

# GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

**CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY**

**PO Box 3572 \* Oldtown, ID 83822 \* [www.gentleshepherd.com](http://www.gentleshepherd.com) \* January 2019**

## **God's Glorious Attributes**

### **Part 6**

#### **IMMUTABLE**

By Rayola Kelley

It becomes harder every year to face a new year. At my age if youthful dreams have not been realized, they have long been disbursed in the grave marked with a headstone reading, "What will never be." If my grandiose goals have not materialized by now perhaps it is because they were not realistic in the first place, and by wisely accepting that fact, I have discovered that I am allowed to appreciate that which I have accomplished along the way with grace, knowing if anything of significance was brought to some fruition, it was because of the Lord.



My lack of youthful strength reminds me that I must first seek wisdom to understand how to do something, thereby, avoiding running around the same old mountain while my present strength falls to the wayside. Don't get me wrong, I am thankful for another year that I have been given the opportunity to share Jesus' life and message with others, as well as enjoy the lives of family and friends, but it seems every new year is coming at me like a fast moving train that is gaining immense speed with each passing year. It was just yesterday we were welcoming 2018 in, and now 2019 signals that this year is coming to a close and the events marking it are ready to be put to bed in some vault until someone

shows enough interest to take them out, dust them off, and carefully open the pages to seek out its historical lessons. As I look back at the past years, I realize I have witnessed much history. I came out of the era of great change when what we would consider a more innocent time was being challenged by a new beat of Rock n' Roll, followed by a tumultuous time in the 60's where everything that was institutionalized such as God, family, country and etc. was being rejected in the name of free love while unleashing radicalism that wore the face of anger and hate. In the 70's the generation gap was officially given a name as the drug scene was taking center stage while the basic right to life of many unborn babies was being sacrificed in the name of women's rights. The 80's was the Reagan era. There was prosperity but it was clear the cultural war was heating up as colleges and the different media outlets were clearly trying to influence and corrupt the worldview of innocent minds. When the 90's came there were various scandals, an impeachment of a president, and a balanced budget. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we were faced with election problems and with 9/11.

As we face this New Year we must realize that it marks the end of the second decade of this century. I remember the time when I was the young kid on the block, but now I am one of those individuals who are considered an elder, somewhat far removed from those seemingly fragile Millennials who have been given everything as far as the world, but are bankrupted as far as moral character. It seems that the general presentation of the Millennials is that they hate reality, shun hard places that could enlarge character, and believe everything should be handed to them without working for it, earning it, and yes even sacrificing for it. They believe that everyone of intelligence should see life as they do, but they do not realize that they refuse to deal in reality, and it is only by facing reality that we can wisely address the issues that

are plaguing our homes, churches, and this nation.

Looking back at my Christian walk, I received Christ as Lord and Savior when the concept of "Born Again," had become a fad, somewhat confusing the actual experience that identified a person to salvation, and eschatology was being offered up as a main menu in many churches as a call for believers to be ready for Jesus' coming.

In my initial years of Christianity, I made the Christian walk about outward conformity to religious standards while failing to guard the inward environment of my soul. I found myself caught up with various political causes that caused me to jump on bandwagons instead of learning what it really meant to be prepared for the real spiritual battles, while walking by faith according to the Word of God and the sweet impression of the Spirit upon the soul.

I often share how the Lord gave me a seven-year rope to do my own religious thing before He pulled it and I found myself on my face, broken by my leanness of spirit and the lack of joy that is to mark salvation. It was then and there that I realized that victorious Christianity was solely established in a relationship with the living God and not by religious association, activities, or causes.

Even though I had an incredible experience in my brokenness before the Lord, I was still a carnal Christian. I had worldly notions and I had a habit of trying to fit the truths of God into my limited understanding. I also lacked valuable discernment and as a result took a few detours. Praise God He was not surprised or put back by my failures; rather, He turned them into stepping stones to teach me some very important lessons about my faith walk.

In the late 1980s I sensed God was calling me into some type of ministry, but I could not imagine how it would ever materialize because of personal responsibilities. However, God did some ripping in personal relationships and successfully tore me

away from what I had known for years to be my life in order to separate me to Himself for preparation of His work. From there I found myself facing various "spiritual" terrains such as rushing rivers, destructive waterfalls, barren wildernesses, dark, long valleys of uncertainties, and the changing of spiritual seasons that were ushered in by various storms.

For the Lord to bring forth His calling in my life the first three years of the ministry, I found my fledgling faith was challenged and enlarged, while the following couple of years after the initial test of faith I tasted the political aspect of religion and was occasionally tested to compromise or sell what the Lord had given me to secure what some would consider success. In the following years after some great tests, the Lord brought me into a vast wilderness where He could redefine my vision. From that point on the awareness grew that unless the Lord does something, it will never truly be brought to fruition.

Through the years my co-laborers and I have encountered one hindrance after another. In each hindrance I learned valuable lessons, and one important lesson was to avoid being sidetracked by something that had nothing to do with my commission to share the Gospel or make followers of Christ. The storms taught me that they will come and go but as long as I am founded on and in the Rock, I cannot be moved from what is true and lasting. When we encountered rushing rivers too great to cross, we quickly learned to discern whether it was the Rivers of Living Water of God's Spirit and if so, we simply needed to get into the current of the river; or, if it was an obstacle, we had to wait on the Lord to part the river so that we could pass over.

Needless to say, I have witnessed many miracles of God touching hearts and lives. I have seen miraculous healings of bodies, broken hearts, wounded spirits, and crushed souls. I have watched Him part the waters, make straight the crooked paths, move the mountains, and take my hand to walk me through the valleys. It has not been an easy walk, but it has been a glorious journey. I would not trade any of it. In fact, I can't imagine life being any other way than it is now, challenging at times, but satisfying, fulfilling, and rewarding.

As you can see, my life has been

in constant flux. Every new move, whether it was from Idaho to Seattle, from Seattle to Houston, Texas or from Houston back to Idaho or whether it was from Moore, Idaho to New Plymouth, and on to Council, Boise, Nampa, and now here in Northern, Idaho it was orchestrated by God. In some cases we could see His hand mightily move on our part and other times He used circumstances to discipline our steps in preparation to move us into the right place at the right time.

I realize that what is normal to me is not normal to others and that the flux in my life would be too much to bear for others, but we are not asked to walk the same path as someone else and as a result we are not all prepared in the same way. The main concern a Christian must have is whether or not he or she is where God wants him or her to be.

Most people want a couple of things in their life, stability, security, and assurance that somehow matters will turn out right in the end. To some, my walk may appear to be a bit shaky and questionable. Since I walk by faith, I have no real worldly security to speak of and no real assurance that the storms on the horizon will not take me down into the abyss. However, I had to learn that my stability is based on an immovable Rock, my security rests in His salvation, and my assurance in the work of redemption. I must admit there were times that I had to be willing to lose what I had in order to gain what was before me to walk in a greater knowledge of the Lord.

I began to realize life is in a constant flux because it has a current that brings in seasons that are meant to change, revive, and mature the landscape. My soul has a landscape that must be changed and I have a spirit that must be renewed daily and a body that has come to maturity and if Jesus tarries, one day will give way to the sweet sleep of physical death.

My spiritual journey has been wrought with surprises and challenges, never letting me become idle, complacent, or bored. Granted, I could have found excuses to sit down in the middle of the course, step off course, or throw my hands up in the air as if to say the course is too hard to travel, but I knew that a person who put his or her hand to the plow and looked back was not worthy to be a disciple of Christ (Luke 9:62).

I am where I am today not be-

cause I am wonderful or honorable, but because God is faithful and capable of honoring the hearts and prayers of those truly seeking to please and obey Him. I did not finish projects because of any personal determination or ability but because nothing made sense to me but to continue to advance forward on the path before me. I do not consider my present character in light of past accomplishments but in regard to being faithful in accepting present challenges, while looking for opportunities to finish the projects that are before me.

Through the years we have kept journals and have discovered that some major events happened on the same day or around the same time at different years. Granted, there could be years between some of the happenings like changing our location, but certain events happened around the same time, which revealed that there are indeed seasons in the Christian walk.

I say all of this because even though life is in flux, Solomon made it clear that there is nothing new that happens under the sun. We all may be on different paths but no one can avoid the cycle of life and the challenges that life brings its way. The cycle of life simply means it begins with life, but we all know it ends with physical death. Although death is part of the cycle, it is still feared, unexpected, traumatic at times, and leaves one in a state of shock that often turns into anger.

Although there are events we can be certain of, life can prove to be unpredictable and will throw many curve balls at us, leaving our minds spinning, our hearts racing, and our blood pressure elevated. The truth is we might like excitement occasionally, but we do not like change unless we are initiating it. We want to somehow control change so it will not throw us off balance. We want to come out on top of situations, while avoiding being buried by them, but those who must walk through the challenges of life will agree there is no way of controlling the challenging waves or storms the current of life brings our way.

The truth is if we want stability, security, and assurance, we must put our confidence in something or someone who can't be moved by the events of life, will not change in light of changing cultures, and will not be caught off guard.

It is this reality that causes me to seek the Lord as my Rock, the one who never moves, the one who never changes, and the one who will not step outside of who He is. He does not play games with emotions and does not try to bully or insist on His way, and yet sovereignly oversees everything that is happening on earth, above earth, and even below it.

The Bible is clear that God is immutable in His nature, character, and ways. This is true about each person of the Godhead. *Malachi 3:6* states, “*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*” *Hebrews 1:12* says this about the Lord, “*And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou are the same, and thy years shall not fail.*” We also have *Hebrews 13:8* declare this about Jesus, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*” And finally, we have *James 1:17*, “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*”

This means God is not unpredictable. He works in absolutes and has clearly outlined how He regards matters of our heart, soul, life, and conduct in His Word. I realize that the fact the Lord does not change does not set well with some people. They want God to be flexible about His Law, yet His Law is law and will stand in the end because justice stands on truth and truth cannot be moved from what it has been established as being morally so. Granted, the people who want God to be flexible is because His holy Law will ultimately bring an indictment against their evil attitude and wicked practices. People want God to be tolerant, but yet these very same people are intolerant against any absolute that might refute them. These individuals not only want everything to adjust to their immovable ideas but they want everyone to bow down in agreement to the confusion, chaos and insanity of them.

We see that since God is immutable, He is who He was at the beginning, continues to be who He is in spite of the changes taking place at different times, and will always be who He is when all the world stands before Him to be judged. He does not change His mind about what is truth because the world wants a certain

fantasy that feeds selfishness. He does not care if a majority of the people disagrees with Him and rage against what He has already established as being so for He is the majority, nor does He care how world powers try to rid the world of Him, because in the end He will continue to stand as the Rock.

Whosoever has built their lives on this immovable Rock, aligned their attitude and conduct up to its righteous ways will be able to stand in the storms of life, withstand the attacks of the bullies and tyrants of the world, and will continue to stand in spite of how much they may lose along the way. King David said of this Rock in *2 Samuel 22:2-3*, “*The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*”

David names his enemies: the waves of death, the floods of ungodly men, the sorrows of hell, and the snares of death. We have the same enemies today. Death threatens to consume us, the ungodly declare they will win in the end, and the tormenting sorrows of hell edge ever so close to devour us, as death is forever trying to ensnare us into its deadly ways, but if we stand on the Rock, and hide in Him as our fortress, He will become a shield to us as His authority identifies us to His salvation.

As our Rock we can be assured that God will not move from who He is, leaving us unsure of what can be trusted, uncertain as to His plan, and unpredictable as to the end results.

If we as believers want to start the new Year right, let's get our relationship right with the Lord, which brings us to an important question. The question is are you aligning and anchoring yourself to this Rock or will this Rock become a source of judgment to you because it remains as strong as ever and unchangeable in its location? This Rock clearly has not suffered any weathering or erosion, which reminds us that if we are not clinging to the Rock, we will be broken against it in judgment as it breaks us into pieces that will leave us in utter spiritual ruin (*Matthew 21:42-44*). †

## CREATION MOMENTS

### “NOAH’S IMPOSSIBLE SHIP”

*Genesis 6:15*

*“And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits..”*

According to the Bible, Noah’s Ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. It was built of a type of wood called “gopher wood.” This may have been laminated wood, but it was wood. However, skeptics claim that even today wooden boats cannot be made that large simply because wood is not strong enough to endure the huge stresses generated by such a large structure; they say only iron can endure these stresses.

That is, of course, not true. Ancient writers tell us of a sea battle in 280 B.C. in which the *Leontifera* participated. They describe the *Leontifera* in some detail. They tell us that she carried 1,600 rowers and 1,200 additional fighting men. From these and other details, the *Leontifera* has been estimated to have been between 400 and 500 feet long. Plutarch tells us of another ship built around 294 B.C. that had twice as many banks of oars as the *Leontifera*. In the late third century B.C., Ptolemy Philopator built a ship that took 400 sailors to run, in addition to 4,000 rowers. With additional soldiers on board, the ship carried 7,250 men. This battleship was 420 feet long, wider than Noah’s Ark and about the same height.

The Bible is trustworthy in all that it teaches, even when it talks about historical fact or the natural world that science studies.



*Prayer: Lord, help me never to doubt the accuracy of anything in Your Word. Amen.*

“The Large Ships of Antiquity.”

<https://creation.com/the-large-ships-of-antiquity>

## LIFE IN “D MINOR”

By Jeannette Haley

*“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.” – Psalm 81:1-2*

There is something about music in a minor key that touches the deepest recesses of the human soul. For some, (especially in western cultures according to information on the subject), D Minor evokes a sad, somber, depressing tone, while others describe D Minor songs, such as “Holy Is Our King” sung by Rita Springer, as “deep, beautiful, reverent, great and powerful.” Personally, I have to concur with these descriptive words for even in my childhood I gravitated to hymns and songs in a minor key, or at least with minor inflections because they resonate with my spirit, calm my soul, still my thoughts, and usher me into a place of holy awe, setting my spirit free to meditate on, worship and adore our Creator, Holy God, Majesty in the heavens, Redeemer, Savior and Lord.

Interestingly, out of 277 songs in one of my praise and worship music books, only three songs are in the key of D Minor while one song is in the key of B Minor; one in G Minor, four in the key of C Minor, and a whopping nine in the key of E Minor. One can only speculate (which I realize is not a good foundation upon which to form a solid opinion) that most people prefer to stay with the emotionally “safer” upbeat, familiar, and less soul-searching and challenging songs. We all enjoy the feel-good choruses, tunes, and jingles that soothe our ruffled emotions, but do little to feed the deep places in our souls with solid spiritual food. This is not to say that all music written in Major keys lacks depth, but I do believe that the cultural “tastes” in music, art and literature are a symptom of our general overall immoral and increasingly blasphemous society. It is a sad fact that there has been a notable shift from the “faith of our fathers” to the contemporary, feel-good, weak, powerless “Christianity” of today. After all, we are living in the prophesied time of the “falling away” (from the Way, the Truth and the Life) and the proof is evidenced in the multitudes of professing “Christians” flocking to seeker-friendly churches where they hear, sing, and jump up and down to music

that makes them feel good; soak up a message from a motivational speaker that makes them feel good; and participate in fleshly activities that make them feel good. It’s as if everything in their “song of life” has to be in an upbeat Major Key of “D” (delusion) so they always feel good about themselves. It’s just another twig on the branch of “positive confession,” mind-sciences religions that grow out of the tree of error, apostasy, Gnosticism, occultism, Hinduism, and every other satanic religious lie there is, all of which is rapidly developing into the One World Religion of the antichrist.

Tragically, the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit departed long ago and only a few committed saints have made note of it. The late Dr. A. W. Tozer, author and pastor, said, “If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.” David Wilkerson said, “If the Holy Spirit is at work in a church, then every song, every word of praise, every note of every instrument are all given unction by the Spirit to exalt Christ. The Spirit is doing what He has been called to do—presenting us to our Bridegroom in all His glory and majesty.”

Now it is a New Year, and we all hope that it will be a good one—a good one for this mess of a world, for our nation, for our communities, families, and lives. We’re marching in the Major Key of D to get a new sense of duty and make resolutions or decisions to accomplish certain things, to do better, and to be better. We’ve all been wished by people from various sources to have a “Happy New Year” and by gum, we’re going to do all we can to ensure that it is. The problem is, sooner or later all our decisions and doing end up in “D Minor,” which ushers in a certain somber tone, and a big dose of reality that most folks dread. On top of that, it’s January which means for those of us who live “up north,” there are a whole lot of dark, dreary, dismal days that can lead to depression, despondency, and lack of desire to do anything. It can be hard to even get off your derrière to go let the dog out!

By this time, you are disgusted with yourself, so you start digging

around in your mind for the answer to your debilitating dilemma. You desperately need direction on how to escape from the reality of unfilled desires, continual distress, dead-end philosophies, daily duties and endless drudgery. At this point, some may feel like shouting in D Minor, “Give me delusion, or give me death!” The sad truth of the matter is, the moment a person chooses delusion (lies) over reality (truth) he or she has chosen death. Delusions may offer temporary relief, or a pseudo escape from the Minor Keys of life’s song, but as surely as the outgoing tide turns and rushes towards the shore, reality in the jaws of time swallows up every delusion and vain philosophy of man, leaving the naked soul standing alone to face the Judge.

There is only one place to look for the truth that can set the mind, the soul and the spirit free and that is to the Lord Jesus Christ who said, “*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” John 8:31, 32. “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” Matthew 11:28. But I fear that in these last days of unbelief and apostasy most will choose their delusions, believing that the world and the worldly church has more to offer them than the God who gave His only begotten Son to die for their sins, and who calls them to be separate from the world and to follow Him. Such a choice is idolatry for God will have no other gods before Him, and that equally applies to inordinate affections of a person, or persons, family, the work of one’s hands, worldly pleasures, material possessions, a particular church, or even ministry. Our God is a jealous God; therefore, this is a good time to honestly reevaluate our perspectives, priorities and motives. If these things are wrong before the Lord, then everything we do will be “off key” and in vain because it originates out of a wrong premise. God can only honor that which is offered to Him out of a consecrated and pure heart of love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Delusion is the work of devils upon the human mind and soul, yet people love their delusions that are built on false promises, a false presentation of God, false so-called Bible “versions”, false prophecies,

false visions, false prophets, and false doctrines of demons. What the Holy One of Israel proclaimed to Israel in *Isaiah 30:8-11* applies to the church in this hour as well. “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.” How sad it is to read in verse 15 of this chapter, “For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.”

The high-toned, modern “prophets” of today preach a “gospel” that is alien and foreign to the Holy Bible (*Textus Receptus*) and to the pilgrim church. As Jesus and the apostles warned, false prophets abound. A. W. Tozer wrote in 1950, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies … 2 Pet. 2:1. Whatever it may be in our Christian experience that originates outside of Scriptures should, for that very reason, be suspect until it can be shown to be in accord with them. If it should be found to be contrary to the Word of revealed truth no true Christian will accept it as being from God. However high the emotional content, no experience can be proved to be genuine unless we can find chapter and verse authority for it in Scriptures. ‘To the word and to the testimony’ must always be the last and final proof. Whatever is new or singular should also be viewed with caution until it can furnish scriptural proof of its validity. Throughout the twentieth century quite a number of unscriptural notions have gained acceptance among Christians by claiming that they were among truths that were to be revealed in the last days. The truth is that the Bible does not teach that there will be new light and advanced spiritual experiences in the latter days; it teaches the exact opposite! Nothing in Daniel or the New Testament epistles can be tortured into advocating

the idea that we of the end of the Christian era shall enjoy light that was not known at its beginning. Beware of any man who claims to be wiser than the apostles or holier than the martyrs of the Early Church. The best way to deal with him is to rise and leave his presence!”

How do we escape from all the cleverly crafted lies and delusions that the entire world, and much of organized religion is wrapped in? How can we learn the lessons of life in D Minor? The answer is D-A-R-E. Beginning with “D” take a deep breath and then dare to believe deep down in your heart what the Bible says about daring to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” Matthew 4:4b. Dare to trust God and toss out your list of New Year’s resolutions, daring yourself instead to “seek…first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [necessities of life] shall be added unto you” Matthew 6:33.

Once we dare ourselves to step out in faith, step up to the challenge and step beyond our comfort zone, we need to act! It’s one thing to sit and dream about a new beginning in the New Year, but it’s another thing altogether to get up and get going, especially if you don’t feel like it. As for me, if I only did what I feel like doing very little would ever get done! I learned a long time ago that feeling follows action, not the other way around. I may not like the “tune” (or tone) of my environment, responsibilities, or how my “song of life” is going on a particular day, but God didn’t tell us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel if and when you feel like it. He tells us in His Word what He has called us to do, what He requires of us, what pleases Him, what works will be rewarded, and what our responsibilities are as an obedient Christian. We are to “redeem the time.

Therefore, we have no excuse for walking in confusion or darkness because we have the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us because “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Even though we may have decided to dare to believe and to act, there

is a warning our Lord gave us that we as believers need to take very seriously. Jesus said in Matthew 5:37, “*But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*” This is serious! How often do we get ourselves into trouble by failing to stop and think, and count the cost, before we open our mouth and in a moment of heightened emotional euphoria, or feelings of infallibility, or passion, or sympathy, or inspiration, or even love, make rash promises or commitments to others that we all too often forget or fail to keep? How many times have we committed ourselves to help shoulder burdens, lighten the load of others, helped struggling Christian workers, or given hope to people who need someone they can count on to not drop the ball, and then miserably faded out and failed both God and man? In Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5 we are warned, “*When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*” Therefore, as we begin a New Year with new resolutions for ourselves, we need to be very careful when making promises and vows to others and heed the words of Jesus, who knew how easy it is for us weak and fallen people to make promises that we will not, or cannot keep. It is a point of anguish to begin a joyful song in another’s life, only to leave it unfinished. In times past the payment of vows was part of repentance before the Lord. “*I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people*” Psalm 116:14.

After daring ourselves to come higher in God, and to know Him in the New Year, acting on it in faith (dare to believe) and obedience (action), we come to the “R” in D-A-R-E which stands for repentance, righteousness, revelation and revival. We know that “*There is none righteous, no, not one*” Romans 3:11. The danger in familiarity is we begin to take for granted certain basic things that we know and believe as Christians. It is easy to let these vital truths concerning salvation slip into the “background music” of our lives where they remain without regularly coming forth into sharper focus where we can re-examine ourselves, repent of those things that the

Holy Spirit convicts us of, and seek God for greater revelations of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross.

*1 Corinthians 1:30* says, “*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*”. Truly, without Him we are nothing. *I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*” *Galatians 2:20*. A. W. Tozer said, “Our error today is that we do not expect a converted man to be a transformed man, and as a result of this error our churches are full of sub-standard Christians. A revival is among other things a return to the belief that real faith invariably produces holiness of heart and righteousness of life.”

Finally, the “E” in D-A-R-E stands for established for eternity. Eternity is never ending, forever and ever, and something our finite minds definitely cannot begin to grasp. Have you ever heard a piece of music that was so beautiful, so heavenly, and so utterly soul-satisfying that you wish it would never stop? I believe the music of heaven (that some people who have had near-death experiences say they have heard) is far more glorious and beyond anything that we can imagine. In heaven there is eternal worship to the King of kings, and the Lord of lords with no sour notes to cloud the soul. The Apostle Paul wrote, concerning the future hope of the saints, “*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*” *2 Corinthians 5:8*.

Therefore, as we enter into a New Year, let us pray that our Lord would prepare us for the opportunities and challenges that we will surely face, and that He will help us to make an eternal difference in the lives of others, knowing that “*all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation*” *2 Corinthians 5:18*.

May our “life song” reflect the glorious music of heaven as we dare to believe God as revealed in His eternal Words of truth that shall never pass away; may the music of our lives be anointed to honor Him in our actions through obedience, keeping our

vows, and living for His glory alone; may the “minor keys” of our life testify of His righteousness to the saving repentance and revival of others; and, may we retain an eternal perspective, never forgetting that we are just passing through until we receive “*an inheritance, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*” *1 Peter 1:4*. †

## ISRAEL IN PROPHECY

By Fredi Winkler

In chapter 66, verse 8, the prophet Isaiah said, “Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.”

Was this prophecy fulfilled in 1948, when the nation of Israel was founded? I could certainly be interpreted that way, but the larger context of this prophecy shows that there’s more to it. The following verses in this final chapter of Isaiah show that the event predicted in verse 8 is tied to the second coming of the Messiah and the powerful events that will occur at that time.

Verses 15 and 16 speak of the fire that God will use to execute judgment on the world when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in power and glory. Then, in verse 18 we see that God will gather the people of all nations. That matches perfectly with the words of Jesus in Matthew 25, following his end-times sermon in chapter 24. The nations will be gathered in order to decide who will be chosen to enter into the thousand-year kingdom, and who won’t be. This event will include Israel too; Israel will not be spared from the judgment of the nations. Israel is also a nation, or *Goi* in Hebrew; it is identified with that word several times in the Old Testament.

For God, the final restoration of Israel won’t happen until after that—namely, the establishment of the kingdom of God and His Messiah on earth. It’s then, according to verse 19, that the remaining nations will be evangelized. We can’t forget that the majority of mankind has not yet recognized the glory of God. At last, Israel, along with those who are called from among the nations, will fulfill God’s original directive to be a blessing for all nations.

Paul talks about this future, spiritual, “new birth” in Romans 11:15, “For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”

This statement isn’t easy to understand. Surely, God didn’t want to reject His chosen people, Israel. In Acts chapter 15, we see these events: Paul made a special trip to Jerusalem to clarify the question of circumcision. There were some who said, “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved” (verse1). The Pharisees made salvation dependent on outward acts, and that corrupt misclassification of Jesus’ act of salvation ultimately led to the rejection of Israel. In their eyes, the basis of salvation was through following the law, and not by the act of deliverance that Jesus gave freely on the cross at Calvary. God rejected that false interpretation, and thus rejected the nation of Israel, who mostly believed the lie.

When the day comes that the remnant of Israel recognizes that the only thing that can save them is the act of deliverance by the Messiah, Jesus, then there will truly be “life from the dead,” as Paul said. The truth that will finally get through to them after such a long time will inspire them, in the words of Isaiah, “to proclaim the glory of God among the nations.”

## PAUL WASHER QUOTES

A lot of people think that Christianity is you doing all the righteous things you hate and avoiding all the wicked things you love in order to go to Heaven. No, that’s a lost man with religion. A Christian is a person whose heart has been changed; they have new affections.

Pride is a terrible and dangerous thing. It can take so many forms; it can even assume the appearance of humility. Pride can lead not only to self-exaltation, but also to self-abasement. The key to battling pride is not found in struggling against thinking too highly of ourselves or in striving to think of ourselves as lowly. The key is found in simply not thinking about ourselves at all, but setting our minds on Christ and the needs of others.

The true convert does not receive the gospel as an addition to his previous life, but in exchange for it.

## ARCHAEOLOGISTS DISCOVER MASSIVE 4,000-YEAR OLD BOMB CRATER AT SITE OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH DESTRUCTION

During the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Denver, Colorado, scholar Phillip Silvia reported the preliminary findings of their excavations in the area, which some scientists consider to be home to the Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The results suggest that cities and settlements in the Jordan Valley's Middle Ghor region, where up to 65,000 people lived around that time, were obliterated with a powerful wave of heat, wind and tiny particles, the outlet Science News reports.

According to the Bible, the ancient cities, thought to have been located on the Dead Sea, were wiped away by God for the sinful behaviour of their people. The preliminary findings of US scientists suggest that this region witnessed a major calamity almost 4 thousand years ago, which left it uninhabited for centuries.

**God looks down on** man's nuclear weapons, and I believe He laughs at our puny attempts at warfare. He has things in His arsenal that make our most powerful nukes look like firecrackers. We first read about these weapons in the 38th chapter of the book of Job. The weather is the strongest weapon that has ever been created, and there is no defense against it. Think about that the next time your 'small talk' revolves around the weather, no small matter there.

"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." **Genesis 13:13, 19:24,25 (KJV)**

**Contrary to modern-day** Laodicean revisionists, the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of unrepentant homosexual behaviour. This was the place where the original LGBTQ lifestyle was founded, and when God pronounced judgement on it in a fiery blast from above, Sodom and Gomorrah ceased to exist. That area today,

as you can see in the photo, resembles a bomb blast crater after an horrific explosion has taken place. It remains uninhabited to this day. "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." **Genesis 19:27,28 (KJV)**



### Bible Revisited: Alleged Sodom Site Thought to Have Been Hit by Cosmic Blast

**FROM SPUTNIK:** Archaeologists from Trinity Southwest University, a Christian higher educational institution in Albuquerque, New Mexico, have claimed civilization in the Dead Sea region was destroyed 3,700 years ago following a meteor explosion in the atmosphere.

Waves also pushed salty water from the Dead Sea, which devastated the soil. The explosion, the researchers argue, "not only wiped out 100% of the Middle Bronze Age cities and towns, but also stripped agricultural soil from once-fertile fields," Newsweek reports.

According to the scientists, a low-altitude meteor explosion caused the catastrophe which wiped out the region, including the ancient city of Tall el-Hammam, where the researchers worked for years. Radiocarbon dating reportedly revealed that mud-brick walls suddenly disappeared in the Middle Ghor city, as only stone foundations remained.

A pottery surface found on the site was melted into glass, which may be a result of extreme temperatures. Following the alleged blast, people wouldn't return to the region for 600-700 years.

(Now The End Begins Web Site)

*"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."* - Heb. 12:28,29

## WHERE DID REVERENCE GO?

*"And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."* - Leviticus 9:24

"We of the nonliturgical churches tend to look with some disdain upon those churches that follow a carefully prescribed form of service, and certainly there must be a good deal in such services that has little or no meaning for the average participant—this not because it is carefully prescribed but because the average participant is what he is. But I have observed that our familiar impromptu service, planned by the leader twenty minutes before, often tends to follow a ragged and tired order almost as standardized as the Mass. The liturgical service is at least beautiful; ours is often ugly. Theirs has been carefully worked out through the centuries to capture as much of beauty as possible and to preserve a spirit of reverence among the worshippers. Ours is often an off-the-cuff makeshift with nothing to recommend it. Its so-called liberty is often not liberty at all but sheer slovenliness....

In the majority of our meetings there is scarcely a trace of reverent thought, no recognition of the unity of the body, little sense of the divine Presence, no moment of stillness, no solemnity, no wonder, no holy fear." - A. W. Tozer

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"While our thoughts stir our feelings, and thus strongly influence our wills, it is yet true that the will can be and should be master of our thoughts. Every normal person can determine what he will think about. The best way to control our thoughts is to offer the mind to God in complete surrender. The Holy Spirit will accept it and take control of it immediately. Then it will be relatively easy to think on spiritual things, especially if we train our thoughts by long periods of daily prayer. Long practice in the art of mental prayer (that is, talking to God inwardly as we work or travel) will help to form the habit of holy thought.

The best way of all is to 'let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' For to have the mind of Christ is to have good and pure thoughts always." - A. W. Tozer

## RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

**Q:** "Is there a difference between fellowship and communion?"

**A:** They both share the same meaning in the sense that both fellowship and communion entails agreement and sharing but there is a difference in intent or purpose. When the Bible talks about saints coming into agreement, it usually uses the word "fellowship," but when it comes to God and the saint, the KJV uses the word "communion." (2 Corinthians 13:14.)

Fellowship entails finding, or coming, to a place of agreement, while communion is a place of agreement. I can fellowship with anyone by finding a similar point of interest with them, but that does not mean I will have communion with them. The reason is because the place of fellowship could include fleshly, worldly, or secular subjects such as work, hobbies, or interests such as sports, etc. but when it comes to communion the right spirit must be present.

Fellowship means two people will come into a place of agreement where they can share about a matter. Such fellowship can be in the intellectual, emotional, or will arenas, but communion implies two individuals coming into complete oneness about something. For example, those who are married are to come to this place of oneness in order walk in agreement. In such communion they share about important and personal matters to make sure they are on the same page and heading in the same direction as to ensure certain results.

Through the years I have encountered this oneness with some Christians, but the oneness was present and brought about because the spirit in us was in total agreement about the message and the direction of a matter. That is why we are told in Matthew 18:20, where two are three are truly gathered in His name, He will be in their midst.

If you notice the word we use to come together to partake of the emblems of the wine and bread is "Communion," and the reason for it is because it is a spiritual exercise that not only requires agreement about what the bread represents (Christ's broken body) and the wine (His blood that established the new covenant), but this agreement is to bring the Body into oneness in spirit.

God does not want to simply fel-

lowship with us, He wants to commune with us. He wants us to be in oneness with Him about matters concerning our calling and His heart towards the Church and the harvest field of the world. He wants to be able to share and entrust us with deep things that will shape our understanding of Him and refine our faith and define our walk before Him in greater measure.

"Commune" is the word He used with Moses in Exodus 25:22, "*And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*"

Consider the incident in Exodus 24. Moses was told to come up unto the LORD and he was to bring Aaron, his two sons and seventy of the elders to worship from afar; but, only Moses was to come up into the mount. Since these men could not come near the mountain, the Lord came near to them. It tells us that they saw God and did eat and drink. The men fellowshiped or partook together before the Lord, but it was Moses who went up to Mount Sinai, communed with the Lord as He received the Law, and when he came down, he reflected His glory from partaking of what He had for him.

We clearly see that in fellowship we can partake together of what we agree on, but in communion we are actually to partake of Him and what He has for us. The Apostle Peter put it in this light in 2 Peter 1:4, "*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*"

As a believer, I appreciate fellowship with saints, but it is in true communion where my spirit experiences a deep satisfaction. Fellowship is pleasant, but communion is glorious. As believers, we must not settle for mere fellowship, we must seek out the Lord in Spirit and truth so that we can commune with Him and each other in a fulfilling way. †

### ~RECOMMENDED READING~

**WHY THEY CHANGED THE BIBLE**  
One World Bible For a One World Religion—By David W. Daniels

## DAVID WILKERSON QUOTES TO PONDER

Israel never got up and followed the Lord's leading to the Promised Land. They never followed the Spirit at all costs. They continued in stubborn rebellion, backsliding, spiritual harlotry and idolatry. They were chosen, but not cleansed! They were special, but they never separated themselves unto Him. And when it was time to go into Canaan, they were not ready. Instead, they were turned aside, having learned nothing in the wilderness. They were as backslidden as they had been at the beginning. What a tragedy! Forty years of no growth--of only living for self!

This is truly a picture of modern-day Christianity. We gloat in being chosen and called of God, but we do not want the discipline of the Holy Ghost to prepare us for the holiness of the bridehood. We take all His blessings, His gold and silver and His great provision. But when the Holy Spirit says, 'Let's get up and go, it's time to get prepared as a bride for the Master'--then it's a different story!

The Holy Spirit does not perform His work in us in some disjointed, haphazard way. He doesn't exist simply to help us cope with life, to get us through crises and to see us through lonely nights. He isn't there just to pick us up and pump in a little more strength before putting us back into the race.

No, everything the Holy Ghost does is related to His reason for coming--to bring us home as a prepared bride. And He acts only in keeping with that mission! Yes, He is our Guide, our Comforter, our Strength in time of need. But he uses every act of deliverance--every touch, every manifestation of Himself in us--to make us more suitable as a bride.

Neither is the Holy Ghost here just to give gifts to the world. No, His every gift has a purpose behind it. If you prophesy, that prophecy has one purpose: to glorify Christ and to make the world and His church fall in love with Him! Every time someone is healed, the Holy Ghost is saying, 'Take a look. That's your Jesus! Isn't He wonderful? He is healing--and you're just seeing the manifestation of who He is!' †

"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." - Rev. 22:20