

Truth

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6b)



"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." (3 John 1:4)



The Berean Lamp
For the Body of Christ.

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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller





The Way of Truth

By Scott Moller

*“I have chosen the way of **truth**;
I have set my heart on your laws.”*
(Psalm 119:30 NIV)

In the Book of Judges, we are told, “Another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel” (2:10b). Furthermore, it was described as a time when “everyone did as he saw fit” (21:25) or, as the King James Version puts it, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” It would appear that we too find ourselves living in such a time.

Because that generation did not know the Lord, they did not know truth, for to know the Lord is to know truth. In fact, to know the Lord is to embrace truth – to love truth. Several times through the Scriptures, God gives Himself the title “God of Truth.” Jesus states in John 14:6: “I am the way and **the truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Apart from the Lord, there is no truth.

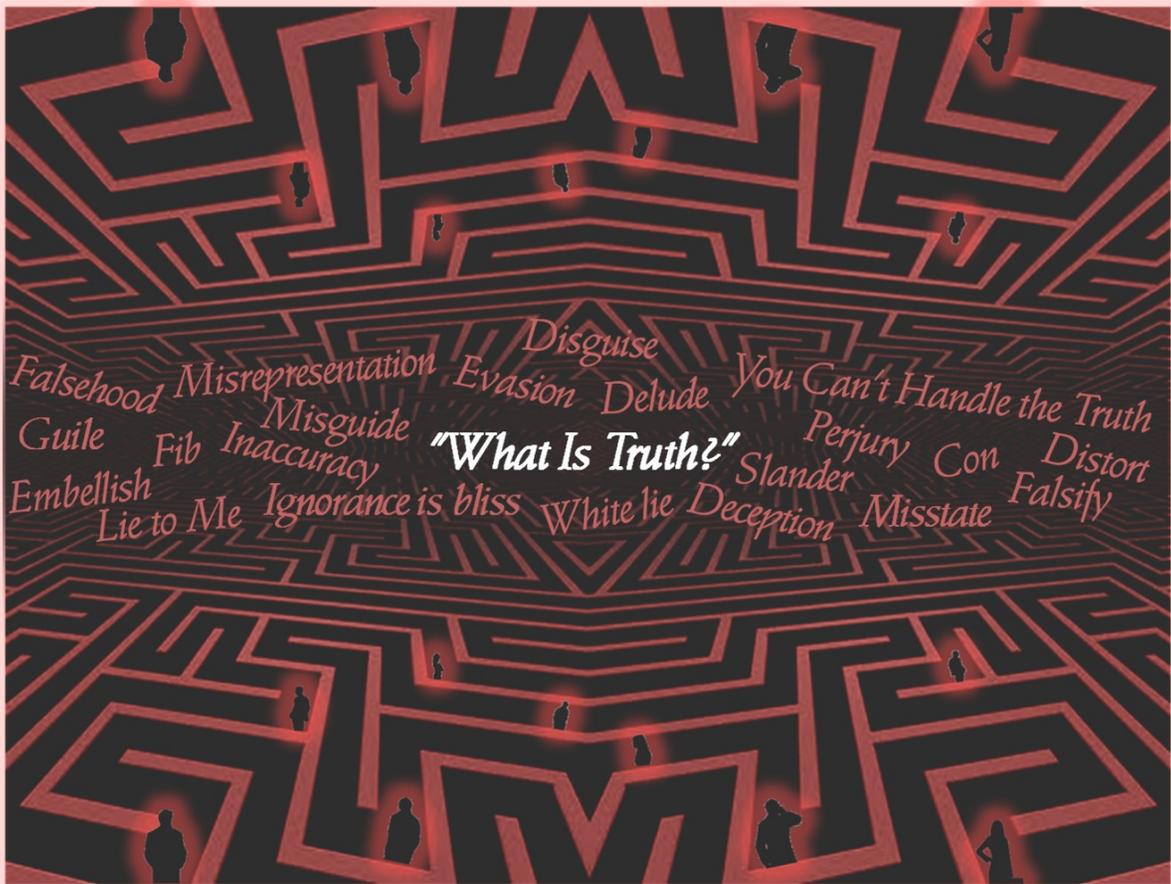
Sadly, we live in an age where the truth of God is being systematically removed from our way of thought and society. This should not surprise us, given the tactics of our ancient foe, Satan. Way back in the Garden of Eden with Eve, Satan began his first encounter with mankind with the words “Did God really say ...?” (Genesis 3:1) From the very beginning, Satan has been attempting to lead mankind away from truth. It is understandable why Jesus described Satan as the father of lies (John 8:44).

It may be expected that the world at large has grown cold towards truth, but it is outright distressing how the Church itself has drifted from the truth. The Apostle Paul warned us of this in 2 Timothy chapters 3 and 4. Paul begins this section of Scripture with this warning:

“But mark this; There will be terrible times in the last days” (3:1). He goes on to describe this generation in the following ways: “[They] will be...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power” (3:4b-5a) and they will be “always learning but never able to acknowledge the **truth**” (3:7). He goes on to say, “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the **truth** and turn aside to myths” (4:3-4). When men will not put up with sound doctrine, they will not put up with truth.

Many of us are grieved as we see these things taking place around us, but we do not need to be overwhelmed. Great men in Scripture such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel were grieved by the departure from truth around them, but they stood firm. God described their nation as follows: “This is the nation that has not obeyed the LORD its God or responded to correction. **Truth** has perished; it has vanished from their lips” (Jeremiah 7:28). These men and others obeyed their calling, leaving the results to God. They set good examples for us. We do not need to lose heart or become faint. God has not been caught off guard. He foretold of these very times so that we could be prepared.

We need to be actively strengthening ourselves in the Word of God so that we will know the truth; we must be in prayer, seeking wisdom from God; we need to be active in the Body of Christ so that we might encourage one another; and we must be sober-minded so that we will not become distracted from our calling. Jesus encouraged the disciples with these words: “I have told you these things, so that **in me** you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).



Welcome to the World

"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the TRUTH and wander off into myths." 2 Timothy 4:3-4

"..Always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the TRUTH." 2 Timothy 3:7

"Then Pilate said to Him, 'So you are a KING?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the TRUTH.

Everyone who is of the TRUTH listens to my voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?'"

(John 18:37-38a)

Walking Into the Darkness as Lights

By Nathan Warner

The Gospel is the Truth. It is the good news of Jesus brought to life by the Spirit of Truth in our hearts. The Gospel is the foundation of our Faith, and it is as relevant today as it was when Paul entered Rome in the first century after Jesus ascended into Heaven.

After recent events in our country, there is a temptation to think we have things pretty bad. I know I am tempted to think that way -- after all, things are worse than they were yesterday and there seems to be no reasonable expectation that they will get any better without a miraculous moving of our God in the hearts of the people and the leaders of the world. We should be praying for the people who brought this nightmare into reality. As hard as that can be sometimes, we must pray for their eyes to be opened.

Experiencing the New Testament

With everything that has transpired the last ten years or so, a thought has slowly been growing in my heart. Perhaps we never fully understood what the Apostles' lives were like when we read the New Testament in years past. I remember reading the Gospels and the Book of Acts just as I would read any other adventure story: from the safety of my couch in the warmth of my own home, eating cookies and potato chips -- all the while thrilled by the heroic feats and miracles - but in a detached way because I was sitting safely on that couch watching from a distance and could not fully take in the danger, the courage, the difficulties God's people faced. Though I might not have been able to rest my finger on it, the New Testament felt so far away -- it was so difficult to really absorb the full meaning of what was transpiring on each page because I could only relate vicariously here in "moral" America.

In many ways, reading the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles was like reading an instruction manual about mountain climbing while I was

crawling along in Minnesota prairies and jumping on small boulders in the garden, all the while thinking I was now a mountain climber because I had read about it. It is the difference between theory and practice. The old saying explains that "experience is the best teacher." Perhaps now we are just beginning to understand what the early Church was facing, as chronicled in Acts and the Epistles. Perhaps now we can taste the first-fruits of the godlessness that has been fermenting in the cup of God's wrath...the wrath Paul talked about in Romans 1: *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."*

The Symmetry of the New Testament and the Last Days

The New Testament Church is relevant to our lives today in a way our grandparents probably never knew. It is relevant through experience. We are living it again. In many ways, it feels as if we have made a complete circuit. It is as if we are entering the epistles from the last chapter in Acts and are working our way back to the beginning of Acts where Jesus ascended into Heaven, though only this time, He will return for us, and we will be caught up to Him (1 Thessalonians 4:17). What an incredible thought! We already have a sense that we are headed right back into the spiritual blackness that once covered the entire earth. We are headed into the same night that tried to stamp out the few small kindled flames on the heads of the disciples during Pentecost, which were blindingly bright in that darkness. After Jesus ascended, only the hands of a small elect held the seeds of the Gospel in that barren wasteland of the world. Only a few people out of the entire world were witnesses of the Light. We owe the fact that we believe in Jesus today, here in America or wherever, to the Holy Spirit's working in these few people in the first century AD. What a difficult task. No, rather, it was impossible without the Holy Spirit.

Jesus foretold what it would be like for His disciples as lights in the darkness after He

would leave: *“But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives”* (Luke 21:12-19).

Similarly, you could read the same description in Mark as speaking to those living in the last days, as the emphasis is a little different: *“And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved”* (Mark 13:10-13).

It Is All or Nothing with Jesus

I think many of us are beginning to see dividing lines emerge in our lives where we least expect them. New fractures and fault zones seem to be appearing everywhere in our families, our relationships, in our work, and in our play. Standing on the line, relating to people of all persuasions, used to be so much easier because that line looked like it was as wide as a river without clearly defining black and white – just gradations of grey. That line is shrinking rapidly and now is so fine that we can hardly stand on it without being on one side or the other. Soon, it will be impossible to claim we are hanging out in the middle. Just as there was no room for moderates to stand in the early Church, there will be no room for

moderates in the Church of the last days. Nor will there be room for fence-sitters in our own families.

It is all or nothing for Christ, as He said, *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me”* (Mathew 10:34-38). We must be careful to not compromise with sin so that we can just “get along” with our families and friends. Jesus must come first in our lives.

We Are in the Last Days Book of Acts

All of these passages make it seem as if we are entering Jesus' words from right to left when He says in Acts 1:8, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* We are starting out in the ends of the earth, where the Gospel has been preached to all peoples, and we are headed back to being witnesses in smaller and smaller areas of the world – lights becoming smaller and smaller in a growing, global darkness. Just as the apostles began their ministries with small lights in the world's utter darkness and watched that light grow, so we are watching the light dim towards utter darkness. But our light will never go out. We will not be left in darkness. Jesus will come for us, and take us with Him when God withdraws His Spirit of Truth just before the Great Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

The Apostles were pinpricks of light that God used as a foundation to preach the Gospel in all the world, dispelling the spiritual night that had held it captive. Just think about it: the Gospel started out with people meeting in their homes in a few small places in Judea (rejected

by their friends and relatives) and spread throughout the entire world over the course of two thousand years. By the power and working of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, these Apostles worked the mightiest of all witnessing: carrying the Light to all nations in the earth against the tides of darkness. After having received the Light for a time, how rapidly the world is reverting back to the darkness it has not fully known since Jesus ascended into heaven, saying, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:18-20).

Now more than ever, the words of Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, Jude, and James make sense because we see happening around us the very things they saw happening around them! Instead of imaging how it must have been, or going to a country on the other side of the world, now we are experiencing the Epistles at the thresholds of our homes, in the lunchrooms of our workplace, and the towns where we grew up! Now we are seeing the Epistles acted out in the Churches we once attended.

Perilous Times - What Are We Supposed to Do?

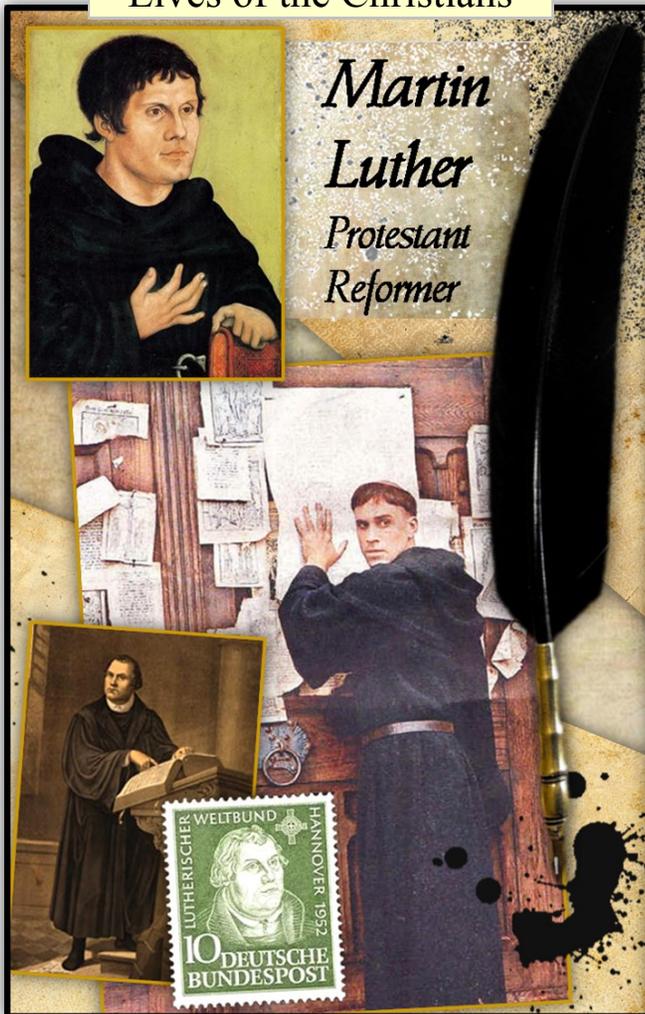
When Paul describes the works of the flesh in Galatians, he says they are “evident” (Galatians 5:19). He didn’t say, “If you look hard, you’ll see them.” He said they were “evident.” The times he was living in parallel exactly Paul’s caution about the end times: *“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such*

people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth...while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:1-7, 13).

What then are we as believers supposed to do in these last days? Exactly what the Apostles did by the power of the Holy Spirit. They were steadfast witnesses of Christ – as Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:1-8: *“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth 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.”* Amen.



Lives of the Christians



Martin Luther

Protestant Reformer

"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason, I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God."

Martin Luther was born in Germany on November 10, 1483. His father wanted him to pursue a career in law, and Luther entered the University of Erfurt, receiving his master's degree in 1505. In accordance with his father's wishes, Luther went on to Law school and, increasingly needing assurance about life, took interest in theology and philosophy. His personal life in a crisis, he abandoned his law career and joined a monastery as a monk. By 1508, he was ordained for the priesthood and taught theology at the University of Wittenberg before earning his Doctor of Theology in 1512. In 1516, a papal commissioner was sent to Germany to sell indulgences (tickets to Heaven), and Luther criticized this. The issue centered around forgiveness of sins – was salvation by grace or by works? Luther argued that salvation by grace was the only approach to God that was supported by Scripture. Luther published 95 theses in Germany and many other countries to counter positions held by the Catholic Church that he felt came against Scripture. This seemingly simple issue struck at the core of the Catholic Church's power, and they demanded Luther recant. When Luther refused, citing the authority of the Word of God, he was excommunicated. Many in Germany, however, agreed with Luther and his reliance on Scripture as the ultimate authority in spiritual matters. The Reformation spread like wildfire. Though he sometimes erred, Luther defended reliance on the Word of God until his death on February 18, 1546.

Truth from a Young Age

By Marge Poppenhagen

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

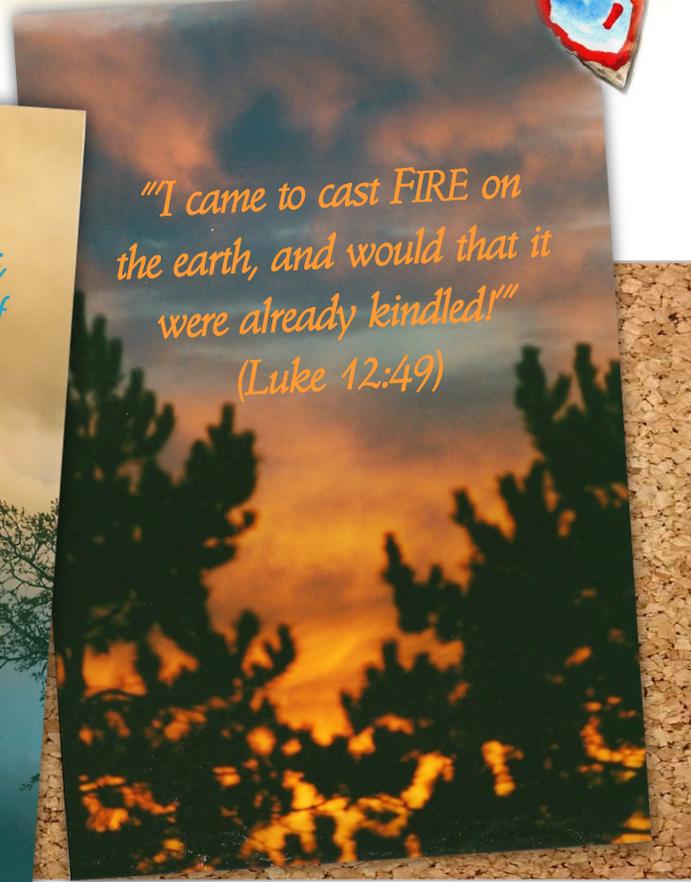
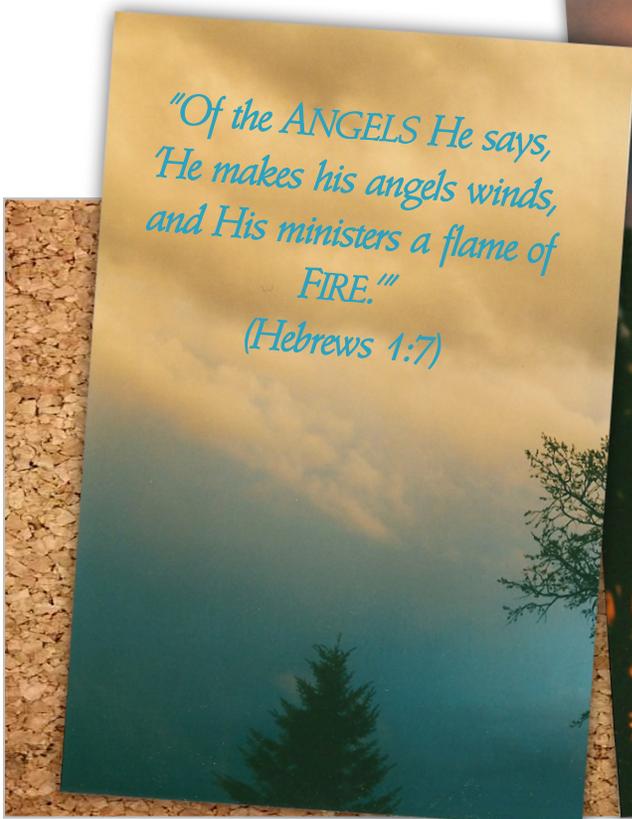
As a young girl, I was not always truthful. I had to learn the hard way to be truthful. It still took a few years before I truly learned that the truth would set me free. It took years before my parents knew I was being truthful. I learned that being truthful is always the best thing and that it should start when you are a child. After I grew up and got married, I taught my four children to always be truthful, as my parents had taught me. Their punishment was always less if they told the truth, and to my knowledge, they were truthful.

This lesson has been carried on in my grandchildren. I think this was illustrated recently when my sixteen-year-old grandson applied for a job and got it. One week later, the company informed him that he had to be at least seventeen years old to qualify for the job. They told him this even though they had already given him the job and even though he had been truthful and upfront with them when he told them he was only sixteen. Since the company had lied to him, his mother encouraged him to not work for a dishonest employer. A week later, my grandson landed a job that he liked much better, and he is now happily working for an honest employer.

We should always seek the truth. Truth has been very important in my life, in the lives of my children, and the lives of my grandchild-

dren. Remaining truthful has been proven to be the right thing all my life. May we all see more truth, that it may set us free.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:36)





"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."

(3 John 1:2-4)

"I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicate by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

(1 Timothy 3:14-16)

What About God's Truth?

By Jesse Larsen

Some of you may have heard the idea that "you have your truth and I have mine," which implies that one worldview is just as valid as another and that we should therefore respect whatever "truth" each person claims to have. Many people claiming to be Christians hold this view. Some simple questions that I have wanted to ask those who hold this idea are: What about God's truth? Does God have any say in the matter? Or is it just up to us to make up our own "truth" as we go along? Is God wiser than we are? If He is, and if He does love us, then would He not want us to have the same views that He has for our own good?

If we truly believe that God is a personal being, then it should be no surprise to see what He said in the following passage: *"If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall **know the truth**, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31-32). Please notice that this verse does not say that "you shall know a truth, and a truth shall make you free" but that *"you shall know **the truth**, and **the truth** shall make you free."* So, could the statement that "you have your truth and I have mine" be an attempt to avoid the correction that God Himself wants to give to us for our own good (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17)? I will let God be the judge of that, but I still want people to think carefully about it. I think it is a reasonable question since the Bible has warned of a time when people would not endure sound doctrine but that they would embrace doctrine that is **according to their own desires** (See 2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Since this verse gives us a clear contrast between sound doctrine and doctrine that is according to our own desires, it is reasonable to conclude that everyone's alleged "truth" cannot be equally valid. And this should also lead us to be careful that we do not judge something to be true based on feelings. After all, Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that the human heart is deceitful. This would have to mean that some-

thing is not right just because it feels right to us. You don't know that you have been deceived until you have come out from that deception (and self-deception is the worst kind). This is why the Bible tells us to *"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. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil"* (Proverbs 3:5-7). When the Bible speaks of fearing the Lord, it simply means to have a reverence for Him, and Proverbs 9:10 tells us that this reverence for Him is the beginning of wisdom. It is for this reason I believe that the main cause for failing to discern the truth is lack of reverence for God. Many people may have a reverence for a "god" that has come out of their own mind or the mind of others, but *"the only true God"* (John 17:3) did not come out of the minds of man, and any alleged "truth" that we come up with cannot be just as valid as His truth!

One other reason for failing to discern the truth can be that we sometimes mistake intelligence for wisdom. Although intelligence is a good thing, it is not the same thing as wisdom. Here is one example of what I mean by that: Ted Bundy had to have been a very intelligent person in order to get away with so many murders for so long. Considering the vile acts that he committed, he was obviously not in a right state of mind, and he was therefore lacking in wisdom, in spite of the intelligence that he had. What we need is God's wisdom rather than *"the wisdom of this world [which] is foolishness with God"* (1 Corinthians 3:19). And it is through His wisdom that our intelligence will be used for the right purposes - otherwise it will go to waste, just as the intelligence of Ted Bundy, James Holmes, and many others has gone to waste. Everyone without God's wisdom does not become a killer, but my point is that we will be led astray one way or another without the reverence for God that leads to His wisdom.

One other reason for failing to discern God's truth is because we sometimes judge something to be true simply because it is popular. However, that mindset should be done

away with in a hurry when we discover that Jesus said there are **few** who find the way of life (See Matthew 7:13-14). Furthermore, the Bible has also warned that **many** would be deceived by false teachers (See 2 Peter 2:1-2 and Matthew 24:11). I don't want to drag anyone down by pointing out how bad things are, but it is often necessary to understand what is wrong in order to understand what is right. It is hard for me not to be concerned about much of the deception going on today, since I have been deceived myself, and I may still have blind spots that I don't know about yet, which is why I need the Lord to continually search my heart as we all do. Much of the deception going on today should not be surprising when we consider the deceitful nature of the human heart, as described in Jeremiah 17:9, but the verse after that one says *"I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind"* (Jeremiah 17:10). So, it is not a hopeless situation, but it will do us no good to try to reform our human nature because we need a new nature (See Ephesians 2:1-9 and 2 Corinthian 5:17). And if God reveals **His truth** to us through this new nature,

then it is not a matter of "you have your truth and I have my truth" because **"the truth"** (John 8:32) comes from God alone, not us!



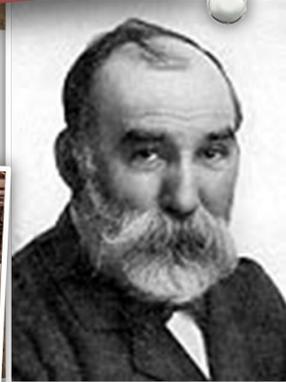
*"Teach me your way,
O LORD, that I may walk
in your truth; unite my
heart to fear your name."
(Psalm 86:11)*

Sing A New Song

Words by Daniel Webster Whittle

Music by James McGranahan

"In a few broken words I confessed my own sins and asked Christ to forgive me."



I Know Whom I Have Believed
 Words: Daniel Webster Whittle (a.k.a. Elias Nathan), 1883.
 Music and Setting: 'I Know Whom I Have Believed' James McGranahan, 1892.
 copyright: public domain. This score is a part of the Open Hymnal Project, 2010 Revision.

♩ = 100

I know not why God's won-drous grace To me He hath made known,
 I know not how this sa-ving faith To me He did im-part,
 I know not what the Spi-rit moves, Con-vin-cing us of sin,
 I know not when my good or ill May be re-served for me,
 Lord may come, At night or noon - day fair,

why, un-wor-thy, Christ in love Re-deemed me for His own,
 how be-liev-ing in His Word peace with-in my heart,
 veal-ing Je-sus through the Word, Cre-a-ting faith in Him,
 wea-ry ways or gol-den days, Be-fore His face I see,
 if I walk the vale with Him, Or meet Him in the air.

But I know Whom I have be-liev-ed, And am per-sua-ded that He is ab-le
 To keep that which I've com-mit-ted Un-to Him a-gainst that day.

I Know Whom I Have Believed

By Maggie Moller

"That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." (2 Timothy 1:12)

The Lyricist – Major Daniel Webster Whittle

Daniel Webster Whittle was born on November 22, 1840, in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts. His mother was a Godly woman who instilled in him a strong sense of Christian principles. When he was a teenager, Daniel got a job working as a cashier for a Wells Fargo bank. One night, while he was working as a night watchman at the bank, he surrendered his life to the Lord. After his conver-

sion, he became a Sunday School superintendent at the great Tabernacle in Chicago. It was there that he met his wife, Abbie Hanson.

In 1861, he joined the army and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. During the summer of 1862, as the Civil War intensified, Daniel was called to active duty in the South. On August 22, 1862, the night before his departure, he and Abbie were married. It would be a year before he and Abbie would be reunited. Before he left, his mother placed a New Testament in the haversack she packed for him. This little New Testament would play an important role in strengthening his dedication to the Lord.

Daniel rose to the rank of Major through his service during the Civil War. While he was leading a charge, he was wounded in his sword arm and placed in a prisoner of war camp. Due to the severity of his injury, his arm was amputated. During his stay in the POW camp, Daniel, wanting something to ward off his

boredom, found the New Testament his mother packed for him. He read through it once, and when he was finished, he started over again.

One night, the nurse on duty came and woke Daniel up. The nurse informed Daniel that a prisoner was dying and had requested someone to pray with him. When Daniel was confused as to why the nurse would consider him a religious man, the nurse replied that he had seen Daniel reading his Bible faithfully and thought he must be a Christian. Daniel confessed to the nurse that his life had not reflected Christ faithfully and that he was not qualified to help comfort the dying soldier. Desperate, the nurse begged Daniel to at least accompany him back to the dying man's bedside. Filled with compassion, Daniel agreed. What transpired that night with the dying soldier is best recorded using Daniel's own words. He said of his experience that night,

"I dropped to my knees and held the boy's hand in mine. In a few broken words I confessed my own sins and asked Christ to forgive me. I believed right there that He did forgive me. I then prayed earnestly for the boy. He became quiet and pressed my hand as I prayed and pleaded God's promises. When I arose from my knees, he was dead. A look of peace had come over his troubled face, and I cannot but believe that God who used him to bring me to the Savior, used me to lead him to trust Christ's precious blood and find pardon. I hope to meet him in heaven."

After the war, Daniel returned home and got a job as treasurer of the Elgin Watch Company in Chicago. Ten years later, at the prompting and encouragement of his close friend, D.L. Moody, Daniel entered into evangelism ministries and hymn writing.

Most of his early works were set to music by Philip Bliss. (Mr. Bliss is also known for composing the music to "It Is Well With My Soul" - his story can be read in the September newsletter.) "I Know Whom I Have Believed" was set to music by James McGranahan, who

composed music for many of Daniel's later hymns.

Daniel's daughter, Mary, also composed music for some of her father's hymns. Mary married William Moody, the son of her father's close friend, D.L. Moody. Daniel died on March 4, 1901, in Northfield, Massachusetts, at the age of 61.

The Composer – James McGranahan

James McGranahan was born on July 4, 1840, in Pennsylvania. Born with a strong tenor voice, James pursued a career in musical performance. He studied under many gifted teachers who all assured him he had a talent that would make him famous without a doubt. Young James was intrigued with thoughts of a life of fame and fortune, and eagerly started down the path of training as an opera performer.

Although James was a Christian, he was not willing to surrender his entire life to his Lord. James had a close friend, Philip Bliss, who was also involved in the musical field. Unlike James, however, Philip was concerned not with using his talents for worldly fame but rather for bringing lost souls to Christ. Philip was concerned with his friend's motives and decided to write James a letter asking him to question the reasons behind his dedicated music studies. Unsure if what he was doing was right or not, Philip read his letter to his close friend, Major Daniel Whittle. Supported by Daniel's encouragement, the letter was sent to James. When James received the letter, the words of his friend hit him as nothing else had in his life. It opened his eyes to his motives for his dedicated efforts at his studies. Philip's words were before him day and night.

Sadly, James never got to tell his friend how much his letter impacted his life. One week after James received the letter, Philip and his wife were killed in a tragic train accident. As soon as James heard the news of his friend's death, he rushed to the scene of the accident. It was there that James met a man who would become a dear friend: Daniel Whittle. Daniel said later of this meeting that as

James stood before him, he knew whom Philip would want to be his successor in composing music for his (Daniel's) hymns.

As the two men rode back to Chicago, Daniel encouraged James to turn his talents over to service for Christ. Philip's letter planted the seeds of surrender in James' heart and Daniel's words watered them. The opera lost a promising star on that train ride back to Chicago, but the army of the Lord gained a valuable soldier. James completely dedicated his talents and his life to the service of Christ. He worked diligently in evangelical campaigns all throughout America, England, and Ireland. James composed over 25 hymns during his lifetime, including "I Know Whom I Have Believed." James passed away on July 9, 1907, in Kinsman, Ohio, at the age of 67.

The main theme of this hymn is the assurance we have as believers in Christ's Salvation. Daniel and James knew that Salvation does not come from man's efforts but from Christ's death and resurrection. How sweet it is to know we can trust fully in Christ's work for us and not on our own efforts!

If we had to earn our Salvation on our own merit, we would all fail as soon as we enter the world, but because Christ died to pay the price for our sins, we can go boldly before the throne of God as redeemed and born again into God's family! We too can KNOW in whom we have believed, just as Daniel and James did so long ago.



Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

By Ginny Larsen

*"O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent?
Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who
walks blamelessly and does what is right and
speaks truth in his heart...."*

(Psalm 15:1-2)

*"Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you
are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all
the day long."*

(Psalm 25:5)

*"Send out your light and your truth; let them
lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!"*

(Psalm 43:3)

*"Behold, you delight in truth in the inward be-
ing, and you teach me wisdom in the secret
heart."*

(Psalm 51:6)

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall
see God."*

(Matthew 5:8)

As I've gone through the Sermon on the Mount lately in Matthew 5, digging deeper into each "Blessed are they" phrase that Jesus spoke, I'm aware that Jesus is getting to the heart of the people listening. He is addressing the Jewish nation who thought themselves saved and favored by God just because they were Jewish. They thought of themselves as keeping the law, just because they had the law and knew it. They looked to the Pharisees who kept the law perfectly (outwardly, that is). But Jesus was showing them the righteousness that was above that of the Pharisees. He was revealing to them their own hearts, how sinful they were, and how full of deception and darkness they really were.

Jesus always gets to the heart. It is our heart He desires. *"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"* (Matthew

5:8). God desires truth in our inward parts - in our heart of hearts. It is the one who comes into His Light, allowing all in his own heart to be exposed to God's Light, Who is truth. It's only when we allow this exposure and vulnerability to ourselves that we can be made pure of heart.

We all have hidden motives. All of the motives of one who has not been regenerated are selfish in some way. We do what makes ourselves feel good. Even when we're reaching out to someone else, there is something we look to get out of it. When our hearts come before God, the very truth is brought forth to us, and we're made to see ourselves as we really are in His Light - despite our attempts to hide what is there from our own conscience, try to make it look better than it is, or try to excuse it. No wonder we run from God's Word! No wonder it is so hard to read our Bible. It convicts us. It kills us, so to speak, slaying our sinful nature. But it's only when we let it in that it brings forth Light and truth, which gives life as well.

Our hearts are seared by the Word and purified. They are cleansed. We're no longer afraid of His Light but are able to come into it with joy and confidence and be filled with the love we find there. We're able to see God. We're able to know Him. As long as we hide anything in our heart, we are kept from the intimacy of knowing Him and what He desires for us. We're kept in a superficial relationship with Him. When we confess our sin (admit to it and agree with God against it), we are freed from it as well by His power as we put faith in the gift of His forgiveness and promise of eternal life.

As believers, born of His Spirit, we are to continually walk in His Light, where truth is. We are to cling to truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6a). Jesus Himself is the truth. How, then, could He ever abide in a lie? Is it any wonder that He says He hates lies? Whenever I am confused and don't understand the truth in a situation or someone is being deceptive, my prayer is, "Lord, bring forth Your Light and Your truth - let them lead me." Sometimes

that means exposing the lies of others, the lies of false teachers or prophets, or the lies of Satan in a situation where someone is bound and can't see their way out of the bondage he has caused them. Sometimes it means the confusion in my own mind is over a matter I need clarity on or over a teaching or admonishment someone has given. I have learned that if I allow God to examine my heart for truth first and if I allow His Word to cleanse me, then I can count on Him to bring forth the truth in a situation and lead me. He has done this for me again and again. But if my heart is not true before Him, if there is a hidden agenda in my heart, if there is some way I am trying to make my will acceptable to Him and convince myself that His Will is my will, even though the Word tells me otherwise, then I will be led astray by others, by circumstances, and even by what seems spiritual because it all seems to fit with what my heart really desires. So I make sin to look like God's will. Once in this spot, spiritual discernment becomes impossible. In this way, I will walk in compromise and darkness, even thinking I am okay until I look to the Lord again, honestly, with truth in my inward being, asking Him to examine my heart in His Light and enabling me to see myself. We're unable to see God as He wants us to as His children as long as we find a way around the truth in His Word, rather than truly in our heart of hearts receive it and believe it and obey it. We're given eternal life in order to know Him (John 17:3).

How deceptive Satan is! He convinces us that if we believe a lie we won't be held accountable to truth! But no matter what we do with truth - receive it or reject it - truth is still truth. Jesus is still truth. God's Word is still truth, and that truth will never pass away, and one day all will be judged, not by man's standards, but by that Word of truth. Wouldn't it be better if we learn to know that Word now and abide in it, letting that sharp, two-edged sword pierce us now and bring us to the life He has for us, rather than wait until it's too late to benefit from His truth? Satan convinces us that His truth is going to reveal a very harsh, cruel God that likes to spoil all our fun and that

we will be miserable for the rest of our lives and have nothing in this world that makes us happy. He tries to prevent us from reading the Word and living by it. We see Hollywood's version of a "Christian" in the movies and TV shows where they put out harsh, sour-faced killjoys who condemn everyone else. So people think this is what they will have to become if they want to be a Christian. They think it is a life of guilt and trying to live by standards they never can keep and that all those who call themselves Christians are hypocrites because they can't keep it either! Nothing is further from the truth. You see, the father of lies has kept people in that lie, where the truth is hidden and turned into a lie, and they never find His life then.

The Christian life is one of truth. It is a life where truth reveals what is already in us (and already holds us condemned) in order to free us. It is the truth that reveals the life of God that He holds out freely for "whosoever will" come to Him in truth and receive Him. It is a life of walking in His Light that reveals freedom...true freedom that enables us to know Him. *"And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"* (John 17:3). Is it any wonder, that the world tries to excuse sin, rather than facing that truth? They try to make sin look good, or even twist around what is good to make it evil and what is evil to make it look good? They have to do something with their guilty conscience. We should look on them with compassion because they have to do something in order to live with their guilt. They have to find some way to fill the void in themselves. Unfortunately, if it is not filled with Christ and if their guilt is not cleansed by Him, they have to resort to other means to do so. This is the whole reason for psychology and religion. They are both human-centered and are lies that cover and change the truth of God. They are man's way of trying to better themselves and, in the process, destroying the conscience God gave them. Because they cannot succeed at bettering themselves without God, they have to continually build up more ways to try. Once you

live a lie, you have to continue making more lies in order to keep up the facade. So the depravity grows and progresses to more depravity, such as we see happening in the world today (such as Romans 1 describes), until man is given over to his own depravity and its consequences. They think they are free from the truth and that they won't have to endure the consequences of that truth, but that truth is still there, proving itself true even as they grow deeper and deeper into their lie. Finally, they are destroyed by their lie and then they rant against God for it. *"When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD"* (Proverbs 19:3).

The one we lie to the most is ourselves. We can't be honest with God if we are not honest with ourselves. It takes the grace of God to enable us to truly be honest with ourselves. We cannot examine our own hearts by constant introspection. In fact, introspection in my life almost destroyed me and my relationship with God. It's by looking at God, through His Word, that we are able to truly see ourselves. The more we look inward, the worse we become. It is flesh trying to improve flesh, which is impossible. The more we look at Him, the more we are freed from sin and made like Him. Let God look into your heart. Don't think you can know it or change it. Bring it to God and allow Him to bring His truth to you. Allow His truth to cleanse you and lift you up to Him, where you can abide in His life and in His joy. Even Satan uses God's Word, which he twists to kill and steal and destroy. He twists it and then uses it to condemn us. But if we open our hearts to God in truth, His truth brings life out of death. It brings freedom from condemnation. It brings peace and joy. We want to stay in His Light then and walk in it and never again be away from it.

The words to "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," a hymn by Martin Luther, stand out to me: "The body they may kill, His truth abideth still...His kingdom is forever." Let us then hold on to what is truth that lasts forever. Let us hold on to Christ. Abba, Father, keep us in Your Light, and let Your truth guide us continually. Amen.

Depart from Me You Workers of Iniquity

By Jani Lynn Warner

“If you are wise, you are wise for yourself and if you scoff, you alone will bear it.”
(Proverbs 9:12)

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the Parable of the ten Virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom as part of His wedding party. Did they all go out to meet the Bridegroom as followers of the Bridegroom, or were they only pretending for their own reasons, like Judas who met Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane with the kiss of friendship and with lamps (John 18:3)? We get some clues from Jesus, who describes them as five wise virgins who took oil with them and five foolish virgins who did not take an extra flask of oil to keep their lamps burning. This party consisted of the wise and the foolish, but they were all in a group going out to meet the Bridegroom. The foolish spend time with the wise in the context of “friendship,” but they do not live like the wise live where it matters (*“follow me as I follow Christ”* – 1 Corinthians 11:1). They may all sleep and slumber, but they do not all have the light when it matters. Judas spent time with the twelve disciples and pretended to be one of the twelve, but he had different motives. There seems to be a common theme of wolves lurking around sheep (unobserved or unsuspected), the foolish lurking around the wise, and individuals who have an agenda (“what’s in it for me?”) lurking around individuals who follow Jesus (“God is sovereign and I am nothing”). The pretenders want something, but it is not the righteous lifestyle that Christians are called to live. They may be like Simon, who thought he could purchase the gift of God (See Acts 8:9-22).

Proverbs gives us concise descriptions of the wise and the foolish. The wise fear (reverence) the Lord and seek wisdom and understanding from Him: *“For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and*

understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). Proverbs 1:7 states: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”* We learn in Proverbs 8:13 that *“the fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate.”*

Proverbs has much to say about the foolish (evil and harmful) individuals. Proverbs 1:7 says, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”* Proverbs 1:22 expands on their foolishness: *“How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools hate knowledge?”* *“If someone wise corrects the foolish, he will get dishonor, insults, and hatred”* (Proverbs 9:7).

Returning to the Parable of the Ten Virgins, although the wise had extra oil for their lamps, the foolish did not. *“The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out’* (Matthew 25:8). The foolish are a hindrance to the wise. They want to take from the wise, but in this case, the prudent sent them away to buy oil for themselves. The Bridegroom came, and the prudent Virgins were faithfully ready to go with Him to the Wedding, whereas the foolish Virgins were busy buying more oil. The foolish are always busy doing “righteous acts.” Later, they came, saying, *“Lord, Lord, open up for us, but He answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour”* (Matthew 25:11-13). Even though they may have had light in their lamps, the Bridegroom did not recognize them – possibly the light was a strange light.

When Jesus declared that He was the Living Bread that came down from Heaven, He said that unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you (John 6:53). Many of His disciples left when they heard this, and Jesus asked the twelve, *“Will you also go away?”* Simon Peter answered, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God”* (John 6:68-69). Peter was saying that just like the wise Virgins, they (the disci-

ples) would wait on Jesus. But Jesus knew their hearts and who of the twelve were sincere. He answered Peter, *“Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?”* Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him” (John 6:70-71). Those who are foolish virgins go out to meet the Bridegroom without extra oil for their lamps. They do not need extra oil because they are just pretenders “of being wise” and only want enough to deceive the wise and the bridegroom. They want to live the way they want to live and not come under the authority of the bridegroom. Since the bridegroom does not know them, they are unbelievers who will not be allowed into the presence of God, yet they pretend to belong to Him. The foolish are always trying to use God to get what they want, and they don’t walk in truth. Judas, for example, had an agenda for waiting on Jesus. Pretending to be a friend, Judas was only there to try to use Jesus to get money and power because he was a thief (John 12:6).

“The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”
(Psalm 145:18)

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”
(John 4:24)

Jesus is a separator who knows our hearts. He knows which individuals are the sincere and wise spiritual virgins that follow Him and which ones are simply lurking around to see what they can get out of Him. The latter are just like the huge crowds of followers that claimed to be disciples but who only wanted to eat free food and experience miracles: *“Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.’”* (John 6:26-27)

Jesus is coming soon. May we be true to Him with oil in our lamps and extra oil stored up so that we will be found faithful followers of Christ. May we work for the food that does not perish but endures to eternal life.

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” (John 8:31-32)

December Newsletter Theme—Peace
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Theme: Peace, “Peace be to you,” Peace offerings, Prince of Peace, There is no peace to the wicked, “blessed are the peacemakers,” “Peace be still,” “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword,” the way of Peace, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you,” “we have peace with God,” the Gospel of Peace, “live in peace,” “He is our peace,” Peaceable fruit of Righteousness, etc...