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# Pilgrims Journal

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*“They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb 11:13–16)*

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## Clouded Vision

*“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen” (Rev 1:7).*

The first verse of the last book of the Bible begins with its name, “Revelation,” or as it is in the original language “Apocalypse.” This ancient Greek word literally means “unveiling” or “disclosure” but in our modern vernacular has come to denote catastrophe or disaster. Sadly, this is what the return of the Lord will be for many: a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. What is revealed? It is not the revelation of St. John the Divine, as men have titled the book, but rather a deeper understanding of Jesus and of God’s eternal plan. The verse that we will be studying, which commences this revelation, begins with “behold” and ends with a double exclamation of assent or agreement. Any time we come to scripture, its message should hold our whole attention, but here we are directly commanded to look. The surety of this revelation is twice affirmed at the end of the verse with a double Amen (yes, so be it)! This is the same word with which Jesus began so many of His sayings to us: “verily (amen) I say unto you.”

When scriptures tell of God manifesting His presence in visible glory (Hebrew term “Shekinah”), ***He often appears shrouded and hidden within clouds.*** Men and women sometimes veil themselves in fear and shame, but God does it because His face is too bright and beautiful for men to bear. ***In his feeble fallen flesh, sinful man cannot see God and live.***

Though the saved also do not literally see the Lord, they love and believe in Him (1Pet 1:8). We know the sun and stars are still shining even when clouds hide them from our sight. But this verse declares that **one day the Lord will no longer be hidden.** Clouds are not affected by geographical, political, cultural or religious boundaries. They continue to soar undeterred through the heavens. Like them, the church must follow Christ’s command and boldly proclaim Him as Lord and Savior before every tribe, nation and tongue (Mat 28:18-19). ***Yet many men and nations reject or are willingly ignorant of the coming and power of Jesus Christ.*** They scoff and say “*where is the promise of His coming?*” Nevertheless, in this book of unveiling, there is given a prophecy and promise to all mankind that instead of hiding, the **Lord will soon return riding on the clouds for all to see.** Not only will every eye see, but every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Him King of kings and Lord of lords (Phi 2:10-11). The redeemed are those who acknowledge this before they see Him upon the clouds and the damned will do it after.

### Every Eye Shall See

Traditionally this verse has been applied to the unrepentant Jews or to those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. This is because it is written that when He comes in the clouds all will wail. This time the Son of God will not be manifested veiled in flesh as a lowly babe born in a manger, or appear as a loving Bridegroom, but as the ***Judge of all the earth.*** Jesus Himself referred to those who will not rejoice at His coming like true saints will, when He said, “*Then shall all the tribes of the earth*

mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mat 24:30; 2Thes 1:7-9). Unsaved men will wail with both **terror and regret when they see Him**. However, the verse we are meditating on can also relate to those who are taken in the rapture as well as those who will be left behind. It states “every eye” will see and “all kindreds” of the earth shall mourn. All means all. A song that will be sung in heaven before the throne goes, “*Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation*” (Rev 5:9). This shows that the Lamb’s Bride will be made up of those who are saved and sanctified from all peoples and places. So before we consider how this verse concerns the lost, let us examine how it can apply to the saved.

### They That Pierced Him

When reading Revelation 1:7, some might think it is speaking only about the Jews, Romans, or those who actually carried out the killing of Jesus in the first century. But it can also apply to all the saved who live in the age of Grace. The passage contains reflections and fulfillments of prophecies given about our Savior hundreds of years before He came and died on Calvary. The Psalm that contains the verse, “*My God, my God, why?*” which Jesus shouted out from the cross also states “*they pierced my hands and my feet*” (Psa 22:16). We know why. It was for our sakes, because of our sin. “*They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn*” (Zec 12:10; Jn 19:37). When a vessel is pierced, the valuable contents inside leak out and are

lost. How intense would be your weeping and sorrow at the loss of a firstborn or an only son! How much stronger would it be if you were the cause of his death? Because the saved realize how precious the life and how costly the death of the Son of God is, they too **weep in repentance**. It was not just those who held the hammer or handled the lance that pierced Jesus. It was not just nails, whip, thorns and spear point that pierced Him, but the penalty and punishment for our sin. “*He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him and by His wounds we are healed*” (Isa 53:5 NIV). **Will you look now with repentance and godly sorrow upon Him who was wounded for your sin and weep?** If you are already saved, do you still come to tears when you remember what He went through on your behalf? If men do not wail at the pierced feet of Christ before He returns, they will do so afterwards. Thus the saying is true for all men, the saved and the lost: every eye shall cry.

### Looking For Him

The New Testament saints who are caught up in the rapture will also have seen the Lord coming in the clouds. But Jesus will not appear to them as a fearsome Judge who passes a sentence of condemnation. He will be like one who declares them winners or champions and selects them for reward, not retribution. When Jesus was taken up to the right hand of the Father, forty days after the resurrection, His disciples watched Him as He ascended until a cloud hid Him from their sight. As the apostles continued to look intently toward heaven, two messengers appeared and asked them why they stood staring into the sky.

Then they declared unto them, *“this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:9-12). After hearing this, the disciples returned to Jerusalem as Jesus had instructed them in order to receive the Holy Spirit. From there they began to tell the good news to the whole world.

### He Will Return The Same Way

It was told that the way Jesus was taken up is the same way He will return for His bride. What way was that? Though Christ spoke day after day and did mighty acts openly, when He left the earth it was suddenly and secretly. Though great multitudes followed Him while He was multiplying loaves and fishes and healing many, only an elect few followed Him after the crucifixion. Not everyone saw Him leave. **Not everyone will see the sudden, secret and select return either—only the prepared disciples.** While He was blessing the disciples, He was carried up into heaven and **His return will be a blessing for us**, not a curse (Lk 24:51). A cloud hid Him from the disciples’ sight, but *“behold, He cometh with clouds.”* Those saints which are now hidden from our sight will arise first and appear with Him. *“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”* (1Thess 4:17). This is the way He will come again. Whenever you see a cloud, Christ may be in it and even if you do not see any, remember, it is always cloudy somewhere in the world. We do not have to stand staring at the sky in order to see Jesus return. What we need is to be born again, water baptized and filled and led by the Holy Spirit. He is that power from on high, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead.

### Wailing Because Of Him

When Jesus was being tried by unjust judges they asked if He was the Son of God. He told them “yes, it is as you say.” Then He prophesied, *“I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven”* (Mat 26:64; Psa 110; Dan 7:13-14). By this they understood that He was claiming authority not only over them, but over all of the earth and eternity. This right belonged to God alone and ***they refused to believe He was who He said He was.*** How horrible it will be for them and those like them when they see Him again in eternity. Let us examine how it will be for those who have rejected His first coming and missed the Lord’s secret coming in the clouds.

When the overcomers are caught up from the earth, Satan will be cast down to it and great tribulation will begin and last for seven years. Left behind Christians who do not surrender to Satan during this time will all be killed. In the middle of the tribulation, Jesus will be seen coming in the clouds with great power and glory. On this return He sends His angels to gather the tribulation martyrs. At the same time 144,000 Jews are sealed to survive the tribulation. They too will weep in repentance as they recognize that it is the pierced Jesus in the clouds who is their Messiah and not the Antichrist (Rev 7:4; Eze 9:4; Zech 12:10).

At the end of the seven years, the Lord collects the two witnesses, the Old Testament saints and the general martyrs from the earth. The Tribulation ends in the battle of Armageddon with Antichrist defeated and Satan bound. Then a thousand

years of peace on earth will begin, known as the Millennium. When this time comes to a close, the devil will be released and the last battle, Gog and Magog, will take place. Finally everyone else who has not previously been resurrected will rise from the dead; the saved and the lost, the just and unjust. At last, before the Great White Throne of Judgment, **everyone will have seen the Lord Jesus as He really is** (Mat 26:64). There will be weeping and wailing but it will be too late. These will be *tears of fear, shame and regret* rather than repentance (Heb 12:17). There will be no excuse, no time left, and no place to hide in heaven or earth from the wrath of God upon all sin and iniquity. Thus, the prophecy will be completely fulfilled, *“every eye shall see him... and all kindreds of the earth shall wail.”*

### **Even So, Amen!**

Each time Jesus appears in the clouds it signals judgment, though **judgment is not always a bad thing**. When Christ comes in the clouds at the rapture to catch away the perfected saints, it is a type of judgment. He will select those who have repented of their sins, received and believed in His grace and lived overcoming lives. In the midst of the tribulation, He comes to select His martyrs, seal the elect from the tribes of Israel and begin judgment on Antichrist and his kingdom. All nature cries for it, and will **rejoice when God comes to judge the earth**. Then the creation will be delivered from the suffering, vanity and corruption of this fallen world.

Though *judgment will be terrible for the wicked* it would be even more terrible if things were never put right and if perfect

justice never was given. The righteousness of our holy God demands a reckoning. If God does not punish sin and reward righteousness, He is not just. When John the Revelator saw that the scroll of final judgment was perfectly sealed and no one was able to open it, he wept much. (Rev 5). Sin and Satan cannot win or continue forever. John was told to stop crying because the Lion of the tribe of Judah had overcome and was able to bring all things to fulfillment. Looking for a lion he saw a Lamb that had been slain with seven eyes and seven horns. This shows that our humble yet mighty Lord and Savior Jesus Christ alone, Who is perfect in wisdom and power, is able to judge perfectly. All judgment has been given to the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Though the wicked will wail in horror when they see Him coming in the clouds, the redeemed will weep for joy! Let us look up, for our redemption is near! □

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## *Battles of a Butterfly*

One day a man found the cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and could go no further.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small shriveled wings.

The man continued to watch the butterfly expecting that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would surely contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It was never able to fly.

What the man in his kindness—and haste—did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening was God’s way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as we could have been and we could never fly. Sometimes in the momentary struggle or trial we fail to see the bigger picture and the handiwork of God in working all things together for our good. He will not allow us to endure more than we can bear. Let us press forward and prepare to fly when the Lord returns!

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2-4 NIV).*

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# That He May Dwell Among Us



## PART 4 — THE HOLIEST OF ALL

The Most Holy Place, the holiest of all—this was the most sacred part of the Jewish tabernacle and temple. But could anyone enter there? There is this veil standing between us and the glory of God on the other side. In addition, entrance was permitted only once a year and only one man could enter: the High Priest. Others had no hope of ever going there. On that day, once a year, all were reminded of their many sins. It was a “Day of Atonement,” yet their consciences never found relief from the condemning memories of all those things they had done. Even though the blood of poor innocent animals was shed for the people’s sins, that blood could not take away the consciousness of sin from the people of Israel. In other words, the way into the holiest place was not yet manifested while the earthly tabernacle stood.

### Entering The Holiest

What was this most holy place, and why does it matter to us anyway? Isn’t it just some outdated religious structure from long ago? **It was there that God met with man!** It was there His shekinah glory was seen between the golden cherubim above the mercy seat of gold. So, who can go in there now, and how do we go about doing that? Wouldn’t we be treading on holy ground? It is certain no one

can enter that glorious place on his own merit. *There is only one way to go within the veil, and that is by the blood of Jesus.* We have boldness now to enter the most holy place by Christ’s blood. He shed His own blood for our sins to give us access into the presence of the most holy God.

### Fellowship With God

When you enter the presence of the Almighty God, do you feel as if you belong there? Do you want to stay, or would you rather run out as soon as the roll has been called? When we speak of the most holy place, we are talking about *fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.* It is through Jesus that we have access by the Holy Spirit to the Father. The experience of being in the most holy place with God can only truly be known by those whose (1) sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ, who have been (2) baptized in water, and raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus through the (3) mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit, as was given on the day of Pentecost (Jn 3:3-5).

Once a person has access into that place, the work is not finished but has only begun. It is there that *God begins the work of transformation of the inner man* of the believer. Now the Spirit of God can change the saint from glory to glory into the image of the Son. Jesus is coming soon to gather the saints who have been transformed into His image. This is His glorious church, a bride without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish. Therefore, we should abide in the most holy place so God’s glory can saturate our being, sanctifying us and preserving us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## The Anchor Of Hope

When we speak of the most holy place, we are looking at something which is not only for this world, but especially for the next, that is, eternity. Since eternity is, by definition, that which will continue forever, we think of it as the **hope we possess**. This hope is before us. We have entered into the most holy place now, and have laid hold upon this hope. This hope is the anchor of our soul. It is steadfast and sure and will not move, no matter what. We need to have that hope as our anchor. That hope must be what holds us so we are not moved away from what matters most. How many people have been swept away by the waves of this world and lost their eternal inheritance. Don't let it happen to you. Do you know that God is the God of hope? May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Our hope is that when Jesus comes we will be like Him. Because we have this hope we purify ourselves, even as He is pure. We want to see Him as He is when He comes. We want the veil to be completely removed. We want to see Him face to face!

## Abiding With Him Now...

Those who are ready to meet Him when He comes will dwell with Him in His eternal home: the New Jerusalem. There will be no need for the sun or the moon to light up that place because the glory of God and of the Lamb will be the light of that glorious city. There will not be a visible temple because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb *are* the temple. Those who have learned to abide in Him in this world will abide in Him in the next. We are reminded of the words of John, "And now little children, abide in Him, so that when

*He shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming"* (1Jn 2:28). Remember that Jesus said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (Jn 14:23). The invisible God who dwells in Zion will fill all of New Jerusalem with His glory. That glory will shine forth throughout New Heaven and New Earth in the age to come.

## ...And For Eternity

The Lord Who dwelt between the cherubim shone forth on earth to His people Israel and through them to all the nations. That same God will shine forth throughout eternity from His throne in Zion. **How close do you want to be?** His servants will serve Him and they shall see His face. ***Dwelling in the most holy place now prepares us for the most holy place in eternity.*** We must live now as if we were there in the glorious presence of God. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life...he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." We will pass from this world to the next. The bodies of the saints who are ready to be caught up at the coming of the Lord will be changed to be like His glorious body.

So, first and foremost, the most holy place is that **glorious habitation of the Most High God**. The earthly tabernacle was only a pattern of the heavenly one. That most holy place which we are speaking of is for the saints who have been perfected in four primary aspects of God's divine nature: love, faith, holiness, and obedience to the will of God. These are eternal things, and are those things for which we should strive. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Look up, your redemption draweth nigh.

Set your affection on things above, not on the things of this world. If Christ is your life, when He shall appear, then you shall appear with Him in glory.

### Golden Pot Of Manna

To regress a little, there were some wonderful things found in the ark of the covenant which was in the most holy place. The golden pot which contained the manna reminds us of the **Word of God which is our daily bread** during our wilderness journey in this world. How we need the Word of God to sustain and nourish us as we press on toward the promised land above! Just as that bread from heaven was gathered every morning, be diligent to seek God early in the day and receive a word from heaven. That word will guide you to heaven. Jesus is the true bread which came down from heaven, and those who eat of Him will live by Him. Those who eat His flesh and drink His blood will have eternal life and He will raise them up at the last day.

### Aaron's Rod That Budded

Aaron's rod that budded was also kept in the ark. **We need the miracle working, resurrection power of God to work in our lives.** As the Holy Spirit, the glory of the Father, raised Christ from the dead, so we need the Holy Spirit to quicken our mortal bodies and to transform our inner man into the image of the Son of God. How God wants to show forth and make known His glorious power in these last days! Oh, church of God let us wait upon our God and receive His mighty power! As the psalmist said, "O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to every one that is to come" (Psa 71:18). People need to see that power.

### Stone Tablets

Also inside the ark could be found the two stone tablets of the covenant which God gave to Moses. Under the New Covenant, **God writes His law in our hearts and puts it in our minds.** Let us love the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and walk with God in sweet communion. His law is light to the souls of the redeemed. Let our hearts burn within us as we meditate on the sweet counsels of God given for our lives.

### The Mercy Seat

Speaking of the ark of the covenant, it was above this ark that the glory of God was witnessed to some extent by the high priest. God has made a covenant with us through Christ Jesus. He is our High Priest who is the propitiation for our sins. This is revealed in a shadow by the cover or lid of the ark. This cover was made of one piece of gold. It is known to us as the mercy seat. On either end of the mercy seat, made of the same piece of gold, were the two cherubims. Their faces were looking inward toward the mercy seat. Paul said, "We are laborers together with God." Jesus said, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor" (Jn 12:26). Those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes will be seen standing with Him on Zion in eternity. Let us look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. **Let us be one with Him.** "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21). □

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On June 30, 1860, a debate between the agnostic, Thomas Huxley, and the Anglican Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, was held at a meeting of the British Association in Oxford. The debate had been sparked off by the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* seven months earlier.

Wilberforce was an experienced and skillful debater. As well as being a theologian, he was an able naturalist. He was also well-versed in Darwin's theory and shortly before the debate, he had written a 19,000 word review of Darwin's book, which Darwin himself admitted was thoughtful and well written.

Wilberforce began the debate and after making several scientific points, concluded with Paley's argument that a watch implies the existence of a watchmaker and similarly design in nature implies the existence of a Designer. Huxley then arose and is said to have put forward his now well-known argument that six eternal monkeys or apes typing on six eternal typewriters with unlimited amounts of paper and ink could, given enough time, produce the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm of the Bible, a Shakespearean sonnet, and perhaps even a whole book, simply by randomly pressing the typewriter keys.

He went on to make his point that, in the same way, molecular movement, given enough time and matter, could produce a man,

purely by chance and without the work of any Designer or Creator. But is this true? Let us now consider some answers to Huxley's argument, an argument that is still advanced from time to time by modern-day evolutionists: that chance is a better explanation for origins than design.

Let us imagine a special typewriter, "user-friendly" to apes, with 50 keys, comprised of 26 capital letters, 10 numbers, one space bar, and 13 symbols for punctuation. For the sake of simplicity we shall disregard lower-case letters and settle for typing to be all in capitals, and we shall disregard leap years.

How long would it take an operator, on the average, to correctly type the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, by randomly striking keys? To obtain the answer, let us first consider the first verse of the Psalm, which reads: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

According to the Multiplication Rule of Probability in its most simplest form, the chance of correctly typing the three first letters of the Psalm which are "t, h, e" is 1 chance in 125,000 keystrokes. At a rate of one strike per second, the average time taken to make 125,000 strikes is 34.72 hours. So already we see that to type the simple word "the" by random chance is going to take us more than a day and that itself will only happen if we work constantly with no breaks. But now let us look at the chance of randomly typing the eight keys that are needed for the two words "the Lord" (seven letters and one space). To do this in the right sequence, we need to beat odds of 1 chance in 39,062 billion keystrokes. There are 31,536,000 seconds in a year, so the average time taken in years to make 39,062 billion strikes at the rate of one strike per second would be 1,238,663 years.

The time taken on the average to correctly type the whole of verse 1 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, which contains 42 letters, punctuation, and spaces, would be  $50^{42}$  (that is 50 with 42 zeros after it) divided by the 31,536,000 seconds that are in a year, which is  $7.2 \times 10^{63}$  years (this number would take up most of the page to fully write out!). Such vast numbers are already beyond our comprehension, but as we look further into this, it will get even worse for the faithful evolutionist.

The time taken on the average to correctly type the whole of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, made up of 603 letters, verse numbers, punctuation, and spaces, would be  $50^{603}$  divided by 31,536,000 which is  $9.552 \times 10^{1016}$  years! But the evolutionists say that the age of the Earth is only 4.6 billion years (a good deal shorter than the above number), and they say that the age of the universe is only 15 billion years.

Such a number is far too large for most people to comprehend. However, the late Sir Fred Hoyle, who was Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge University and was not a Christian, illustrated the point this way: *“Now imagine 100,000 billion billion billion billion billion blind people each with a scrambled Rubik cube and try to imagine of the chance of them all simultaneously solving the puzzle at the same time. The idea that the operating program of a living cell could be arrived at by chance in a primordial soup here on Earth is evidently nonsense of a high order”*

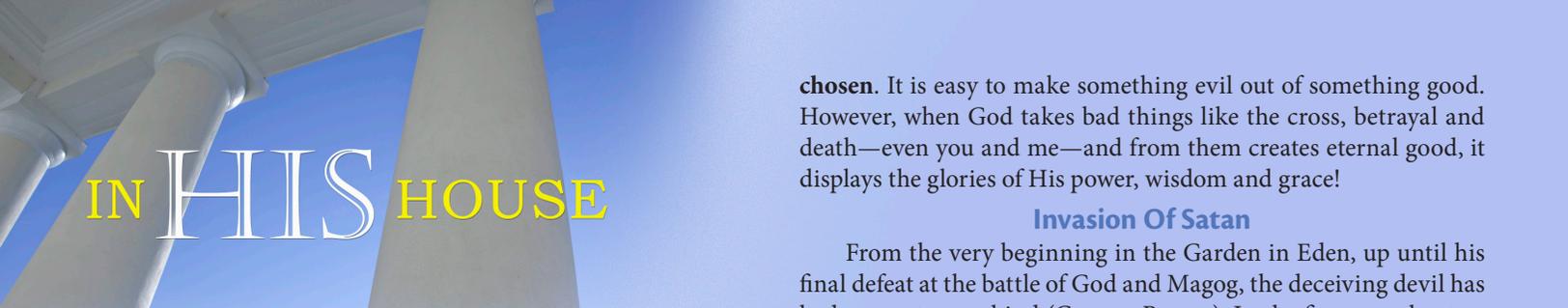
Nevertheless, ever since Thomas Huxley made his famous statement, others too, such as Stephen Hawking and Richard Dawkins, have made similar pronouncements about monkeys' randomly typing and being able to produce one of Shakespeare's sonnets or at least a sentence from one of his plays.

But when Plymouth University (UK) researchers installed a keyboard and computer screen in the monkey enclosure at Paignton Zoo, home to six Sulawesi crested macaques, it didn't result in a nicely typed set of the complete works of Shakespeare—not even a single word of the Bible. When the researchers gave six monkeys one computer for a month, what they got was...a mess.

The first thing the lead male did was to find a stone and start bashing the computer with it. Eventually, the younger ones came and pressed some of the keys. But most of the macaques' time was spent sitting or jumping on the computer. After one month, the monkeys had produced five pages of text, composed primarily of the letter 'S'. But there was not a single recognizable word in sight. The letter 'A' was the only vowel to be used, and it did not make an appearance until the fourth page. The theory that chance random combinations of living matter could produce the Bishop of Oxford, a living cell, or even a single functional protein molecule, whether in time or in eternity, therefore fails on all counts.

Life is overflowing with machinery, codes and programs, which cannot be explained using just the chemical makeup of substances alone. No observation has ever shown such information-bearing structures arising spontaneously. The obvious inference from science, as well as the obvious implications of Scripture, is that the original creation of living things involved the very opposite of chance: namely, the imposition of external intelligence onto matter by an original Designer or Creator. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” We are not the products of blind, random chance. We are a creation that is loved by its Creator. □

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# IN HIS HOUSE

## PART 4 — BAD THINGS

In this series, we have been studying different items that the scriptures record as being present in God's earthly dwelling places. Until now all the objects examined, though they may have appeared unexpected or unusual at first, were clean, blameless and good. But in this installment we will examine some of the **negative or "bad" things sometimes found in God's house**. It is counter-intuitive, or goes against common sense, to suppose that God would allow any evil in His house. How can bad things get into a good place, how can unclean things be found in a holy place? The very fact that evil exists is part of the mystery of iniquity that has troubled mankind for all of history. This problem along with the presence of pain and wickedness in the world has caused men to question how an all-knowing, all-powerful, loving God could allow any evil to exist at all. Some answers will not be fully revealed until after the rapture, when our earthly life is over and we are in that perfect place. Yet even now from God's Spirit and Word we can receive enough understanding to know that **God is wholly good, and will cause even evil to work for good to those whom He has called and**

**chosen**. It is easy to make something evil out of something good. However, when God takes bad things like the cross, betrayal and death—even you and me—and from them creates eternal good, it displays the glories of His power, wisdom and grace!

### Invasion Of Satan

From the very beginning in the Garden in Eden, up until his final defeat at the battle of God and Magog, the deceiving devil has had access to mankind (Gen 3 – Rev 20). In the first two chapters of the book of Job we read that when the sons of God presented themselves, that slanderer Satan, who had been roaming the world, was also seen accusing man before God. Believers therefore should not be surprised to find that *even after salvation they have an adversary in the physical and spiritual realms*—from the beginning, and until the end of their Christian lives on earth. In spite of what prosperity preachers claim or "easy believe-ism" evangelists teach, walking in the footsteps of Jesus is not a trouble-free journey. The Calvary road that Christ has called us to follow Him on is not a painless pilgrimage. In fact, our Lord had taken water baptism and was anointed with the Holy Ghost, received testimony from heaven that He was the Father's beloved Son who had done everything right; and yet right after this, everything seemed to go wrong for Him. He was driven by the Spirit into the desert to be *tempted by the devil* for forty days. The culmination of this time of testing was when Jesus was taken by the tempter on a trip to the top of the temple of God in Jerusalem (Lk 4:9). There Satan quoted scripture in order to make the Son of God fall both literally and spiritually. What would we think of anyone else having such experiences: visions given by Satan, carried to different

places by the devil, hearing that liar even twist scripture to deceive him—even while at the house of God?! From Jesus' temptations, we discover that **Satan may be allowed to attack us at any time, and anywhere.** The devil can go with us to church and may even do the driving. In spite of being within the walls of a house of worship, the **enemy can whisper an opposing message in our ear** or try to cause us to misuse and misinterpret the Word of God. There is no location or building on earth that can bring us closer to God; neither is there any that can keep us any further from the evil one. During the Great Tribulation, the devil's agent, Antichrist, will set himself up in the temple of God proclaiming himself God (2Thess 2:4). Let us not be ignorant of the devil's devices or be led astray by his cunning.

### Overcoming Temptations

When Jesus returned from the desert, He did not come back defeated or weakened by the wicked one, but was full of the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:14). The devil's tests are designed to make us fail but **God will use those same trials to make us victorious and stronger.** If we submit to God and resist the devil, the enemy will flee (Jam 4:7). Sadly, many of God's children do the opposite. **No man is immune to the devil's tricks and temptations,** but God has forewarned and *forearmed* us. We are exhorted to keep watch because our adversary is always prowling about like **a lion ready to devour us** (1Pet 5:8-10). Saints are commanded to put on and stand in the Lord's strength and power, and not in their own (Eph 6:10-11). We must not be taken unaware or think that we have it worse than anyone else. *"Do not be surprised at the painful trial you*

*are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. Your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings"* (1Pet 4:12; 5:9 NIV). It is **"in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"** (Rom 8:37). In order to have victories we have to have enemies. Though we are promised pain for a short while, **we are promised perfection forever.** We overcome because **greater is He that is in us** than he that is in the world (1Jn 4:4). No matter where or when the enemy appears, **with Jesus within we will always win.**

### Evil Men Within

It is not only Satan and evil spirits who strive to do us damage within and without the house of God, but evil men will attempt it as well. An example of this is seen in the life of David (1Sam 21-22). David was on the run for his life from the demonized King Saul. He fled to the tabernacle of God at Nob and was there given the priest's bread and Goliath's sword. (The sanctuary had been moved from Shiloh to Nob as part of God's judgment against the sons of the former high priest Eli.) While David was in the house of God, Saul's chief shepherd, Doeg the Edomite, was also there doing some religious duty. This same Doeg reported on David to Saul and ended up slaughtering the priests and everything in their town of Nob. While still on the run, alienated from his home and the house of God, David wrote a psalm about this experience. He sang that although some grow rich and strong by **slandering, gossiping and lying** about others, they will soon be uprooted from God's presence and from life itself, while **those who trust in God will be planted forever in His house** (Psa 52).

## Trusted Traitors

We might expect outside enemies to betray or lie about us, but when it is done by those ***within our own group or home it hurts all the more***. Yet the painful truth that traitors can only be those we trust and the fact that there are ***enemies within*** is witnessed again and again in the Bible. During a time of restoration, Nehemiah was warned to run and hide inside the temple by Shemiah who was probably a priest. It turns out that Shemiah had been bribed by enemies of the rebuilding: Tobiah and Sanballat (Neh 6:10; 2Pet 2:1-3). Later Nehemiah had to evict this same Tobiah who amazingly had been given rooms in the very house of God (Neh 13:7; Mat 21:12). In this there was a foreshadowing of Jesus casting out the businessmen who were ***turning His Father's house into a den of thieves***. Can it be in our day also that the ***fear of men, love of money and compromise*** are creeping into the church?

## Overcome Evil With Good

The worst betrayal that ever happened was within Jesus' own inner circle. Judas was one of the chosen twelve. He had seen and heard Jesus' miracles and preaching and done the same himself in Jesus' name. He was intimately acquainted with Jesus, and His movements. He was entrusted with the Lord's finances even though he stole from them. ***In the end he chose to sell the Savior to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver***. Yet all this was part of the plan of God for Christ on His path to the cross and to glory (Mat 27:9). Jesus was aware of this when He quoted the passage, ***“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me”*** (Psa 41:9; Jn 13:18). Nevertheless it was still the way He greeted Judas as he betrayed

Him with a kiss: ***“Friend”*** (Mat 26:50). Could we live with our betrayer as Jesus did and none of those around us suspect it? Our Good Shepherd can say, ***“I was wounded in the house of my friends”*** and He will comfort and sustain us when we suffer the same (Zech 13:6-7). We should not become bitter or seek revenge but rather look to the Lord who ***overcame evil with good***. Remember, at one time we were all sinners and traitors towards God.

## The Lord Knows His Own

Let us not be surprised by betrayal, either of us personally or of the truth of the Gospel, even when it comes from those close to us. Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God is like a field of wheat in which an ***enemy sowed tares***. It is like a net containing both clean and unclean fish. We will see ***“false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”*** ***“There shall be false teachers among you.”*** ***“Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things.”*** ***“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you”*** (2Cor 11:13; 2Pet 2:1; Acts 20:30; Jude 12). All this was written not to make us discouraged, paranoid or suspicious of everyone around us, but to forewarn and keep us ***looking to the Lord***. The good and the bad will be side by side until the Lord comes and decides who is selected and who is rejected. ***“In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. The Lord knoweth them that are His”*** (2Tim 2:19-20).

## Enemy #1: Ourselves

So far we have studied about Satan and traitors being found in God's earthly dwelling places and among His people. But there

is another source of “bad things” in the house of God which may be the most unexpected and destructive of all. It is not just obvious enemies like the devil, Doeg or Tobiah that bring evil into the house, but it is we ourselves that do it. Though outwardly we may appear clean and good, in our *minds we may be corrupt and enemies of God*. Unless we maintain continuous repentance, faith in Jesus and humility, we will quickly become like the Sadducees and Pharisees. These were self-righteous sinners whom Jesus had the most difficulty reaching—people who were *blind to their own sin* but sharp-eyed towards the faults and failures of others. They were those who mouthed and memorized scriptures but *did not really hear and apply* them to their own lives. When we are just outwardly religious how easily we can become *holy hypocrites and whited sepulchers!* It often takes eyes other than our own to reveal to us our hidden sin. It may take another’s voice to tell us, like the prophet did to David: *“thou art the man.”*

### Secret Sins

If God or one of His servants dug below the surface of our lives, what would be uncovered? One major instance of inward evil hiding in the house of God was exposed by a vision given to Ezekiel. The prophet was instructed to go to a hole in the wall of the temple and there dig to find a door. When he went through that door he was shown every kind of *creepy and unclean thing* portrayed all around the inner walls with Israel’s leaders worshiping in the midst of this mess. The Lord told Ezekiel this is what they *“do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery”* (Eze 8:12). The more the man of God looked, the more *hidden sin and rebellion* he discovered. Everyone had turned away from the true and living God to their *internal idols and images*. Because His people had already left Him in their hearts and minds, God

decided to depart from His house in Jerusalem. As the presence and glory of God lifted from the temple, judgment fell upon the wicked. Of course none of these honorable men and women were doing these abominations openly or publicly. It was only revealed by revelation. However in our own lives these things could be happening literally as well as in our imaginations. How many of us have secret suitcases or locked closets full of forbidden articles? How many of us have phone numbers, bank, email or internet accounts that we hide from parents, partners or family members? Yet *“nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account”* (Heb 4:13 NIV).

### Crystal Clear Life

*“We have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...to sympathize with our weaknesses...one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne...that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Heb 4:14-16 NIV).

**With Jesus Christ within we can overcome all evil and sin.** New Jerusalem, the eternal habitation of God, is made up of gold as translucent as glass and crystal clear living stones. From within, the glory of God and the Lamb will be the living light that radiates unhindered through those walls. Is there any place in that crystal city to hide sin, lusts, lies, and rebellion? **There will be no shadows, no enemies, and no bad things up there in God’s eternal habitation.** Since that City, the pure Bride of Christ, will be transparent, should we not now be the same? □

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“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Josh 1:7-8). Joshua was a man of the Word of God. As a spiritual leader, Joshua’s success in life and ministry depended upon his adherence to the holy commandments of God. Specific instructions were given to Joshua by God as to how he must handle the Word of God to be prosperous and successful: he was not to turn from it to the right or to the left; the book of the law should not depart out of his mouth; he was to meditate on it day and night; he had to observe and do according to all that was written in the Word of God. To the glory of God, Joshua exhibited strength and courage as he obeyed the Word of God. As a result, he became a good leader who led the march of the children of Israel into their promised land of Canaan.

### **No Alteration Of The Word**

God’s express command to Joshua was not to turn from the Word of God to the right or to the left. This signifies that he was not permitted to modify the words of God. **You and I have no sanction**

**from God to change His Word to suit our lifestyle.** We are to be conformed to the standards of God’s infallible and pure Word. We praise God for Joshua’s uncompromising determination to hold fast to the holy laws, commandments, statutes, and ordinances of God which were given to him by the hand of Moses, the servant of the Lord. As Joshua diligently practiced the Word of God, God gave him authority to teach it to the people of God: “*And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, ‘Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God’*” (Josh 3:9).

The Lord Jesus Christ taught the Word with authority. He claimed that His words were from the Father and that He was taught of the Father how to speak the Word. “*I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things*” (Jn 8:28). “*The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned*” (Isa 50:4). The doctrine of Christ was the unadulterated Word of the Father. Therefore with confident assurance Jesus said, “*heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away*” (Lk 21:33).

We are expected to live the Christian life by **every word** that proceeds out of the mouth of God. “*It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God’*” (Mat 4:4). We should neither add to nor take away from the holy scriptures. “*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*” (Rev 22:18-19).

The Word of God is a fire; it is a hammer; it is a sharp two-edged sword. Be careful while handling it. Seek wisdom from God to understand it. *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Tim 2:15). Neglect of the Word of God or lack of knowledge of the Word of God will bring ruin to our life. *“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you”* (Deut 4:2).

### **Holy Laws In Our Mouth**

As Joshua was given the charge to lead the people of God to the Promised Land, the Lord’s instruction to him was that “this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth.” This shows the vital importance of speaking the Word of God with faith. Joshua was full of the Word of God and always spoke the word of faith. With patience and faith in God’s Word, he inherited the promises.

The greater part of the ministry of Jesus and His disciples was by the spoken word. Jesus healed the sick and cast out the devils by His word (Mat 8:16). He revealed His glory, power, grace, and wisdom by the word He spoke. They marveled at His word. *“And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, ‘What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out’”* (Lk 4:36).

The servant of the Lord must learn to order his words carefully and wisely according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He must speak as the oracles of God. *“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts”* (Mal 2:6-7).

In order for us to speak the Word of God, our heart must be filled with the Word of God: for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Col 3:16). *“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach”* (Rom 10:8). When we speak the Word of God with grace and faith, miracles take place. *“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak”* (2Cor 4:13). Our God spoke the world into existence. Gracious words proceeded out of the mouth of Jesus. You and I need grace in our lips. *“Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever”* (Psa 45:1-2).

### **Meditation of God’s Word**

Joshua was commanded to meditate upon the Word of God day and night. By reading and meditating upon the holy scriptures each and every day, Joshua was reminded of the ways of God. He had to perceive and know the mind of the Lord, as he spent time in His Word and in prayer. ***A spiritual leader who forgets the holy laws of God will surely lead astray the people of God from the paths of righteousness.*** A daily searching of the Word of God is indispensable for ministers and believers who are awaiting the coming of the Lord. The will of God for our lives is contained in the volume of the scriptures. Therefore, unless we daily read and prayerfully meditate on the Word of God, we will not know the plan of God for our day-to-day Christian life. Jesus said, *“Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God”* (Heb 10:7).

God promised a successful and prosperous ministry for Joshua if he magnified the Word of God in his life and ministry. God's choicest blessings are for those who meditate upon His holy Word day and night. We should take great delight in God's Word. *"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"* (Psa 1:1-3).

The Psalmist loved the Word of God so much that he even forsook the comfort of sleep in order to meditate in the Word of God. He desired to see wonderful things in the holy laws of God. *"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Mine eyes prevent the night watches that I might meditate in thy word"* (Psa 119:97,148,18).

**In God's holy Word, we find a mine of wealth.** The Psalmist says, *"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil"* (Psa 119:162). Jesus said, *"the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"* (Jn 6:63). The Word of God is the word of grace and truth; it is the word of faith, love, and hope. God's Word is unchanging, infallible, and eternal. *"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven"* (Psa 119:89). The Word of God brings peace, purity, and prosperity into our lives. It makes us wise unto salvation. *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2Tim 3:15). When we study the Word of God, initially some verses may not have any impact on us. But at the right time, the Word of God will effectively work in our lives. Therefore, let us not neglect reading, meditating, and memorizing the Scriptures.

## Careful Observance & Practice of The Word

Joshua had to diligently observe and do all that was written in the Word of God—then blessings were guaranteed indeed. When we magnify the Word of God in our lives, God will honor us. Joshua's personal decision for himself and for his family was, *"as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Josh 24:15). The zeal of Joshua to be obedient to the holy commandments of God provoked the whole congregation of the children of Israel to serve the Lord. God magnified Joshua and blessed his ministry. *"The Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life"* (Josh 4:14). Finally Joshua entered the Promised Land and triumphantly led the congregation of the Lord into the land of Canaan to enjoy it. ***"Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua"*** (Josh 24:31). What a beautiful testimony!

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Joshua Who implicitly obeyed all the commandments of the Father. Jesus not only preached the Word, but also practiced it. *"Jesus began both to do and teach"* (Acts 1:1). After having done the whole will of the Father, our Jesus was exalted to be seated at His right hand in Zion (Heb 1:3).

Dear child of God, follow the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ because in Him we find all the fulfillment of the Word of God. Christ was the Word of God made flesh Who dwelt among us. *"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"* (Jn 1:14). As we continue to follow our Jesus, being obedient to His holy commandments, He will lead us to our heavenly inheritance, New Jerusalem and Mount Zion. Hallelujah! ☐

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Charmain James was born on July 16, 1969 in Georgetown, Guyana. She was only two years old when her mother died, and lost her father at the tender age of fifteen. As an orphaned teen, Charmain lived with her brother's family, and later moved to Canada at the age of twenty-five to live with her sisters. It was there that she met Clairmont Walcott, the man whom she married in July of 1996.

Charmain delivered with much difficulty their firstborn, Cordell, a year later. However, the joy over their newborn son was short-lived as he passed away three months later after contracting meningitis in the hospital. For Charmain, this tragedy, coupled with the effects of her physical afflictions, became the impetus for her search for God.

One day, her husband came home from the laundromat with a gospel tract; Charmain followed the address on that tract to the Grace New Covenant Pentecostal Church in Toronto, Canada. The ministers made a follow-up visit on this new soul and prayed with Charmain to receive Christ as her Savior. She continued to attend the church, went on to take water baptism, and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. One year later, through her life and testimony, her husband followed her in the waters of baptism and together they began to follow the Lord. In this new relationship with Christ, Charmain began to find answers to her questions and sorrows. In February 2002, God granted the desire of her heart when she gave birth to a son, Othniel.

Charmain was challenged by the deep things she was learning from God's Word and sought the Lord to strengthen her faith in Him. A growth in trust and personal sanctification became evident in

her life. Charmain was often heard speaking this burden of her heart: "I want to trust the Lord." The Lord, in turn, was speaking to her and increasing her faith from passages such as Isaiah 43:2, Psalm 46:10 and Hebrews 10:36.

Charmain was the embodiment of the virtuous woman found in Proverbs 31. She gave priority to her family and home; she loved her husband and son and devoted herself completely to their care. She counseled other sisters in the church to not yield to a secular mindset, but rather to follow God's Word in submitting to their husbands in every decision—and she practiced what she preached. Charmain was open to correction and counsel, while she was very forthright in all her speech and actions.

Her burden was not limited to her home alone: Charmain took a great burden for God's house as well. She was a Sunday School teacher and had a burden for young people. She organized activities for children and spent quality time with them. During the 2010 Toronto Convention, despite her physical afflictions, she was actively involved in meal preparation for over a thousand people. Charmain reached out to help the brethren in many ways, especially those who were new to the church: cooking them meals, taking them grocery shopping, and helping them move into new homes.

Charmain's battles in her body continued, yet she was experiencing God in a beautiful way. She was drawing closer to Him and changes became evident in her character. Meekness and a tranquility born of God's presence were especially evident in contrast to her increased physical afflictions. Weeks before her passing, God reminded her of something she had borrowed from a friend and had not yet returned. When her friend said that it was not necessary to give it back, Charmain replied, *"If I don't, how can I stand blameless before my God?"*

In February of 2011, Charmain gave the following testimony:

*“God has been really dealing with me through my health, among other things. Last night when I came to the tarry meeting, I was in a lot of pain and I wanted to go home, but God gave me grace to stay through and take Holy Communion. One of the prophecies during the meeting was about the coming of the Lord, and when I got home, I was meditating on it before I went to sleep. And just briefly, I had a dream. One of my older sisters and I were conducting some business in a certain building, and when we walked into the place, it was okay. But while we were in there, a woman walked in and said, ‘Everyone! Look outside!’ I took one look outside and what was sunny became gray and dull, what was grass became dust. Everyone was running to pick up their kids, husbands running to get their wives. It was just confusion. I was standing there and watching all these things happening, and there were little things that appeared to look like robots. And they were putting a security band on everybody’s wrists. Some people were trying to run to avoid the security band so they couldn’t be tracked. I thought I was going to get a band, but they passed me. It was almost like I was invisible. I was standing there and watching everything that was happening, and I thought the fact that I could see this meant that I had been left behind. In that moment as I was standing there, I heard these exact words, ‘This is the message you have been receiving all these years, to be ready and prepare yourself.’ Mothers were crying—there was one woman, beating the ground, crying out for mercy and for help—and no one was helping anyone, everyone was just running to get their families. And truly when I woke up this morning, I opened the Morning Manna, and the first thing I saw was: ‘Behold I come quickly.’ I thank God for the internal work He’s doing in different areas of my life. He is helping me.”*

Charmain had left to attend revival meetings in Montreal the weekend before the Lord took her home. Though her infirmity limited her ability to attend all the meetings, she was strengthened enough

after prayer to return to Toronto on Sunday evening. On Monday, she was feeling better, but she decided to take off work on Tuesday in order to rest. However, God had other plans for her, and on Tuesday morning, she slipped peacefully into the arms of Jesus.

Daniel 2:29-30 says, *“Thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and He that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation...”* While Charmain meditated on her bed about the coming of the Lord, God revealed to her this dream *‘of what should come to pass hereafter.’* Although Charmain thought she had been left behind, she didn’t realize that the reason for her invisibility was because she had already been taken from this world. Charmain came to a place where no one could put a band on her; she couldn’t be tied to this world, for she was living above all that was happening in this world. In her dream, Charmain saw mothers running for their children and husbands running for their wives, but not once in her dream did she think to look for her husband and her only son. God had already brought her to a place where she had surrendered them to His will and had the faith of the Son of God. Charmain chose to lay down her life, offering herself as an excellent sacrifice for the One Who gave Himself for her. She became a sacrifice on the altar and the consuming fire of God’s love took her. May the Lord help us to choose His Word over our own lives, that we may hear those two words that Charmain heard: “Well done!” □

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## *Are You Waiting To Be Called?*

Back when the telegraph was the fastest method of long-distance communication, a young man was seeking a job as a Morse Code operator. He noticed an ad for such a position in the newspaper and proceeded to the address that was listed.

He arrived at a large and busy office, resonating with all the noisy clatter one would expect at such a place—and, of course, the distinctive sound of a telegraph in the background. A sign on the receptionist's counter instructed job applicants to fill out a form and wait until they were summoned to enter the inner office.

The young man eagerly filled out his form and then sat down with the seven other applicants in the waiting area. A few minutes later, he abruptly stood up, crossed the room to the door of the inner office, and walked right in.

Naturally the other applicants perked up, peering whimsically at one another, wondering what was going on. They muttered among themselves that they hadn't heard any summons yet. This latecomer must have been overzealous, entered the office in unnecessary haste, and would soon be marched out and sent away. Within a few minutes, the employer escorted the young man out of the office—but then said to the other applicants, “Gentlemen, thank you very much for coming, but the job has just been filled.”

The other applicants began to grumble in protest, until finally one spoke up saying, “Wait a minute, I don't understand! He was the last to come in and entered your office without permission—yet we who have been patiently waiting out here never even got a chance to be interviewed. Yet he gets the job? How is that fair?!” The employer

replied, “I'm not sure what you were patiently waiting for. For the last several minutes while you've been sitting here, the telegraph has been ticking out the following message in Morse Code: ‘If you understand this message, then come right in. The job is yours.’ None of you were paying attention to the summons. This young man was. The job is his.”

Very often our lives are like that office, teeming with busyness, and surrounded by so much noise. Cell phones ring, music plays, newscasters drone on, and in the cacophony of the surrounding sounds, we tune out the still, small voice of God. Does He not speak through all of creation? Is His voice not heard in the Scriptures? Does He not call us through the life and work of Jesus Christ? Have not His words been resounding all throughout our lives? Can you hear the Lord when He speaks to you? Are you listening—or are you deafened by the noise, and still “waiting to be called”?

In these last days, the harvest is great but the laborers are very few. Many are sitting in the waiting room, while an urgent call is coming from the inner chambers. Many are called: but only few respond to the call to be chosen of the Lord for this work. In the midst of the commotion, *be still*: and you will know the voice of your God.

Isaiah was surrounded by so many sounds: angels crying, “Holy!” and the people all around, speaking with their unclean lips. Yet in the midst of all that, this was his testimony: “**Also I heard the voice of the Lord**, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then said I, ‘Here am I; send me’” (Isa 6:8). Hear God's voice, heed His call: the job can be yours!

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