching for sand-dollars*

*Our treasures are stored for us in Heaven
And Jesus Christ is coming to take us there*

Amen.



**March/April Newsletter Theme—
THE MILLENIUM
Submission Deadline: March 27
Publish Date: April 5**

The Millennium...

- What is the Millennium?
- What causes the Millennium?
- What will happen during the Millennium?
- What will the Church be doing?
- How does the Millennium end?

Verses on The Millennium (from the NASB version)

Revelation 20:4 — *“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”*

Isaiah 11:1-9 — *“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”*

Revelation 20:7 — *“When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison.”*

Further Out—May/Jun 2016: THE RAPTURE