

The Bible Standard



ABIDE WITH US

Abide With Us

— Luke 24: 13-35 —

(The Living Bible)

“THAT SAME DAY, SUNDAY, two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles out of Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking of Jesus’ death, when suddenly Jesus himself came along and joined them and began walking beside them. But they didn’t recognize him, for God kept them from it.

“You seem to be in a deep discussion about something,” he said. “What are you so concerned about?” They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. And one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about the terrible things that happened there last week.” “What things?” Jesus asked.

“The things that happened to Jesus, the Man from Nazareth,” they said. “He was a Prophet who did incredible miracles and was a mighty Teacher, highly regarded by both God and man. But the chief priests and our religious leaders arrested him and handed him over to the Roman government to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had thought he was the glorious Messiah and that he had come to rescue Israel.”

“And now, besides all this — which happened three days ago — some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning and came back with an amazing report that his body was missing, and they had seen some angels there who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, Jesus’ body was gone, just as the women had said.”

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘You are such foolish, foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures! Wasn’t it clearly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory?’ Then Jesus quoted them passage after passage from the writings of the prophets, beginning with the book of Genesis and going right on through the Scriptures, explaining what the passages meant and what they said about himself.

“By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus would have gone on, but they begged him to stay the night with them, as it was getting late. . . . As they sat down to eat, he asked God’s blessing on the food and then took a small loaf of bread and broke it and was passing it over to them, when suddenly — it was as though their eyes were opened — they recognized him! And at that moment he disappeared!

“They began telling each other how their hearts had felt strangely warm as he talked with them and explained the Scriptures during the walk down the road. Within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem, where the eleven disciples

and the other followers of Jesus greeted them with these words, ‘The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter!’

“Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.”



“Lift up a standard for the people” — Isa. 62: 10

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On the Way to Emmaus

*Two hours walking and talking with a stranger
— and life would never be the same again.*

SETTING OUT FROM JERUSALEM with heavy hearts and flagging steps, Cleopas and his companion agonized over the events of the past few days, their faith defeated, their hopes dashed. They were not silent. In their perplexity they recalled and re-examined what had seemed impossible to doubt — that Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and in word, should have been the promised Redeemer of Israel. But three days before, He had been ignominiously condemned to death by crucifixion, and laid in a borrowed tomb — a dead and helpless Redeemer!

The stranger walking their way fell into step and listened a while with courteous interest to their bewildered converse. His gentle questioning drew from the travellers the sad account of hopes raised and then crushed, of joy overtaken in deepest grief and loss. “We *trusted*,” they said — and now it seemed that their trust had been unfounded.

Their waking hours had been inspired by an increasing conviction that through this man Jesus the hopes of Israel from ancient times would come to fruition. Indeed, the Master Himself had not only affirmed that this was His mission, but His ministry of teaching and healing, His miraculous powers, His transparent purity and sinlessness, and His undoubted relationship to His Heavenly Father all evidenced that He was sent from God.

The Growing Certainty

Guided by a wisdom that taught Him when to speak, and when to be silent, Jesus chose the ones to whom He would reveal His true identity. When John the Baptist sent an urgent inquiry from his prison cell, seeking assurance that his own understanding was not mistaken, Jesus obliquely drew attention to the evidence — the blind received their sight, the deaf their hearing, the lame were made to walk, lepers were healed, the poor had the Gospel preached to them (Matt. 11: 2-5). Good news? Yes indeed!

Yet some at least of those who became Apostles had more than an inkling — even from their earliest acquaintance with Jesus — that He was the Messiah. Andrew, and John (who later recorded the event in his Gospel (1: 41)) had eagerly taken the news to their own brothers, Peter and James.

Later, the time was ripe for Jesus to make it more plain to His disciples. First asking them what people in general said of about Him, and receiving vague answers, He pressed for their own thoughts on the matter. Peter’s answer was positive: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16: 16). Peter no doubt spoke for the Twelve, and Jesus at that time charged them not to make the matter common knowledge — “tell no man” (Matt. 16: 20).

While the people in general were not ready to receive such challenging news, there were occasions when Jesus put them to the test. At the synagogue in Nazareth, where all knew His family background, He courageously identified Himself as God’s elect Servant, spoken of by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 42: 1; Luke 4: 21). They were half persuaded at first, marvelling at His eloquence. But He knew how fickle they were, and aroused their vindictive anger by reminding them how God had sometimes sent His prophets to outsiders, rather than to Israel. On that occasion they were ready to kill Him, but by Divine protection He was delivered.

“I am He”

Jesus’ encounter with a woman of Samaria also foreshadowed the wider purpose of Messiah’s advent. Israel’s stiff-necked resistance to the manner of His coming, so different from what they had hoped for and expected, would in time throw open to all nations the privileges that might have been exclusively theirs. The disciples wondered why Jesus talked with a Samaritan woman, and one of no good reputation. Yet to her He chose to reveal His mission:

*The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he
— John 4: 25, 26*

The time came when caution was no longer appropriate. Arrested and brought before the assembled chief priests, elders, and scribes, Jesus at first held His peace. Urgently requiring His admission of guilt on the grounds of blasphemy, the high priest demanded: “Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus answered, “I am” (Mark 14: 53, 61, 62).

“We Trusted . . .”

In the light of all the convincing evidence gathered, all the compelling words of wisdom they had heard while sitting at His feet, all the confidences He had imparted especially to the chosen few — the shattering blow of the Master’s death was almost unbearable. The despondency of Cleopas and his companion — shared no doubt by most of the Lord’s followers — evoke our deepest compassion. We, too, have experienced the emptiness of unfulfilled hopes. We have at times undermined our faith and vexed our minds. God’s people cannot be strangers to sorrow, and sometimes we, like the early disciples, have been overcome by melancholy and apt to withdraw from the scene to nurse our wounds and wrestle with the Lord.

Most often, it is not that we feel the Lord has failed us. Rather, our own failures cause the deepest distress, but they also bring us valuable instruction and correction. And if we have at any time taken a wrong course we may expect disappointment, though some blessings in the way of contrition of heart and greater humility may result. We see, therefore, that even some of the blunders of life may become

stepping stones to greater development in the graces of Christian character and in godly wisdom.

OUGHT NOT CHRIST TO HAVE SUFFERED?

In great need of comfort — even from a stranger — the two sorrowing disciples at once sensed that here was a man they could confide in. Caution in speaking openly of such matters no longer seemed important, and baring one's grief to another does somehow impart a measure of relief. His manner was reassuring, and His evident powers of reason soon gained their close attention.

True, His first words conveyed a mild rebuke: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24: 25). There was no sting in the words; besides, no reproach could now deepen their sense of failure and loss. They must endure their period of mourning for what might have been; life would go on, and the glorious hopes of recent times would fade like a dream.

That the Savior must suffer and die had been furthest from their thoughts during His ministry. During those brief years, with an optimism natural to those who trust supremely in the love and mercy of God, and who believe His promises, they saw only the glory that should come when the restoration of His people would be accomplished, and when all would be blessed. Those hopes now lay in the dust. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24: 21).

The Voice of Reason

But with what stirring uplift of their spirits did they follow the stranger's discourse as He opened up the Scriptures to their dull minds! How their thoughts took wings and soared to new heights of understanding — not flights of fancy — for this learned stranger taught with a persuasive logic, reasoning from one prophecy to another, to explain the sequence of events that had until now so grieved and perplexed them. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (v. 26).

Never a journey passed so quickly! Tracing in the Word of God the prophecies concerning the Messiah, the stranger brought into focus all those apparently contradictory features they had so often wondered about. Glory there was, indeed, but suffering also. *Ought not . . . ?* Was it not *necessary* that Christ should die as an offering for sin? And did He not indeed foretell His own death?

The Divine purpose in sending a Savior into the world was the recovery of mankind from a deadly sentence, and the taking upon Himself of human nature was done that He might offer His own life in exchange for the forfeited life of

Adam and all his progeny. The fellow-traveller patiently showed the Emmaus companions how the prophets had "testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (*see*, 1 Pet. 1: 11).

Beginning at Moses

There was evidence aplenty. Perhaps the Lord carried their minds back to the original promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The crushing of evil was there pictured, and that it would cost Messiah something of suffering was also implied. Again, Abraham's offering of Isaac as a sacrifice and receiving him back alive showed that Messiah must die and be raised from the dead. Moses had also recorded beforehand in great detail the sufferings of Christ, pictured in the Passover Lamb and in the sin offerings of the Atonement Day.

Isaiah, too, had portrayed the rejected man of sorrows, the one brought as a lamb to the slaughter, cut off out of the land of the living — the suffering Messiah. *The glory could not come first!* Their recent vision of a kingdom restored to the glory of former days, a waiting nation reinstated as God's chosen, and the prospect of a brave new world beyond, was not mistaken — but prematurely conceived.

And so it began to dawn upon their minds that they had believed and focussed on all the glorious aspects of God's promises, but had failed to give proper weight to the unpleasant, sacrificial features of the Divine plan, fundamental to reconciliation between God and man and necessary that the blessings might flow — that the *glory* might follow.

Abide With Us!

The narrative does not tell with what amazement the disciples looked at their companion and wondered at His knowledge of the Scriptures, so much greater than their own, and greater than that of the other apostles. No wonder that on reaching home they urged Him to stay the night, loath to part from one whose fellowship brought such gladness. "Abide with us . . . the day is far spent!" And he went in to tarry with them."

It was as He asked a blessing on the bread that their ears — as if suddenly unstopped — recognized with utter astonishment the familiar cadences of their Master. And He at that moment vanished from their sight.

The two disciples were thoroughly animated. Their thoughts flew again over His discourse on the way, and now they knew why their hearts had fired up, why it was that on their short journey they had been conveyed to new heights of joy and to new depths of understanding. He had cleared



away the misconceptions, pointed out the fulfillment of prophecy and renewed their faith in the promises of God.

“The Lord is Risen Indeed”

And what was it the women had said? Jesus’ body was missing, and angels had told them He was alive! How the two regretted their incredulous dismissal of that report. They could not now be content to rest at home, knowing that other dear hearts were still perplexed, but hastened back to Jerusalem to pass on the wonderful news.

The apostles and others were gathered there already. They needed no persuading as to the truth. Simon Peter also had seen the Lord, and as they each told of their experiences, Jesus Himself appeared among them. Surely the color drained from each face, as they gazed at what seemed to their confused thoughts to be an apparition! Mindful as always of their frailty, He hastened to reassure them. “Peace be unto you,” He said, and showing that His body was of a normal, earthly substance, and that He was hungry, He calmed their troubled thoughts and turned their attention again to the Scriptures:

These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures
— Luke 24: 44, 45

Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise on the third day. They were eyewitnesses of these things, and must carry the good news of salvation to the whole world.

DID NOT OUR HEARTS BURN?

Centuries have elapsed, and the Lord’s followers have often walked an Emmaus road of doubt and near-despair. The false doctrines of the Dark Ages cast a gloom of fear and disquiet over many Christian hearts, and not all are yet free even in our day from deceptions imposed upon the vulnerable by a powerful adversary (1 Pet. 5: 8).

Some of us, in times past, understood only in fragments that in some way, at some time, Jesus would rescue mankind from sin and its legacy of sorrow and death. We clung, perhaps, to what was little more than an *instinct* that with Him lay the answer to the world’s distress.

But thanks be to God, many are blessed by having walked in daily company with the risen Jesus, and have shared this experience with others of faith. Our hearts burned within us as He fanned our flickering faith into a blaze of love. How did He do this? Through the kindly concern of some dear servant of the Lord? By a word fitly spoken in time of need? By the ministry or example of a more mature traveller along the Emmaus road? All of us can trace the providential leadings of Divine grace as we came to

know the Lord. And Christ is instructing us still, on our journey through life’s experiences.

Abide With Us!

There is no parting of the way. It is for us as for Cleopas and his friend — we cannot but entreat Him to remain with us, offering Him the humble hospitality of our hearts and our homes. All we have, and are, and hope to be, are His for all time. He does not impose Himself upon us uninvited, but responds gladly to the urgent welcome of those whose friendship and loyalty are undoubted.

The passing years in company with the Lord and His followers bring maturity. Who has not noticed the blessing that comes to those who meet together, remembering the words of the prophet: “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it” (Mal. 3: 16)?

Some are not so situated that they can meet often with others of the same persuasion. While Jesus promised to be with the twos and the threes gathered together in His name, the isolated should not feel disappointed that He did not promise the same to the solitary ones. There is a *fellowship of the spirit* that does not depend on our bodily presence with one another (Phil. 2: 1, 2). The tie that binds our hearts in Christian love transcends the limitations of time and space, so that the true child of God is never alone.

In The Secret of His Presence

*In the secret of His presence
how my soul delights to hide:*

*Oh, how precious are the lessons
which I learn at Jesus’ side.*

*And my Savior rests beside me,
as we hold communion sweet;
If I tried, I could not utter
what He says, when thus we meet.*

*Would you like to know the sweetness
of this secret of the Lord?*

*Go and hide beneath His shadow,
this shall then be your reward.*

*And when’er you leave the silence
of that happy meeting place,
You must mind and bear the image
of the Master in your face.*

— G.C. Stebbins

* * *

The Secret of the Lord

Who Shares It?

HOW DOES IT FEEL to be one of those in whom the great Creator confides? And what rare and awe-inspiring sense of privilege comes with the awareness that one has been granted some insight — small though it may yet be — into the mind of the Eternal?

It is not a matter of pride, but rather of humble gratitude, that we should be among those relatively few in number who have found favor in God's sight, and become His friends. We are in good company.

- Noah was a righteous man who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6: 8, 9). To him, God confided His intention to destroy the corrupt society of that day.

- Abraham also believed God, and “it was imputed unto him for righteousness” (Jas. 2: 23). “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?” (Gen. 18: 17).

- Amos stated a general truth when he said: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3: 7). The prophets all expressly declare that what they are recording is the Word of God.

- The Lord Jesus told His disciples: “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.” “I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Mark 4: 11; Matt. 13: 35).

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

In worldly administration, for reasons of security certain information is not available to those outside a restricted group. Some governments have enacted official secrets legislation, making it a criminal offense for staff in security and intelligence services to disclose information about their work. Pressure groups are always active in urging for open discussion in all governmental affairs and, inevitably, some classified information, in spite of the secrecy, becomes common knowledge.

Information Technology

It is indeed difficult — perhaps impossible — to keep any matter under cover in today's world. In spite of secret service law-enforcement departments, investigation bureaus and secret police, the “information superhighway” sends all manner of data indiscriminately from one end of the earth to the other, flooding society with news reports, propaganda, misinformation, rumor, gossip, trivia, and a miscellany of facts. Such a stupendous channel of communication is impossible to police.

UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION

It has never been God's intention to keep His purposes for planet Earth a closely guarded secret. As we have seen, although by reason of sin the original filial relationship of man with his Creator was forfeited, God in His great mercy nevertheless acknowledges the good intentions of those who seek Him, and they are rewarded. *He takes them into His confidence.*

The secrets imparted, the hints, the hopes, the promises, are not “classified” or restricted by any Divine legislation intended to keep the vast majority of the human race in the dark. Yet the information apparently so openly available is by some means protected from the eyes and ears of the unworthy. Our Lord thanked the Father that the holy things were hidden from those who were (in their own estimation) “wise and prudent,” but were revealed unto “babes” (Matt. 11: 25). He spoke often in parables and dark sayings, which served to hinder the merely inquisitive from acquiring undeserved privileges, but said: “unto you — my disciples — it is given to *know*.”

Knowledge from on High

David tells us that “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant” (Psa. 25: 14). The Hebrew word here translated “fear” is *yare*, and signifies awestruck reverence, which recognizes God's greatness and seeks His smile of approval. Reverence is shown to be the *key* which unlocks the secret things, and without that key, none can enter.

Not Exclusive

The Word of the Lord that came to the prophets of old was not for their own selfish comfort but was intended as a fund of knowledge for the faithful of all time. It would so inspire them that the message would be carried forward from generation to generation, its urgent purpose being to restore humankind to harmony with their Creator. The achievement of this purpose is yet future, but those in the “secret” are able by their knowledge to trace the progress of the Divine program towards this glorious climax, and we can truly say with the Apostle Paul: “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13: 11).

FRIENDS OF JESUS

Our Lord undoubtedly regarded the travellers to Emmaus as friends. A few days before that memorable conversation, Jesus had talked intimately with His apostles, impressing upon them their special relationship with Him: “No longer do I call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because

all that I have heard from the Father I have made known to you” (John 15: 15, *Weymouth*). At their parting, Jesus instructed His disciples: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16: 15).

The message of salvation was carried worldwide thereafter — on foot, on horseback, by sail. Early instruments of commerce conveyed it, trade winds drove it, soldiers took it (unwittingly) to distant outposts of the empire. Kings espoused it, and common people received it gladly. Wherever a heart was found that truly revered the Lord God of Heaven, His secrets were imparted and treasured.

The Whole Counsel of God

The evangelists, those messengers of good news, set down in writing their record of Jesus’ advent; the apostles wrote instructive epistles to the newly formed churches, and these, added to the earlier revelations through the prophets, presented God’s manifesto for the rescue of a dying world, and its restoration in due time to Edenic perfection.

Many lost their lives for the Gospel’s sake. The sacrificial ministry of the Lord Jesus was the pattern for His followers. St. Paul, whose background, training, and logical mind gave the Gospel a persuasive power, both for Jews and Gentiles, suffered scourgings, imprisonments, shipwrecks, perils of many kinds, hunger and thirst, pain and weariness, for the sake of the ministry. His courage was extraordinary. “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God,” he said, and this was the driving force in his life (Acts 20: 27). So great was his insight into the secrets of the Lord that his ministry rendered God’s Word an open book for many.

The Publishers

“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psa. 68: 11). How true this is! At great cost to human life, Bibles have flooded the world and been made available to all who seek after God the secrets of His great plan to restore life and peace to suffering humanity.

But while millions looked into its pages, comparatively few comprehended its secrets. Just as the nation of Israel as a whole killed their prophets, stoned God’s messengers and rejected the Messiah, so with Christendom — the vast majority *who call themselves Christians*, are still in darkness. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7: 14).

Preaching the Gospel Achieves God’s Purpose

It was not forecast that the whole world would *respond*, but the *witness* was given in order to gather out from all nations a faithful people, an utterly loyal body of believers who have become, as it were, Abraham’s children because of their faith. Christ is the promised “seed” of Abraham, and those who belong to Christ share with Him the joyful prospect of bringing blessings to all families of the earth (Matt. 24: 14; Gal. 3: 8, 16, 29).

*When God says through the prophet Isaiah:
“Come now, and let us reason together”
(1: 18), He is extending the hand of
friendship to each one of us, is ready
to share His thoughts with us, and
confirms that in His view we are
capable of comprehending the mind
of God to the extent that He
reveals Himself to us.*

SO THE WORLD STILL HAS A CHANCE?

John 3: 16, 17 says it all: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

Though the world in general, have not so far believed, *they shall*. God has willed it so (1 Tim. 2: 4). None are saved by ignorance, and as the Scriptures declare: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4: 6). Jesus praised the Father, saying “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent” (John 17: 3).

Life eternal! How can it be? *How can it be otherwise!* Christ gave His life a ransom for all, paid man’s penalty for sin, and in justice God must release the condemned world from the sentence of death and give them a full opportunity to *know* the only true God. This is why Christ returns, bringing “times of refreshing” (Acts 3: 19-21). This is why God has appointed a day when Christ will judge the world in righteousness (Acts. 17: 31). This is why the faithful have so long prayed, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

The Knowledge of the LORD

God has promised that in that day, “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11: 9), and that “they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them” (Jer. 31: 34).

But, one might ask, since the message of salvation in Christ has until now fallen mostly on deaf ears, how can we realistically hope that the future prospect will be any better? Because we believe His Word! Did Christ die to save a modest number of Adam’s offspring? Was He prepared to write off the vast majority as forever lost? No! He died for *all*, and the philosophy and logic of the ransom sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is a fascinating study (1 John 2: 2).

As in our day, so it ever was: the ways of the present world seem more attractive to most men and women than a life dedicated to purity of heart and to godly living. Yet there

is an underlying discontent, a feeling of dissatisfaction, a lack of fulfillment. The unspoken question: "Is this all there is . . . ?" betrays their instinctive need, a sense of incompleteness and loneliness. Some elusive malfunction has disturbed all humankind and severed their connection to the Source of all life and happiness. Few realize that sin is the cause, and even the noblest and most intelligent of unbelievers find it hard to accept that a life-time of learning and achievement and development is lost in oblivion when death takes another victim. It is a grief and an enigma to them.

How they will rejoice to be awakened to new life when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth (John 5: 28, 29)! The broken links will be mended, the misconceptions swept away, and the secrets of the Lord made clear to restored mankind as He writes His laws in their hearts, reviving in each one the image and likeness of the God who created them (Isa. 28: 17; Jer. 31: 33; Gen. 1: 26).

CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT

The vast educational program to be set up under the direction of God's "information super-highway of holiness" will ensure that nobody is left uninformed. While the prophet Isaiah puts this in poetic terms (chapter 35), Christ's Kingdom is not merely a Utopian fiction — it is the logical outcome of God's plan of salvation, and involves a period of intense instruction for the citizens of the new administration.

Today, more than ever, the practical means of achieving a worldwide hearing of the Word of the Lord has opened up

to us. The information explosion and the revolution in travel and communications are clear fulfillments of prophecy (Dan. 12: 4). And perhaps cyberspace — those imaginary, interactive worlds created by networked computers — will be an integral part of that new world order, when our prayer is answered, and Christ's Kingdom is come.

In simple terms we are told that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2: 3). It is not important for us to know beforehand the exact details of Christ's governmental processes. But who can say what Divine technology exists which will *ensure* that all humankind — every descendant of father Adam who shared his sentence of death — will be enlightened as to the way to everlasting life?

The darkness dispelled, the deaf ears unstopped, the blind eyes opened, and the tears wiped away, a great song of rejoicing will fill the earth, as reverent hearts proclaim: "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee

— *Psa. 67: 1-5*

* * *

of interest . . .

A device that attaches to a normal mobile, or cell, phone and allows patients to check their breathing and heart rate has been designed and developed by researchers at Lucent Technologies' Bell Labs in the United States. The device monitors the microwaves transmitted by the mobile phone using an antenna and sensor which pick up the respiratory and heart activity of a patient. The microwaves bounce back to the phone from the chest, heart and lungs of the person using it, and an add-on module reads the signals to produce a pattern of the user's heart beat and breathing. The information is then sent to a remote health monitoring center using the existing telephone network.

It is estimated that 100 million in the U. S. alone suffer from chronic health problems such as heart disease and lung disorders. Telemedicine, the term given to the use of telecommunications for diagnosis, treatment and patient care, is set to become a multimillion dollar industry. In Britain, Prime Minister Tony Blair has promised to connect every General Practitioner's office to broadband by 2006. This would enable remote diagnosis using video-conferencing.

* * *

A tiny futuristic camera capsule is allowing patients to go about their daily lives while pictures from inside their body are taken to help hospital doctors with diagnosis and treatment. The camera pill, complete with minuscule lights, saves patients from sometimes uncomfortable and unpleasant examinations.

By swallowing a small capsule that contains a tiny color camera, the patient is free to carry on normally for the six to eight hours it takes for the capsule to work its way through the digestive system. The capsule provides about 40,000 images, and beams the pictures via radio waves to a small receiver worn by the patient. These are then downloaded from the receiver to a computer, to be analyzed by a doctor. Research is being conducted on how this technology and the use of color pictures might help diagnose Crohn's disease, a common inflammatory infection of the small bowel.

— *Selections from the British Broadcasting Corporation*

BIBLE QUESTION BOX

Q Please explain Matt. 19: 24, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

A To understand this verse, we need to consider its context in Matt. 19: 16-26 (parallel accounts are found in Mark 10: 17-27 and Luke 18: 18-27). A rich young man came to Jesus, asking how he might inherit eternal life. He had heard of Jesus, His teachings of Messiah, and His miracles.

Coming to Jesus openly, despite the persecuting spirit of the rulers and teachers in Israel was commendable, and manifested his faith in Jesus.

Jesus reminded him of the commandments. He then replied, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” (v. 20). He had observed the Mosaic Law and had fashioned his character in conformity to its precepts. The young man’s earnestness and sincerity drew the Master’s appreciation. “Then Jesus beholding him loved him” (Mark 10: 21).

The Revealing Test

The young man’s heart was close to that of a true disciple of Christ, but lacked the spirit of complete consecration to the will of God, a weak spot in his character that Jesus sought to point out by applying a simple test: “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (v. 21).

This requirement revealed that the young man loved *self* more than either God or his neighbor. He had failed to keep the Law and its spirit in the two important principles upon which the Law and Prophets were based: The first is *supreme love to God* — which manifests itself in singleness of purpose to do His will and to please Him; the second is *to love neighbor at least equal to one’s self love* (Matt. 22: 37-40).

The account continues, “He went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (v. 22). Jesus turned to His disciples and said, “Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven” (v. 23).

What is Needed to Enter the Kingdom

Our Lord impressed upon His followers what was needed by each one aspiring for a share in God’s Kingdom. In this sinful world, before the general salvation for the world of mankind opens, the Christian disciple must travel the way of self-denial and self-sacrifice (Matt. 16: 24). The minimum requirements are:

- (1) *duty love* — supreme love to God and the desire to bless one’s neighbor, one’s fellow man, as oneself; and
- (2) *unselfish love* — the good will that out of sheer delight in good principles goes out to others in appreciation, heart’s one-

ness, sympathy or pity — a love that selflessly denies oneself in the interest of others.

Our Lord’s statement, “Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor” (v. 21), has frequently been misunderstood and needs some explanation. The young man did not inquire how to go about doing this, but had he done so, our Lord likely would have offered some practical suggestions. He may have explained that, as the Lord’s steward of his wealth, he must use his means and possessions for the good of others, as a wise benefactor, especially along the lines of advancing God’s purpose and Plan. And not only his wealth — one’s stewardship includes other things, such as one’s time, talents, and reputation.

The Scriptures are silent as to what became of the young man. We cannot conclude that because he was not ready to consecrate his life to God and become a disciple of Christ at that time, that he therefore lost all further opportunity to gain eternal life.

The Camel and Eye of the Needle

One explanation of the camel and the eye of the needle, appears in *The New Creation*, pp. 574, 575:

The large cities of the East in olden times had great gates which were closed at sundown, and not permitted to be opened until morning, lest an enemy should take advantage and make an attack. But they had small gates which were guarded, and through which a man might enter and might even bring in his camel, by taking off the load and permitting the animal to crawl in on its knees. These small gates were called *needle’s eyes*. Thus a rich man may gain access to the Kingdom, but not encumbered with earthly riches or treasures. These must be laid off.

When the disciples heard our Lord’s caution, they were nonplussed and asked, “Who then can be saved?” (v. 25). Their amazement was probably based on their feeling that if this were true for the many religionists of Israel, who were of the wealthy, and who had all the opportunities of time, influence, and money, then they, who were of the poor and lowly class, would have little chance, if any, of winning everlasting life.

Jesus encouraged them with the words, “with God all things are possible” (v. 26). If the heart is pleasing to the Lord — regardless of social standing — He knows how to guide the believer through to eternal life.

* * *

THE YOUNG MAN watched his brother furtively, his sidelong glances noting the tranquil, innocent features and the open-hearted conduct that so clearly endeared him to the others. What was it about this fellow that he found so irritating that it brought the blood to his head and bitterness to his soul? It wasn't as if the lad bore him any malice or was in any way unfriendly — quite the reverse. Even God seemed to smile on him and approve all he did. Yet all this biased regard for his brother gnawed at Cain's nervous sensibilities, so that he was never at peace.

Thus, so soon after the perfect man and woman sinned and fell from grace, that green-eyed monster, *jealousy*, reared its ugly head, with disastrous results (Gen. 4: 3–15).

Are Any Immune?

Jealousy in its most commonly accepted sense is the suspicion or fear of being displaced by a rival. It involves possessiveness, feelings of inferiority, and resentment. From earliest childhood such twisted emotions can take root in the character and can fester and destroy the well-being of those who allow this cruel monster to rule in their lives.

Because we all have inherited human weakness, we are all potential victims, and few can rightly claim never to have experienced the searching, self-destructive pangs of jealousy. The Lord's people are not immune. Jealousy is one of the great foes that confront every Christian. It should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man, and of every good principle.

As with Cain and Abel, and later in the case of Joseph and his brothers, the ties of blood were no protection against such destructive emotion, so our spiritual relationship with brothers and sisters in the Christian faith does not make us invulnerable to the "green eye" of jealousy. Human frailty leaves the door open for the monster to creep in, and we are apt to complain:

- Why am I less loved than another?
- Why isn't my work valued like that person's?
- I'm always given the dirty jobs!
- She was invited, I wasn't!
- God chastises me more than others!
- It's not fair, nobody listens to what I say!

Childish? Immature? Yes — and *painful* When human mothers and fathers witness the sibling rivalry of their children, are they not grieved? So, also, our Heavenly Father must sorrow to see His consecrated children display the unreasoning and futile emotion that betrays a lack of trust in His justice and love!

Reading Cain's heart and seeing the spirit of contention that prompted his offering, God could not give it the respect that Abel's offering elicited, based on purer motives. And Cain's countenance fell. Facial expression is usually an

accurate guide to one's state of mind, and like Cain, the jealous find their fault very hard to conceal: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Gen. 4: 7). Ominous words! And Cain did not heed the warning.

Responsibility to Children

We cannot know to what extent Adam and Eve were to blame for their first son's obsessive jealousy of Abel. Perhaps when the second son was born, the trauma of losing God's favor, losing Eden, losing life, had diminished a little. Accepting what still remained of His mercy, and grateful for the glimmer of hope imparted, they resolved to count their blessings (Gen. 3: 15).

Children still differ widely in their predispositions along the lines of character, and careful watching and guidance in the early years is one of the greatest challenges of parenthood. One child will be more sunny and attractive than another, and will — in spite of the parents' best intentions — be granted greater indulgence.

The more difficult child will observe and be hurt, with fallen face. It seems that personal preferences are often inevitable, and they are extremely difficult to hide. But for the sake of the child who is vulnerable to imagined (or real) lack of esteem and love, every effort must be made by the Christian parent to reassure, comfort, and banish the fear.

We have in the parable of the Prodigal Son an example of a wise father's reaction to a loyal son's jealousy: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine" (Luke 15: 31). Parental and filial love matures with the passing years, if early pitfalls are avoided, and family relationships can all be deeply valued, while being *different* in kind.

Slay the Monster at Sight

Jealousy is as cruel as the grave. As a spiritual disease it eats away at the well-being of those afflicted, and if unchecked, ultimately destroys them. Careers may be ruined, friendships lost, and marriages broken, through the power of obsessive jealousy. Once affected, only with great difficulty can the mind be cleansed from it entirely. And not only the sufferer is affected. The poisonous fangs of the green-eyed monster are certain to inflict pain and trouble on others, and cause distress to all onlookers who witness in action this most pernicious of human emotions.

Yet even when "sin lieth at the door" as in the case of Cain, jealousy is not a fault that can *never* be forgiven. Cain regretted that God's face was now hidden from him — a small sign of penitence, and the Lord's merciful course with him foreshadowed His grace in due time towards a guilty, jealousy-driven world. As Christians, our due time is now. The love of Christ constrains us, and that love is not envious, nor easily provoked, but rejoices in the truth.

* * *

The Green-Eyed Monster

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

— Prov. 14: 30 —

(NIV)

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United States: *Ohio*, August 15-17; *Illinois*, October 3-5; *Oklahoma*, November 7-9

Details

United States

Athens, Ohio, August 15-17 (Friday-Sunday)

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Transportation is available to and from the Columbus Ohio International Airport; contact the class secretary with the pertinent information: Mrs. Karen Brown; telephone: (740) 969-3797; email: kpbrown@buckeyenet.net

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Dan Herzig, New Haven, Connecticut, August 17; Pittsfield, Massachusetts, October 12

Walter Markiewicz, Moscow, Idaho, September 13, 14;

Eugene, Oregon, September 27, 28; Riverside, California, October 4, 5

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