

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

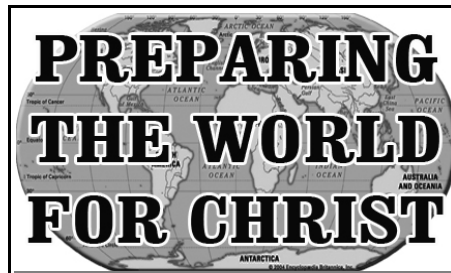
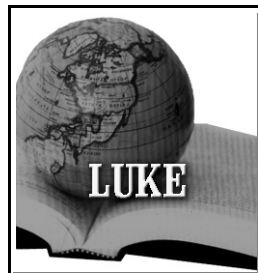
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #5

COMMENTARY ON: 1:57-66

JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BORN

Elizabeth's "full time" came, and she gave birth to John the Baptist. The three months she spent with Mary must have been a most excellent preparation for the birth. This was no ordinary child, and he was not born under ordinary circumstances. The things that had been foretold about this child must have occupied the minds of Elizabeth, and Zacharias, and Mary as well. This was a pivotal moment in history – a time associated with massive change, the restructuring of thinking, and the elevation of spiritual life to hitherto unknown plateaus. The child is born, and the "friends" think the name of the child should be "Zacharias," after the name of his father. That means the details of John's birth had not been shared with others. It was not yet time to divulge everything about this child. Now, Zacharias will tell their friends and neighbors that the child has already been named. He and Elizabeth had known the name from the beginning, but no one else knew it.

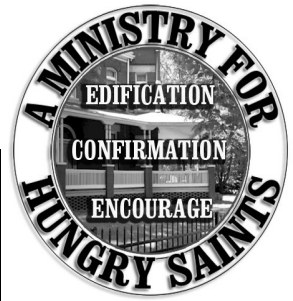


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke 10/31/2014

Lesson Number 5



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

LUKE 1:57 "Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.⁵⁸ And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.⁵⁹ And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.⁶⁰ And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.⁶¹ And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.⁶² And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.⁶³ And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marveled all.⁶⁴ And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.⁶⁵ And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.⁶⁶ And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him." Luke 1:57- 66

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Elizabeth's "full time" came, and she gave birth to John the Baptist. The three months she spent with Mary must have been a most excellent preparation for the birth.

SPECIAL FELLOWSHIP

There is no social involvement that is as precious as that which is built around the Lord. Ponder some of those involvements that are in Scripture. Moses/Aaron, Moses/Joshua, David/Jonathan, Peter/John, Paul/Timothy, Paul/Silas, etc. These are the kind of

relationships that are to be cultured, for there is every reason to believe they are ordained of God. Many professed believers culture relationships that are not only unprofitable, but actually militate against faith. While no person can legislate to another in such matters, every person must work out their own salvation in this regard. The Lord has spoken plainly to us about such things—i.e.

⇒ "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor 6:14).

⇒ "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph 5:11).

⇒ "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." (1 Cor 5:11)

⇒ "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine

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which ye have learned; and **avoid them.**" (Rom 16:17)

⇒ "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: **from such turn away.**" (2 Tim 3:5)

⇒ "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.**" (2 John 1:10-11)

⇒ "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, **let him be Anathema Maranatha.**" (1 Cor 16:22)

⇒ "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed.**" (Gal 1:9)

⇒ "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition **reject;** Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus 3:11)

These, and other such admonitions, are generally not taken seriously – if they are even known. However, such things are written for our protection, because they are involvements that make a place for the devil – something that we are forbidden to do (Eph 4:27).

NO ORDINARY CHILD

John the Baptist was no ordinary child, and he was not born under ordinary circumstances. The things that had been foretold about this child must have occupied, yea dominated, the minds of Elizabeth, and Zacharias, and Mary as well.

Knowing how to live is something that requires a lot of faith and grace. Consider the following.

- ⇒ One of the key factors in spiritual life is being able to concentrate on proper things, while not allowing ourselves to be overly absorbed in things that tend to distract us. This is not a simplistic matter, and must not be approached as though it was (2 Cor 4:18; Col 3:1-2,17).
- ⇒ The people of God must learn to live so as to fulfill all of their obligations (Rom 12:1; 13:8).
- ⇒ They are to be a savor of life in the midst of a heathen culture (2 Cor 2:15-16).
- ⇒ They must maintain godly priorities (Matt 6:33; Col 3:1-2).
- ⇒ They are required to use the world without abusing it (1 Cor 7:31).
- ⇒ They must be subject to higher powers (Rom 13:1) without

neglecting the highest power (1 Pet 1:5).

A PIVOTAL MOMENT IN HISTORY

The birth of John the Baptist was a pivotal moment in history – a time associated with massive change, the restructuring of thinking, and the elevation of spiritual life to hitherto unknown plateaus.

OTHER PIVOTAL MOMENTS IN HISTORY

There are many of these moments in history – moments in which a significant change was taking place. These were times that impacted on the rest of history, reshaping environments, and more clearly defining the will of the Lord. Some of them include the following.

- ⇒ Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden (Gen 3:24).
- ⇒ The flood (Gen 6-8).
- ⇒ The dispersion at Shinar (Gen 11:1-9).
- ⇒ The calling of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).
- ⇒ The deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex 12-15).
- ⇒ The giving of the Law (Ex 20:1-18; John 1:17; Gal 3:24-25).
- ⇒ The rejection of Israel at the border of Canaan, and their wandering in the wilderness (Num 32:13; 1 Cor 10:5; Heb 3:16-19).
- ⇒ The inhabiting of Canaan (Josh 6; 24:18).

The birth of John the Baptist was a pivotal moment in history – a time associated with massive change, the restructuring of thinking, and the elevation of spiritual life to hitherto unknown plateaus.

- ⇒ The Kingship of David (Acts 13:22).
- ⇒ The Babylonian Captivity (Jer 29:10; Matt 1:17).
- ⇒ The rebuilding of Jerusalem (Neh 2:5-20).
- ⇒ The ministry of John the Baptist (John 1:23; 16:16).
- ⇒ **THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST** (Gal 4:4; Rom 9:5; Heb 10:7-8).
- ⇒ Israel's rejection of Christ (Matt 23:38-39).
- ⇒ The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41).
- ⇒ The conversion of Paul (Acts 9:1-22).

This is only a brief sampling of the kind of events to which I refer. **They are epochs in which there is more concentrated power and a greater revelation of Divine purpose.**

One of the dangerous circumstances of our time is the deluge

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron 12:32).

Today there are leaders who do not know or understand the times, and therefore they do not know what to do – what to emphasize, or what to stress. They may see a fractured church, and think the emphasis must be on unity rather than maturity (Eph 4:11-16). They may see a world that is alienated from God, and think the stress must be placed on evangelism rather than the church really being *"the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim 3:15). They may see divided families, and think the emphasis should be placed on family relationships rather than doing whatever we do to the glory of God (Col 3:17).

This is a very significant problem of our time: religious leaders not knowing what to do – and it is because they do not have an understanding of the times.

WHEN JESUS CAME

When Jesus came, the times were

Kingdom of God" (Lk 4:43). He sent His disciples out to *"preach the kingdom of God"* (Lk 9:2). John the Baptist also preached *"the Gospel of the Kingdom of God"* (Mk 1:14). **John understood the times.**

Jesus preached *"the Gospel of the Kingdom"* (Mk 4:23; 9:35). Before returning to heaven, He told His disciples, *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come"* (Matt 24:14). He had the ultimate understanding of the times.

The point is that this is not what other people thought was the message appropriate for the times – that is why they were not preaching it.

A CIRCUMSTANCE THAT REQUIRED DIRECTION

The child is born, and the *"friends"* think the name of the child should be *"Zacharias,"* after the name of his father. **That means the details of John's birth had not been shared with others.** It was not yet time to divulge everything about this child.

Now, Zacharias will tell their friends and neighbors that the child has already been named. He and Elizabeth had known the name from the beginning, but no one else knew it.

Thus we are brought to the beginning of a new epoch in which the thrust of preaching and teaching would change, and the way would be prepared for the coming of the promised Messiah. Those who had been living by faith, expecting that Messiah to come, would hear that message with joy and eagerness. They would press into the kingdom that would be preached, and seize it *"as a precious prize—a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion"* AMPLIFIED (Matt 11:12). To this very day, that is how those who understand the times, and are living by faith, receive this message. **They will not allow any distraction to rob them of the benefit of being a part of that Kingdom, which shall never end.**

One of the dangerous circumstances of our time is the deluge of carnal distractions, and the opportunity to be involved in more things that are, at the best, less related to life in Christ Jesus.

of carnal distractions, and the opportunity to be involved in more things that are, at the best, less related to life in Christ Jesus. **When a person becomes absorbed in these things, they are rendered incapable of seeing things that are "signs" or "warnings."** There may be a Satanic initiative that has been released, or the clearing of the way for some great benefit from God. It could even be the rejection of a generation, or the acceptance of one. That is why Jesus spoke of *"the signs of the times"* (Matt 16:3). These signs determine what men are to do – where their thrust is to be. That is why the men of Issachar were so important:

certainly not ideal for Israel. Their country was occupied by a foreign power, and they were being ruled by officials of the Roman government – an idolatrous and bloodthirsty power. What should be emphasized under a circumstance like that? The Jewish people had learned to adapt to the circumstance, and to maintain their religious obligations so they were not offending the Roman government.

However, when Jesus came, He did not speak of the need for a better government. He did not join the group with which Barabbas was identified. Instead, He said, *"I must preach the*

SHE BROUGHT FORTH A SON

LUKE 1:57 *"Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son."*

Even though Elizabeth was of great age, and the powers of darkness were no doubt opposed to this birth, she carried the infant full term, and delivered the child at the appropriate time – **the appropriate time according to nature, and the appropriate time according to the Divine calendar.**

THIS HAD TO BE A TIMELY BIRTH

The birth of John the Baptist had to be a timely one, because it was linked to the birth of Christ, whose birth was appointed. As it is written, *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law"* (Gal 4:4). The entrance of Jesus into the world, together with His ministry, was prophesied by Jacob (Gen 49:10), Isaiah (Isa 9:6-7), Daniel (Dan 9:24-26), Malachi (Mal 3:1), and others. **I mention this because whatever God foretells He manages and controls.** No word of prophecy depends upon the intentions or activities of men. **Divine appointments are imposed upon men. They are never negotiated, stalled, or changed.** Some examples of this include the following.

- ⇒ The flood (Gen 7:13).
- ⇒ The birth of Isaac (Gen 18:14).
- ⇒ The deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex 12:41).
- ⇒ The time when God poured forth His

Spirit (Joel 2:28/Acts 2:17-18).

⇒ The vision of Habakkuk (Hab 2:3).

pleasing and perfect will," ^{NIV} *"so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and*

At no point does God's will revolve around you! Rather, you, by His grace, are brought into His will.

The birth and ministry of John the Baptist was foretold by Isaiah (Isa 40:3-4). **That very fact meant the matter was strictly controlled by God.** That is why Zacharias and Elizabeth lived to be of great age. It is why the precise time when Zacharias was to minister in the Temple came when it did.

THE APPLICATION TO US

If we can ever get into the flow of the will of God, **certainty will mark our lives.** John is clear about this: *"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him"* (1 John 5:14-15). This is one of the reasons we are to present our bodies to the Lord, and *"be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"* (Rom 12:2). Other versions read, *"Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good,*

perfect." ^{NRSV}

I realize that some feel that, in this text, *"the will of God"* is His will **for you.** That is why the Amplified Bible reads, *"the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]."* **But this is not right.** At no point does God's will revolve around you! Rather, you, by His grace, are brought into His will. God will so direct the person who is wholly devoted to Him. Such a person will be given insight into what the Lord is doing. They will, so to speak, know the times, and what they ought to do because of them (1 Chron 12:32).

Elizabeth bringing forth her son was under the strict management of God – the God who had foretold it in the first place. The birth occurred when He intended it to occur, the circumstances, and the powers of darkness notwithstanding. That is how God fulfills what He purposes.

THEY HEARD HOW THE LORD HAD SHOWED MERCY ON HER

⁵⁸ *"And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her."*

HER NEIGHBORS AND HER COUSINS

"And her neighbors and her

cousins . . ."

Other versions read, *"neighbors and relatives,"* ^{NKJV} *"neighbors and kinsfolk."* ^{RSV}

These were not *"neighbors"* as we

consider them. **To begin with, the cities in which the priests lived were not public thoroughfares.** They were separate from the rest of the people. Therefore we read of *"the cities of the Levites, and the houses of the cities of their possessions"* (Lev 25:32), and

"the houses of the cities of the Levites" (Lev 25:33).

These *"neighbors,"* therefore were priestly families, particularly acquainted with the ways of the Lord.

Jews have always maintained their own community. Today, even in the United States, they maintain separate communities in Baltimore, Charleston, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Galveston, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and many other cities.

The point that I am making here is that these *"neighbors"* were not Gentiles, or those unacquainted with Jewish life. When they heard about Elizabeth giving birth, it was not neighborhood gossip. For this reason, the birth was reported in a manner quite different from that of the world.

From the beginning, the Jews lived together – at least until they were dispersed. After they had migrated to Egypt, having seventy people, they lived together in Goshen (Gen 45:10; 47:1 Ex 9:22). When they were delivered from Egypt, they were delivered in a group, traveling together (Ex 12:51). When they camped on their journey, they did so in an organized manner around the Tabernacle (Num 2:2). When they occupied Canaan, they were to drive out the inhabitants so the land would be theirs, and so they would not learn their ways (Lev 18:3,24,30; 20:23; Num 33:52; Deut 12:30; Josh 3:10). When some of those who had been dispersed made their way back to the promised land, they lived together.

This does not mean that believers must live together, and no one should conclude that from these comments. **The only reason I mention them is to define what *"neighbors"* means in our text.** These were people familiar with the ways of God, which will be confirmed by the next clause.

One of the great advantages of maintaining a closeness to the people of God, is the benefit of being able to share the blessings of the Lord with those of understanding.

HEARD HOW THE LORD HAD
"*... heard how the Lord . . .*"

Other versions read, *"that the Lord,"* ^{NASB} and *"that God."* ^{MESSAGE}

God had brought Elizabeth into His own purpose, making her one of the key people in preparing the world for redemption. So far as we know, she only had one child, there being no record of her giving birth after this. But what a child she had!

Notice how the people traced Elizabeth having a child back to the Lord. They did not marvel that she had a child in old age, but that the Lord had

her," ^{GWN} *"lavished on her His faithful love,"* ^{NJB} *"was making His kindness great with her,"* ^{YLT} *"had great compassion on her."* ^{WEYMOUTH}

Once again we see that mercy does not necessarily assume a miserable condition. In this case, it was a helpless condition, but not a depraved one. I am sure that, notwithstanding this perspective, Elizabeth could have gladly joined with Jacob in saying, *"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant"* (Gen 32:10). Paul associated God's mercy with receiving a ministry, and not fainting in it: *"Therefore seeing we have*

While the world has its version of rejoicing together, it is not to be compared with the mutual rejoicing of kindred spirits – those with identity with the Living God.

dealt with her. This is the manner of people who have been cultured in the ways of the Lord.

Because she was of great age, it is doubtful that she was alive when John ministered, preparing the way for the Lord. In fact, since John *"grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel"* (Luke 1:80), we assume his parents had passed away early in his life. It is written that the word of the Lord *"came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness"* (Lk 3:2). In fact, **John's preaching and baptizing were largely in the wilderness,** where the people came to him to be baptized (Matt 3:1; Mk 1:4).

SHOWED GREAT MERCY UPON HER
"*... had showed great mercy upon her . . .*"

Other versions read, *"displayed His great mercy,"* ^{NASB} *"magnified His mercy towards her,"* ^{ASV} *"had been very good to her,"* ^{BBE} *"how good* ^{ADONAI} *had been to her,"* ^{CJB} *"had been very kind to*

this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not" (2 Cor 4:1).

THEY REJOICED WITH HER
"*... and they rejoiced with her."*

Other version read, *"they were rejoicing with her,"* ^{NASB} *"they shared her joy,"* ^{NIV} *"took part in her joy,"* ^{BBE} and *"celebrated with her."* ^{CEB}

While the world has its version of rejoicing together, it is not to be compared with the mutual rejoicing of kindred spirits – those with identity with the Living God. While the spirit of the world moves one to be self-centered, those associated with the Lord are moved into a *"mutual"* environment. **They are actually able to have joy because of the blessing of another person.** This was the case the neighbors and relatives of Elizabeth. They were rejoicing WITH Elizabeth because, with her, they had perceived God had been merciful toward her.

There are other references to this sharing of joy. In the body of Christ, it

is the result of being “members one of another” (Rom 12:5; Eph 4:25).

⇒ GENTILES WHEN THEY BELIEVED. “And when the Gentiles heard this, **they were glad**, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:48)

⇒ THIS IS SOMETHING BELIEVERS ARE ADMONISHED TO DO. “**Rejoice with them that do rejoice**, and weep with them that weep.” (Rom 12:15)

⇒ IT IS AN ASPECT OF BEING MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER. “And whether one member suffer, all the members

suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members **rejoice with it.**” (1 Cor 12:26).

⇒ PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH. “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and **rejoice with you** all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and **rejoice with me.**” (Phil 2:17-18)

There is something in this mutual joy that brings refreshment, strength, and peace to the believing soul. When the city of Samaria believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12), “there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:8). When Paul and Barnabas reported “the conversion

of the Gentiles, they caused great joy unto all the brethren” (Acts 15:3). When the church had prepared a special letter to the Gentile churches, instructing them concerning circumcision, they “delivered the epistle: which when they had read, they rejoiced for consolation” (Acts 15:30). Paul wrote to the Philippians, in order that their “rejoicing might be more abundant” (Phil 1:26).

This kind of rejoicing should always attend reports of the working of the Lord. No body of professing Christians should get so absorbed with themselves that they cannot rejoice when the working of God is reported.

THEY CAME TO CIRCUMCISE THE CHILD

“^{59A} And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child . . .”

IT CAME TO PASS

“And it came to pass . . .”

Other versions read, “so it was,” NKJV “it came about,” NASB “And it occurred,” MRD “Now it happened,” NJB “And it happened.” TNT

The language here has to do with living as it was ordered and regulated by the Law. That is, a circumstance of life occurred which was natural, yet it was strictly regulated by the ordinances associated with the Law itself.

STRICTLY AND TIMELY REGULATED LIVES UNDER THE LAW

Here again we observe how the Jews marked time – the pivotal points of time around which their lives revolved. In this case, it was a period of eight days, and the reason for their action was to obey the Lord. This was, in other words, a manner in which they were to regard time in the matter regarded what was to be done at birth.

⇒ For example, under the Law when a leper had been cleansed, he was to remain outside of the camp for

seven days (Lev 14:8).

⇒ When a woman was cleansed of her issue, she was not clean until seven days had passed (Lev 15:28).

⇒ The day of Pentecost occurred fifty days after the seventh Sabbath after the Passover (Lev 23:16).

The point here is not these particular examples, but the fact that God actually managed the time of the Israelites. The following is not intended to be a complete listing, but is enough to confirm what I have said.

Daily

- ⇒ Morning Sacrifice (Lev 9:17)
- ⇒ Evening sacrifice (Ex 29:39; 1 Kgs 18:29)
- ⇒ Daily grain offering (Num 4:16)
- ⇒ Burn incense in the Tabernacle (Ex 30:7)
- ⇒ Light the candlestick every evening (Ex 30:8)
- ⇒ Extinguish the lamp every morning (Ex 30:7).

Weekly

- ⇒ Keep the Sabbath day (Ex 20:10-11)
- ⇒ Set new bread on the Table of showbread (Lev 24:5-9)

Monthly

- ⇒ Monthly burnt offering (Num 28:14; 29:6)

Annually

- ⇒ Feast of Unleavened Bread in the appointed month of Abib (Ex 23:15; Deut 16:16)
- ⇒ Feast of weeks (Ex 34:22; Deut 16:26)
- ⇒ Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 16:16)

Every Seventh Year

- ⇒ The seventh year the land was to lie idle (Ex 23:11).
- ⇒ Read the Law before the people (Deut 31:10-13)

Every Fiftieth Year

- ⇒ Every fiftieth year was hallowed as a jubilee, a time of restoration and freedom (Lev 25:10-11).

THE REASON FOR THEIR ARRANGEMENT

Because the people did not have new hearts, and were a rebellious people, these special times were imposed upon them. This was actually for their protection, for God will not remain identified with a people who thrust Him out of their lives. Therefore, by imposing certain time lines upon them, there was a sense in which He

forced them to live in the awareness of Himself. Sensitive souls like David did it willingly, while it was drudgery to others (Mal 1:13). However, the doing of these laws as they were put forth to them, actually kept them from being destroyed by God.

These laws, and others having to do with a specific routine, were the “*handwriting of ordinances*” mentioned in Colossians 2:14, which Jesus “*blotted out,*” taking it “*out of the way, nailing it to his cross*” (Col 2:14). However, for others these, along with other ordinances, were met with this kind of response: “*Behold, what a weariness is it!*” (Mal 1:13).

For souls like Zacharias and Elizabeth, obedience to such laws was not drudgery, for they were righteous, for they were described as “*both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*” – (Luke 1:6), which included the circumcision of their son.

ON THE EIGHTH DAY

“ . . . that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child . . . ”

To appreciate what all was involved in giving birth to a son, it might be well to review what was required after the birth of a child by the

Old Covenant.

⇒ **ON THE EIGHTH DAY.** If a son, “*And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.*” (Lev 12:3)

⇒ **THE MOTHER’S DAYS OF PURIFICATION WERE THIRTY-THREE.** “*And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.*” (Lev 12:4)

⇒ **A SACRIFICE WAS REQUIRED.** “*And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female. And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.*” (Lev 12:6-8)

⇒ **FIRSTBORN SON TO BE PRESENTED TO THE LORD.** “*Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me.*” (Ex 22:29; 34:19-20; Num 3:13; 18:15)

When the Lord Jesus was born, Mary went through this entire procedure. We know from what she sacrificed that her and Joseph relatively poor (Lk 2:22-24).

For Zacharias and Elizabeth, as well as all of their neighbors and relatives, there was no question about what should be done. They knew that this covenant was established with Abraham (Gen 17:10-14), and confirmed and regulated by the Law.

Frankly, I cannot imagine this ordinance being carried out by the average professing Christian. I do not mean to suggest that it is a requirement under Christ. However, it appears clear to me that, even with the remarkable advantages and benefits of the New Covenant, the average “Christian” is not as eager to obey God as many living under an inferior covenant, with inferior promises. If this assessment is true, I do not know how it can possibly be justified. **We have not been liberated to do less, but to do more.**

THEY CALLED HIM ZACHARIAS, BUT HIS MOTHER SAID “NO!”

“ ^{59B} and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. ⁶⁰ And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. ”

THEY CALLED HIM ZACHARIAS

“and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. . . ”

Other versions read, “they would have called him after the name of his father Zacharias,” ^{NKJV} “they were going to call him,” ^{NASB} “They wanted to name him,” ^{NLT} “they were calling him” ^{YLT} “They

all assumed the baby’s name would be,” ^{LIVING} “they tried to name him,” ^{WILLIAMS} “they tried to name him,” ^{MONTGOMERY} and “were intending to.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

You may recall that Ruth’s firstborn son, whose father was Boaz, was given the name “Obed” by “the women and neighbors” of Naomi, who became Obed’s nurse (Ruth 4:17).

This practice has been found in our own country. My mother, Rubye Blakely, received her middle name (“Willie”) by a casual acquaintance of the family. I understand this was not an

unusual practice at that time.

It appears from this text that this was not unusual at that time either. It was thought by the neighbors and

ON THE NAMING OF CHILDREN

“Though we must not imagine that there is any sacredness in names, yet no judicious person will deny that, in this matter, believers ought to make a godly and profitable selection. They ought to give their children such names as may serve to instruct and admonish them, and consequently to take the names of holy fathers—for the purpose of exciting their children to imitate them—rather than adopt those of ungodly persons.” ^{JOHN CALVIN}

relatives that the child should named after his father. Zacharias.

HE SHALL BE CALLED JOHN

" . . . And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John."

Elizabeth says that the child will

not be called "Zacharias." That suggests to us that Zecharias somehow communicated to her what the child was to be named, as Gabriel had instructed him: "thou shalt call his name John" (Lk 1:13). **Confirming this couple was precisely what the Spirit says – "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the**

Lord blameless"(Lk 1:6), it apparently never entered their minds to call the babe by any other name, other than the one revealed at least nine months earlier. Every believer should allow texts like this to instruct them in the ways of the Lord. It is part of working out our own salvation with fear and trembling to do what the Lord requires.

HIS NAME IS JOHN

"^{61A} And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. ⁶² And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John . . . "

NONE OF THY KINDRED

"And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. . . "

This did not make any sense to the neighbors and relatives, but they would not argue about it, imposing their own wills upon the elderly parents. Among other things, this confirmed their respect of Zacharias and Elizabeth – a fruit of them being righteous. **Those who profess faith in Christ should learn that obvious godly and devoted lives will often result in a certain respect and consideration that cannot otherwise be obtained.** Of course, godliness is never to be pursued with merely a desire for such consideration.

HOW WOULD ZACHARIAS HAVE IT

"...And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called..."

Other versions read, "Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him,"
^{NRSV} "began gesturing to his father to

see what he wanted to call him,"^{CEB}

ABOUT WRITING TABLES

"THE TABLES IN USE GENERALLY AT THE TIME WERE USUALLY MADE OF WOOD, COVERED WITH A THIN COATING OF WAX; ON THE SOFT LAYER OF WAX THE WORDS WERE WRITTEN WITH AN IRON STYLUS."

PULPIT COMMENTARY

"talking to him by gestures,"^{LIVING}
"beckoned to his father,"^{ABP}
"communicated with signs,"^{JUB}
"signaled to his father,"^{LITV} and "used sign language."^{MESSAGE}

Now, they made a concerted effort to communicate with Zacharias. Surely they spoke to him also, for there is no indication that he was deaf as well as mute. Some say that the word translated "dumb" means "deaf and dumb," but I can find no basis for that statement. It does seem peculiar that they would make signs to him as though he was also deaf, but there really is no basis for that assumption. **I would rather think that they had no way to know he could hear if he could not speak.** It is clear after they motioned to him, he knew what they meant.

HIS NAME IS ALREADY JOHN

" . . . And he asked for a writing

table, and wrote, saying, His name **IS** John . . . "

Other versions read, "a writing tablet,"^{NKJV} "writing materials,"^{BBE} "a piece of paper,"^{LIVING} "something to write on,"^{ERV} and "writing pad."^{GNB}

Having received the means of communication, Zacharias quickly and decisively wrote, "His name **IS** John." One version read, "John is his name"^{DARBY}

Zacharias had not forgotten what Gabriel told him at least nine months earlier: "thou shalt call his name John" (Lk 1:20). There was not the slightest chance that he would allow another name to be on his son. That is the response of one who was "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). The relative rarity of such people in the professed church of our day is a matter of great concern. Too many people called "Christians" are living beneath the dignity of those who lived under an inferior covenant with inferior promises. No matter what reasoning is presented for such a condition, it simple cannot be justified. It betrays the absence of faith and love, the communion of the Holy Spirit, and faith in Christ. These are all serious circumstance and conditions. A tardy or hesitant people ate a reproach.

AND THEY MARVELED ALL

"^{63B} . . . And they marveled all."

Other versions read, "so they all marveled,"^{NKJV} "they were all

astonished," NASB *"to everyone's astonishment,"* NIV *"all of them were amazed,"* NRSV *"they all marveled,"* RSV *"all surprised,"* BBE *"all wondered."* DARBY

The word translated *"marveled"* is translated from a word with this lexical meaning: "TO WONDER, WONDER AT, MARVEL," THAYER "AS EXPRESSING HUMAN RESPONSE WHEN CONFRONTED BY DIVINE REVELATION IN SOME FORM WONDER, BE ASTONISHED, MARVEL; WITH FOLLOWING BE ASTONISHED OR SURPRISED THAT," FRIBERG "DENOTING INCREDULOUS

SURPRISE," VGNT DICTIONARY AND "E ASTONISHED; ESP. AT DIVINE EPIPHANIES OR DEEDS." GINGRICH

Upon beholding the immediacy of Zecharias writing, and the certainty of his communication, the people all marveled. This was the response of the flesh, that is not privy to the workings of the Lord. They did not know about the encounter Zacharias had with Gabriel the angel. Therefore, they could not comprehend how it was that

perfect agreement between Zecharias and Elizabeth existed at this point. However, behind the scenes, the same Spirit had provoked their response. Their faith was mutual.

This is an excellent example of the effectiveness of *"the unity of the Spirit"* (Eph 4:3), and speaking *"the same thing"* (1 Cor 1:10). **No one should doubt the possibility of such agreement.**

HIS MOUTH WAS OPENED IMMEDIATELY

" 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God."

HIS MOUTH WAS OPENED IMMEDIATELY

"And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed. . ."

Other versions read, *"mouth was opened and his tongue freed,"* NRSV *"able to speak again"* CEB *"power of speech returned"* CJB *"could speak again"* NLT *"his voice and tongue was at once restored,"* WILLIAMS *"started speaking,"* CEV *"Could talk again,"* ERV *"his voice and the use of his tongue."* GOODSPEED

The standard text refers to both the mouth and the tongue, for both are involved in the formation of words – and both were rendered incapable of speaking when Gabriel pronounced Zacharias would be *"dumb, and not able to speak"* until the time John the Baptist was born (:l 1:20).

However, Zacharias speech was not restored as soon as the promised son was born. Instead, it was restored when John was circumcised – eight days later – having received the sign of the covenant made with Abraham (Acts 7:8). That officially identified the birth of John to be specifically associated with the covenant God made with Abraham to bless the whole world through his seed.

HE SPAKE AND PRAISED GOD

" . . . and he spake, and praised God."

Other versions read, *"praising God,"* NKJV *"in praise of God,"* NASB *"blessing God,"* RSV *"gave praise to God,"* BBE *"began praising God,"* CEB *"his first words were a b'rakhah* [transliteration of the Hebrew word for 'praise'] *to God,"* CJB *"spake laudynge [lauding] God,"* TNT *"continued to praise God,"* WILLIAMS and *"blessing and praising and thanking God."* AMPLIFIED

What does it mean to *"praise God,"* or *"bless God?"* **Lexically is defined as follows:** "TO PRAISE, CELEBRATE WITH PRAISES 2) TO INVOKE BLESSINGS 3) TO CONSECRATE A THING WITH SOLEMN PRAYERS 3A) TO ASK GOD'S BLESSING ON A THING 3B) PRAY GOD TO BLESS IT TO ONE'S USE 3C) PRONOUNCE A CONSECRATORY BLESSING ON 4) OF GOD 4A) TO CAUSE TO PROSPER, TO MAKE HAPPY, TO BESTOW BLESSINGS ON 4B) FAVORED OF GOD, BLESSED," THAYER "TO SPEAK WELL OF GOD IN THE FORM OF PRAISE OR THANKSGIVING PRAISE, EXTOL; GIVE THANKS," FRIBERG AND "SPEAK WELL OF, PRAISE, EXTOL IN RECOGNITION OF DIVINE BENEFITS." GINGRICH

In the English language it means, "TO APPRAISE, ESTEEM; TO EXPRESS A FAVORABLE JUDGMENT OF; TO GLORIFY (A GOD OR SAINT) ESPECIALLY BY THE ATTRIBUTION OF PERFECTIONS"

MERRIAM-WEBSTER

As you can see, academic definitions are too ambiguous, assuming people have a good handle on the meaning of words like "consecration, blessing, favored, extol, etc. **To me, the manner in which this word is used suggests that it is certainly not representative of a surface or heartless expression. I see the following in this word.**

- ⇨ Insight concerning the circumstance.
- ⇨ Some decisive understanding of God.
- ⇨ Tracing an event back to God Himself.
- ⇨ A recognition of the work of God.
- ⇨ Hearty thankfulness.
- ⇨ The discernment of special favor.
- ⇨ The perception of the necessity of giving thanks to God.
- ⇨ A willingness and aggressiveness to honor the Lord for what He has done.

Praise cannot be given to God mechanically, or without the involvement of the heart, soul, mind, and strength.

I do not see how a person could really praise the Lord without some measure of these things being present. Praise cannot be given to God

mechanically, or without the involvement of the heart, soul, mind, and strength. As Zacharias had thought

about this whole matter, he had come to the faith that he had lacked in the beginning.

FEAR CAME ON ALL THAT DWELT ABOUT THEM

"⁶⁵ And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea."

FEAR CAME ON ALL

"And fear came on all that dwelt round about them . . ."

Other versions read, *"neighbors were all filled with awe,"* NIV *"were awestruck,"* CJB *"filled with fear,"* NET *"Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood,"* NLT *"wonder fell,"* LIVING *"overwhelmed with awe,"* WILLIAMS *"there came a great fear,"* MONTGOMERY *"we and reverential fear came on all."* AMPLIFIED

The primary meaning of the word

the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid . . ." Gen 28:16-17).

There is something about the presence of Deity, or even an angel from heaven, that strikes fear into the heart of those so visited. Also, the fact that this fear *"came on all,"* indicates that it involved something more than a mere human response.

This can be better understood by something that is said of the Lord. *"Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His*

What happened here was that hearing the startling agreement of Elizabeth and Zacharias on the name of John, and witnessing Zacharias' mouth opened, his tongue loosed, and hearing his praise to God, **they suddenly realized that God was among them.** They knew enough about themselves and God to conclude this could be a jeopardous situation, depending on how they reacted to that presence. The same thing happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:43); when Ananias and Sapphira died (Acts 5:5,11); and when the sons of Sceva were overcome by a demon-possessed man (Acts 19:11).

ALL THESE SAYINGS WERE NOISED

" . . . and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea."

Other versions read, *"were discussed,"* NKJV *"were talked about,"* NASB *"much talk about all these things,"* BBE *"all these things were the subject of conversation,"* DARBY *"in all the hill-country of Judea were all these sayings spoken of."* YLT

Notice the manner of Jewish communities in Scripture. They spoke among themselves of what they had heard – even when it was brief, yet packed with evidence of the working of the Lord.

translated *"fear,"* as used here (phobos), is *"fear, dread, terror,"* THAYER *"terror,"* FRIBERG *"a state of severe distress, aroused by intense concern,"* LOUW-NIDA *"fear, alarm, fright."* GINGRICH The lexical meanings provided here are specifically said to apply to this text: Luke 1:65.

What caused such a reaction? What they had just seen and heard confirmed Divine activity in their midst. It is similar to the experience Jacob had when he awoke from his famous dream of the ladder, set up on the earth and reaching into heaven. He said, *"Surely*

enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled" (Psa 97:2-4).

No one who is knowledgeably witness of the working of the Lord can possibly take it casually. There is a certain spiritual environment that accompanies any Divine visitation. Referring to Sinai, the Psalmist refers to this as menacing clouds, a blazing fire, and arresting lightning (Psa 97:2-5).

In a sense, these protect men from God suddenly destroying them simply with His presence.

Some of the versions distort the meaning of the text by referring to *"things"* instead of *"sayings."* The word translated *"sayings"* is *"raymata"* which has the following lexical meaning: *"THAT WHICH IS OR HAS BEEN UTTERED BY THE LIVING VOICE, THING SPOKEN, WORD; "ANY SOUND PRODUCED BY THE VOICE AND HAVING A DEFINITE MEANING,"* THAYER AND *"AS WHAT HAS DEFINITELY BEEN STATED, WITH FOCUS ON CONTENT."* FRIBERG The only way the word *"things"* could possibly be correct, is if it read *"things said."* This text is speaking of the things that were said during that occasion.

Notice the manner of Jewish communities in Scripture. **They spoke**

among themselves of what they had heard – even when it was brief, yet packed with evidence of the working of the Lord. During Jesus ministry, when He entered into Capernaum, “it was **noised** that He was in the house” (Mk 2:1). The events that took place among the disciples on the day of Pentecost was “**noised** abroad” (Acts 2:6). Two

blind men by the way side “**heard** that Jesus passed by” (Matt 20:30). When Jesus spoke about living water flowing out of the belly of him who believed on Him, “**many people . . . heard this saying**” (John 7:40). At the final Feast Jesus attended, “**much people that were come to the feast, when they**

heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem” (John 12:12).

Ah, those were certainly different from the times in which we are living – although, perhaps more would be discussed if things of greater substance was being said.

THEY LAID THE SAYINGS UP IN THEIR HEARTS

“^{66A} **And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be!**”

THEY THAT HEARD THEM

“And all they that heard them. . .”

Other versions read, “Everyone who heard this,” ^{NIV} “Everyone who heard about it,” ^{GWN} and “All who heard the story.” ^{WEYMOUTH}

LAID THEM UP IN THEIR HEARTS

“ . . . laid them up in their hearts, saying . . .” Other versions read, “kept them in their hearts,” ^{NKJV} “kept them I mind,” ^{NASB} “wondered about it,” ^{NIV} “pondered them,” ^{NRSV} “considered it carefully,” ^{CEB} “took it to heart,” ^{CSB} “seriously thought it over,” ^{GWN} “wondered about it,” ^{NJB} and “reflected on these events.” ^{NLT} Things they heard no doubt included:

- ⇒ The appearance of Gabriel to Zacharias in the Temple (1:14-17).
- ⇒ Zacharias being stricken mute (1:18-19).
- ⇒ The conception of Elizabeth (1:24-25).
- ⇒ The birth of John (1:57-58).
- ⇒ The manner in which the child was named, and the name of the child (1:59-63).
- ⇒ The opening of Zacharias mouth, and ther loosening of his tongue.

⇒ The praise Zacharias immediately offered to God (1:64).

⇒ The fear that came on every one in that area (1:54).

⇒ Quite possibly the prophecy that follows may have also been reported (1:67-79).

I cannot help but draw your attention once again to the manner of these people. **They had been cultured**

reads, “*The people were waiting expectantly.*” I suppose that one of the great disappointments in our minds is the near-total lack of spiritual expectancy in the hearts and minds of professing “Christians.” **They have settled down in the world, and are more noted for complaining than for having godly expectancy.**

Also, there is no question about this: true benefit from hearing a report of Divine working, or hearing the word

They had been cultured by God, taught by the writings of Moses, and hewed by the prophets. Their entire lives revolved around the Lord and His ordinances.

by God, taught by the writings of Moses, and hewed by the prophets. Their entire lives revolved around the Lord and His ordinances.

Such people had been sensitized in their spirits to the Lord. For such, anything made known by the Lord was important, and especially when it was very unusual.

All of this is part of the background that yielded the readiness of the people when John began to minister: “*And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not*” (Luke 3:15). The NIV

itself, must be preceded by pondering, meditation, and extensive thinking about the what has been heard. **People who do not think deeply and extensively about the things of God will not have godly intentions or expectations.** Their faith and hope will be weak, if, indeed, it has managed to survive at all.

WHAT MANNER OF CHILD?

“ . . . What manner of child shall this be!”

Other versions read, “*what kind of child will this be?*” ^{NKJV} “*What, then, will this child turn out to be?*” ^{NASB} “*What will this child become?*” ^{NRSV} and

It is good for the people of God to view their children from the perspective of being used by God. Many neglect this aspect of raising children.

"Whatever will this little boy be then?"
AMPLIFIED

There have been a few births in history that were significant enough to think about in an extended and meditative manner.

- ⇒ ISAAC. His birth was promised, and it was miraculous (Gen 17:21; 18:10,14; Heb 11:11).
- ⇒ MOSES. His mother Jocabed saw he was a *"goodly children,"* and his him for three months (Heb 11:23).
- ⇒ SAMSON. His birth was prophesied by a holy angel, who said he would

deliver Israel (Judges 13:3-5).

- ⇒ SAMUEL. Samuel was born in answer to prayer, and was given to the Lord, even serving in the house of God at a very young age. He was the last of the Judges, and was noted for being hole (1 Sam 1:24-28; 2:18).
- ⇒ JEREMIAH. He was chosen to be a prophet to the nations from the mother's womb (Jer 1:5).
- ⇒ PAUL. He was separated from his mother's womb to preach Christ among the heathen (Gal 1:15).

There have also been children who were seen as especially noteworthy. To name three who, by the Lord's appointment, became great:

- ⇒ ISAAC. Gen 21:10-12
- ⇒ SAMUEL. 1 Sam 2:18-21
- ⇒ DAVID. 1 Sam 16:12-13

Of course, the premier birth (Lk 1:31-35), infancy (Lk 2:21-33; Matt 2:15), boyhood (Lk 2:42-49), and manhood (Lk 4:1-14; Acts 10:38) belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

AN OBSERVATION

It is good for the people of God to view their children from the perspective of being used by God. Many neglect this aspect of raising children.

Although he proved to be a great disappointment, when Eve gave birth to her first son, Cain, she said, *"I have gotten a man from the Lord"* (Gen 4:1) – not a child, but a man. **That is, she was thinking of the potential of the child, not merely of his birth.**

THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS WITH HIM

^{66B} ***And the hand of the Lord was with him.***

This statement is made concerning John. It is a kind of summation of his entire life. It accounts for his birth, his infancy, his childhood, and his adult life.

Most, if not all of this, was accomplished by the angels of God, who are the appointed *"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* (Heb 1:13-14) – and John certainly qualifies to be included in that body of people.

Jesus said of *"little ones," "their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven"* (Matt 18:10). The Psalmist said, *"For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways"* (Psa 91:11). And again, *"The angel of the LORD*

encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psa 34:7).

THE HAND OF THE LORD

"And the hand of the Lord . . ."

Other versions read, *"the Lord's power,"* ^{CEB} *"It was clear that the Lord,"* ^{GWN} *"For surely the hand of the Lord,"* ^{NAB} *"For it was obvious that the hand of the Lord,"* ^{ISV} *"They could see that the Lord,"* ^{ERV} *"Clearly, God has his hand,"* ^{MESSAGE} and *"For the hand of the Lord was [so evidently]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated *"hand"* has the following lexical meaning: "THE HAND; BY THE HELP OR AGENCY, OF ANYONE, SYMBOLIZING HIS MIGHT, ACTIVITY, POWER," ^{THAYER} "FIGURATIVELY, AS THE EXPRESSION OF THE ACTIVITY OF A SUPERNATURAL OR HUMAN BEING CONTROL, POWER," ^{FRIBERG} AND "EQUIVALENT TO ACTIVITY." ^{GINGRICH}

This is an anthropomorphism – a

literary means of assisting us to understand the Lord more fully. Since *"God is a Spirit"* (John 4:24), and is *"invisible"* (Col 1:15), He does not have a hand as men do. However, He is a Creator, and is active in doing things for specific reasons. Therefore, *"the hand of the Lord"* is speaking to us of God **doing** something, engaged in a deliberate work.

The expression *"the hand of the Lord"* occurs thirty-six times in the KJV and NKJV Bibles, 35 times in the NASB 21 in the NIV, 33 in the NRSV and 35 in the RSV. **It has to do with Divine activity toward a particular person, group of persons, or even impersonal life.** The following illustrates this.

- ⇒ AFFLICTION OF CATTLE. *"Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the*

camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain." (Ex 9:3)

⇒ DESTROYING PEOPLE. "For indeed **the hand of the LORD** was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed." (Deut 2:15)

⇒ OPPOSING THE PHILISTINES. "So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and **the hand of the LORD** was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel." (1 Sam 7:13)

⇒ STRENGTHENING ELIJAH. "And **the hand of the LORD** was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." (1 Kgs 18:46)

⇒ THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY. "And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that **the hand of the LORD** came upon him." (2 Kgs 3:14-15)

⇒ ENABLING SUCCESS. "This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to **the hand of the LORD** his God upon him." (Ezra 7:6)

⇒ STRENGTHENING. "And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as **the hand of the LORD** my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me." (Ezra 7:28)

⇒ TURNING THE HEART. "The king's heart is in **the hand of the LORD**, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." (Prov 21:1)

⇒ OBSERVABLE WORK. "That they may see, and know, and consider, and

. . . certain sinful traits are found among some professing Christians: despair, murmuring, complaining, resorting to the worldly-wise, fainting, quitting, excessive sorrow, a retaliatory spirit, a failure to invest their lives in eternity, and a whole lot more.

understand together, that **the hand of the LORD** hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it." (Isa 41:20)

⇒ DIVINE DEMONSTRABLE FAVOR. "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in **the hand of thy God**. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." (Isa 62:3-4)

⇒ DISPLAYED FAVOR. "And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and **the hand of the LORD** shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies." (Isa 66:14)

⇒ GRANTING REVELATION AND INSIGHT. "The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and **the hand of the LORD** was there upon him." (Ezek 1:3)

⇒ MOVING TO A NEW ENVIRONMENT. "**The hand of the LORD** was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones," (Ezek 37:1)

⇒ WORKING THROUGH PREACHERS. "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And **the hand of the Lord** was with

them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11:20-21)

⇒ JUDGMENT. "And now, behold, **the hand of the Lord** is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand." (Acts 13:11)

It is evident that Satan launches certain initiatives that lead people to think God is not a working God – even though the Scriptures are filled with examples of that working in the past, and promises of it in the future. Because of men's failure to comprehend this, certain sinful traits are found among some professing Christians: despair, murmuring, complaining, resorting to the worldly-wise, fainting, quitting, excessive sorrow, a retaliatory spirit, a failure to invest their lives in eternity, and a whole lot more.

GOD IS A WORKING GOD

These few examples illustrate the poignancy of the phrase "**the hand of the Lord**." Unlike all false gods, He is a working and active God, causing things to happen, blessing, favoring, and even cursing.

It is said of all false gods, "They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat" (Psa 115:5-7). That is, they do not say anything or do anything. They are really nothing more than a human imagination, having

There is a quick listing of fifty-seven things God is said to have done. I have not included all of the texts dealing with what God is doing, or has declared He will do.

the same characteristics as those who made them. As it is written, *"They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them"* (Psa 115:8). If people pray to them, like the prophets with whom Elijah had a contest, the prayers are not heard (1 Kgs 18:26-29).

CONSIDERING THE GOD OF HEAVEN

Scripture abounds with phrases that accent the continual activity of God.

- ⇒ *"God hath **said**"* (Gen 3:3)
- ⇒ *"God hath **made**"* (Gen 21:6)
- ⇒ *"God hath **heard**"* (Gen 21:17)
- ⇒ *"God hath **judged**"* (Gen 30:6)
- ⇒ *"God hath **given**"* (Gen 30:18)
- ⇒ *"God hath **endued**"* (Gen 30:20)
- ⇒ *"God hath **taken away**"* (Gen 30:23)
- ⇒ *"God hath **seen**"* (Gen 31:42)
- ⇒ *"God hath **graciously given**"* (Gen 33:5)
- ⇒ *"God hath **showed**"* (Gen 41:25)
- ⇒ *"God hath **caused**"* (Gen 41:52)
- ⇒ *"God hath **done**"* (Gen 42:28)
- ⇒ *"God hath **found**"* (Gen 44:16)
- ⇒ *"God hath **made**"* (Gen 45:9)
- ⇒ *"God hath **multiplied**"* (Deut 1:10)
- ⇒ *"God hath **blessed**"* (Deut 2:7)
- ⇒ *"God hath **destroyed**"* (Deut 4:3)

- ⇒ *"God hath **commanded**"* (Deut 5:12)
- ⇒ *"God hath **chosen**"* (Deut 7:6)
- ⇒ *"God hath **delivered**"* (Deut 21:10)
- ⇒ *"God hath **scattered**"* (Deut 30:3)
- ⇒ *"God hath **promised**"* (Josh 23:5)
- ⇒ *"God hath **requited**"* (Judges 1:7)
- ⇒ *"God hath **heard**"* (2 Kgs 19:4)
- ⇒ *"God hath power to **help**"* (2 Chron 25:8)
- ⇒ *"God hath determined to **destroy**"* (2 Chron 25:16),
- ⇒ *"God hath **overthrown**"* (Job 19:6)
- ⇒ *"God hath **touched me**"* (Job 19:21)
- ⇒ *"God hath **taken away**"* (Job 34:5)
- ⇒ *"God hath **anointed thee**"* (Psa 45:7)
- ⇒ *"God hath **wrought**"* (Dan 4:2)
- ⇒ *"God hath **numbered**"* (Dan 5:26)
- ⇒ *"God hath **sent**"* (Dan 6:22)
- ⇒ *"God hath **joined together**"* (Matt 19:6)
- ⇒ *"God hath **visited**"* (Lk 7:16)
- ⇒ *"God hath **sent**"* (John 3:34)
- ⇒ *"God hath **raised up**"* (Acts 2:24)
- ⇒ *"God hath **cleansed**"* (Acts 10:15)
- ⇒ *"God hath **fulfilled**"* (Acts 13:33)
- ⇒ *"God hath **set forth**"* (Rom 3:25)

- ⇒ *"God hath **concluded**"* (Rom 11:32)
- ⇒ *"God hath **dealt** to every man the measure of faith"* (Rom 12:3)
- ⇒ *"God hath **received him**"* (Rom 14:3)
- ⇒ *"God hath **prepared**"* (1 Cor 2:9)
- ⇒ *"God hath **revealed**"* (1 Cor 2:10)
- ⇒ *"God hath **set forth**"* (1 Cor 4:9)
- ⇒ *"God hath **called**"* (1 Cor 7:15)
- ⇒ *"God hath **distributed to every man**"* (1 Cor 7:17)
- ⇒ *"God hath **tempered the body together**"* (1 Cor 12:24)
- ⇒ *"God hath **prospered**"* (1 Cor 16:2)
- ⇒ *"God hath before **ordained**"* (Eph 2:10)
- ⇒ *"God hath from the beginning **chosen you**"* (2 Thess 2:13)
- ⇒ *"God hath **enjoined**"* (Heb 9:20)
- ⇒ *"God hath **given to us eternal life**"* (1 John 5:11)
- ⇒ *"God hath **put in their hearts**"* (Rev 17:17)
- ⇒ *"God hath **remembered**"* (Rev 18:5)
- ⇒ *"God hath **avenged**"* (Rev 18:20).

There is a quick listing of fifty-seven things God is said to have done. I have not included all of the texts dealing with what God is doing, or has declared He will do. **This gives us some idea of what Jesus meant when He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"** (John 5:17). It gives us some perspective of the scope of the statement, *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* (Phil 2:13).

"THE GOD OF"

In order to accent that thoughts concerning God are more thorough, and conducive to sobriety and piety, the following associations God maintains

are given. They are designed to assist us in broadening the horizon of thought concerning Him. **In all of these associations something of God was particularly made known.**

- ⇒ *"The God of **heaven**"* (Gen 24:3).
- ⇒ *"The God of **Abraham**"* (Gen 26:24)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Isaac**"* (Gen 28:13)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Bethel**"* (Gen 31:13)
- ⇒ *"The God of the **Hebrews**"* (Ex 5:3)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Israel**"* (Ex 34:23)
- ⇒ *"The God of the spirits of **all flesh**"* (Num 16:22; 27:16)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Jeshurun**"* (Deut 33:26)
- ⇒ *"The God of the **armies of Israel**"* (1 Sam 17:45)
- ⇒ *"The God of my **rock**"* (2 Sam 22:3)
- ⇒ *"The God of the **rock of my salvation**"* (2 Sam 22:47)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Jacob**"* (2 Sam 23:1)
- ⇒ *"The God of the **land**"* (2 Kgs 17:26-27)
- ⇒ *"The God of **David**"* (2 Kgs 20:5)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Hezekiah**"* (2 Chron 32:17).
- ⇒ *"The God of **Jerusalem**"* (2 Chron 32:19)
- ⇒ *"The God of his [Manasseh] **fathers**"* (2 Chron 33:12)
- ⇒ *"The God of my **salvation**"* (Psa 18:46)
- ⇒ *"The God of his [he that has clean hands and a pure heart] **salvation**"* (Psa 24:5)
- ⇒ *"The God of **glory**"* (Psa 29:3)
- ⇒ *"The God of my **life**"* (Psa 42:8)
- ⇒ *"The God of my **strength**"* (Psa

43:2)

- ⇒ *"The God of my **mercy**"* (Psa 49:10)
- ⇒ *"The God of **gods**"* (Psa 136:2)
- ⇒ *"The God of the **whole earth**"* (Isa 54:5)
- ⇒ *"The God of **truth**"* (Isa 65:16)
- ⇒ *"The God of all the **families of Israel**"* (Jer 31:1)
- ⇒ *"The God of **all flesh**"* (Jer 32:27)

(Eph 1:17)

- ⇒ *"The God of all **grace**"* (1 Pet 5:10)\
- ⇒ *"The God of the **earth**"* (Rev 11:4)
- ⇒ *"The God and Father of our Lord **Jesus Christ**"* (2 Cor 11:31)
- ⇒ *"God and Father of **all**"* (Eph 4:6)
- ⇒ *"The Father of our Lord **Jesus Christ**"* (Rom 15:6)
- ⇒ *"One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him"* (1 Cor

There are sixty-three aspects of God that have been revealed. I have briefly provided one hundred and twenty-three revealed specified associations in which certain things of God can be known.

- ⇒ *"The God of **hosts**"* (Jer 38:17)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**"* (Dan 3:28)
- ⇒ *"The God of **Daniel**"* (Dan 6:26)
- ⇒ *"The God of **judgment**"* (Mal 2:17)
- ⇒ *"The God of the **living**"* (Mk 12:27)
- ⇒ *"The God of **glory**"* (Acts 7:2)
- ⇒ *"The God of this people **Israel**"* (Acts 13:17)
- ⇒ *"The God of the **Jews**"* (Rom 3:29)
- ⇒ *"The God of **patience and consolation**"* (Rom 15:5)
- ⇒ *"The God of **hope**"* (Rom 15:13)
- ⇒ *"The God of **peace**"* (Rom 15:33)
- ⇒ *"The God of all **comfort**"* (2 Cor 1:3)
- ⇒ *"The God of **love and peace**"* (2 Cor 13:11)
- ⇒ *"The God of our Lord **Jesus Christ**"*

8:6)

- ⇒ *"The Father of **glory**"* (Eph 1:17)
- ⇒ *"The Father of **spirits**"* (Heb 12:9)
- ⇒ *"The Father of **lights**"* (James 1:17)
- ⇒ *"Lord of all the **earth**"* (Josh 3:13)
- ⇒ *"The Lord of the **whole earth**"* (Psa 97:5)
- ⇒ *"Lord of **lords**"* (Psa 136:3)
- ⇒ *"Lord of **hosts**"* (Isa 10:16)
- ⇒ *"Lord of **kings**"* (Dan 2:47)
- ⇒ *"The Lord of **heaven**"* (Dan 5:23)
- ⇒ *"The Lord of all the **earth**"* (Zech 6:5)
- ⇒ *"The Lord of the **harvest**"* (Matt 9:38)
- ⇒ *"Lord of **heaven and earth**"* (Matt 11:25)

⇒ *"The Lord of **Sabaoth**"* [armies] (Rom 9:29)

⇒ *"The Lord of **peace**"* (2 Thess 3:16)

⇒ *"The **Lord of glory**"* (James 2:1)

There are sixty-three aspects of God that have been revealed. I have briefly provided one hundred and twenty-three revealed specified associations in which certain things of God can be known.

These all postulate an acquaintance with Scripture. Where this acquaintance is lacking, the knowledge of God is insufficient.

A DEFICIENCY OF OUR TIMES

One of the great deficiencies of our times is small and unproductive

If it is true that *"Ye shall know them by their fruits"* (Matt 7:16,20), then it appears our society reflects a very serious condition. While it may not be pleasant to think about, it may even be irremediable, like that of Jerusalem at the time of Christ (Matt 23:37-39).

WAS WITH HIM

" . . . was with him."

Other versions read, *"certainly with him,"* ^{NASB} *"was indeed with him,"* ^{NET} *"was surely upon him in a special way,"* ^{NLT} *"was with this child,"* ^{IE} and *"was [so evidently] with him [protecting and aiding him]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is the sum total of what we know about John the Baptist, from his birth and circumcision until he began preaching.

own, or when there is no longer any danger or jeopardy. This error in thinking occurs because the intention of salvation is not perceived.

Deliverance does include the "from" perspective:—i.e. *"delivered from the Law"* (Rom 7:6), *"delivered us from this present evil world"* (Gal 1:4), making us *"free from sin"* (Rom 6:18), delivering us **from the fear of death**, and subjection to bondage (Heb 2:15).

However, **there is also deliverance TO some essential things:**—i.e.

Think of this marvelous summation: *"But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."* (Heb 12:22-24).

In Christ, we have been brought to the dwelling place of God Himself – the heavenly places

thinking and expressions about God Himself. In fact, as a general rule, there really is not a lot being said about God and Christ – what they are doing, what they have pledged to do, etc. The impact this has had upon the thinking of the average "Christian" has been staggering. **It is exceedingly difficult for some professed believers to associate their lives and circumstanced with the working of the Lord.** They are too easily discouraged, and made fearful over things that, to them, appear to be out of control. Much of this is not their own fault. It can be traced directly to Godless and Christless preaching—i.e. preaching and teaching that centers in the activities of men rather than the working and promises of God.

A religious culture has been produced where blessings are not seen for what they really are, and thus they are not reported or talked about to the glory of God. Judgments and personal inclinations are not seen for what they really are, and thus genuine repentance is virtually unknown.

⇒ John was born by Divine enablement, for his parents were *"well stricken in years,"* and his mother *"was barren"* (Lk 1:7).

⇒ John was also *"filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb"* (Lk 1:15).

⇒ *"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel"* (Luke 1:80),

⇒ *"The word of God came to John in the wilderness."* (Lk 3:2).

However, even those remarkable advantages were not sufficient of themselves. **It was still required that the hand of the Lord be with John the Baptist as he advanced in years – and even after he began preaching.**

This confirms the folly of the teaching that believers ever reach a point where they can navigate on their

Ponder the absolute magnitude of this revelation – something that cannot be seen with the eye, or ascertained by any human sense. Here is where all who are in Christ *"are come"*—i.e. have arrived, and by God's grace can remain.

MOUNT ZION

Under the administration of the Law, David captured Mount Zion, which became the resting place for the ark of God (2 Sam 5:7; 2 Kgs 8:1; 2 Chron 5:2). The Zion to which we have come is not one that has been captured. It has never been under the control of anyone but God. This is where the presence of God is located, like the ark of the covenant was located in Zion of old, which was located in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 14:20). In Christ, we have been brought to the dwelling place of God Himself – the heavenly places (Eph 2:6).

THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

This is *"the Jerusalem that is above,"* which is *"the mother of us all"* (Gal 4:26). This is an occupied city, and is the headquarters for the redeemed of

the Lord.

ENUMERABLE COMPANY OF ANGELS

This is the vast hosts of God, the armies of heaven (Rev 19:14), devoted wholly to the ministry of those who shall be the heirs of salvation (Heb 1:13-14). Having come to this numberless company, we are known among them.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This is the universal church, the greater part of which have left the field in which men fight the good fight of faith. There is a sense in which we have fellowship with them now, and it is in their presence that we are running the race with patience that has been set before us (Heb 11:4-12:1-2).

GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL

Out of Christ we could never hope to survive being in the immediate presence of *"God the Judge of all."* But now, having been reconciled unto God (Rom 5:9-10), and having been brought into fellowship with Him (1 John 1:3), we have, in Christ Jesus, access to Him with confidence (Eph 3:12).

THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN

Who is able to fathom the marvelous description of these personalities: *"the spirits of just men made perfect."* The history of many of these saints is recorded from Genesis through Malachi. Now, in Christ Jesus, we *"are come"* to them. It is a fellowship, on our part, that is realized by faith, and we do not know the extent of it. When you are tempted to think you are alone, remember where you *"are come."*

JESUS THE MEDIATOR

Coming to Jesus involves a lot. We were baptized *"into Christ"* (Gal 3:27), into His death (Rom 6:3), raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4), joined to Him (1 Cor 6:17), and *"hid with Christ in God"* (Col 3:3). Mediating as our great High Priest, we

can now *"come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb 4:16).

THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING

This is the blood by which Jesus *"sanctified the people"* of God (Heb 13:12). The sprinkling of this blood cleanses us from an *"evil,"* or *"guilty,"* ^{NIV} *"conscience"* (Heb 10:22).

All of this is involved in *"the hand of the Lord"* being upon us in Christ Jesus. **AND THERE IS MORE!**

WE ARE ALSO CALLED TO

- ⇒ Fellowship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9).
- ⇒ *"Holiness"* (Rom 6:19,22; 1 Thess 4:7).
- ⇒ *"To be saints"* (1 Cor 1:2).
- ⇒ *"Called to liberty"* (Gal 5:13).
- ⇒ Called *"into His kingdom and glory"* (1 Thess 2:12).
- ⇒ Called *"unto His eternal glory"* (1 Pet 5:10).
- ⇒ *"Called to glory and virtue"* (2 Pet 1:3).
- ⇒ We have been brought into a *"good fight"* (1 Tim 6:12).
- ⇒ Brought into a *"race"* (Heb 12:1-2).
- ⇒ Ushered into a warfare (Eph 6:10-18; 2 Cor 10:3-4).
- ⇒ Brought into a pilgrimage (1 Pet 2:11).
- ⇒ Entered into a process of continual change from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18).
- ⇒ Called to perfect holiness in the fear

of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1)

- ⇒ Called to put off the old man, and put on the new man (Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10).
- ⇒ Required to put to death the deeds of the body, mortifying our members that are upon the earth (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5)
- ⇒ Called to grow up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15).
- ⇒ Minister within the body of Christ according to the grace that has been given to us (1 Pet 4:10-11).
- ⇒ Not allow an evil heart of unbelief to be found in us (Heb 3:12).
- ⇒ Put on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-18).
- ⇒ Drawing near to God (James 4:7; Heb 10:22).
- ⇒ Access to God with confidence (Eph 3:12).
- ⇒ Mortifying our members that are upon the earth (Col 3:5).
- ⇒ Walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,25).

This is what requires the continued presence of the Lord.

You see what a rich heritage is ours in Christ Jesus. When you are tempted to think you are alone, or that, as Jacob reasoned, *"all these things are against me"* (Gen 42:36), lift up your head, and say with David, *"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage"* (Psa 16:6). The hand of the Lord is with you as you press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. In Jesus Christ, you are NOT alone! Of that you may be sure.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/14/14. We will continue our series of lessons in the Gospel of Luke. The fifth lesson will cover verses 66-80 of chapter 1: "THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS," one of the premier prophecies of Scripture. He spoke of redemption and salvation, and spoke of the path made to Abraham. Some of involvements of salvation were also mentioned, together with a synopsis of the appointed ministry of his newborn son. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.



2014 PREACHING FESTIVAL

DIVINE INTERROGATION

Friday, Saturday, Lord's Day

7:00 PM 1:00 PM 9:00 AM

NOVEMBER 14-16, 2011

DON DEWELT PRAYER CENTER