

# BIBLE MONITOR

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"For the faith once delivered unto the saints"

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OUR MOTTO: Spiritual in life and  
Scriptural in practice.

OUR WATCHWORD: Go into all  
the world and preach the gospel.

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OUR AIM: Be it our aim to be more sanctified, more righteous,  
more holy, and more perfect through faith and obedience.

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## BATTLE CREEK

There is a region lovelier far,  
Than sages tell or poets sing,  
Brighter than noonday glories are,  
And softer than the tints of spring.

It is not fanned by summer's gale,  
Tis not refreshed by vernal show'rs,  
It never needs the moonbeam pale,  
For there are know no evening hours.

No, for that world is ever bright,  
With purist radiance all its own,  
The streams of uncreated light,  
Flow round it from th' eternal throne.

It is all holy and serene,  
The land of glory and repose,  
No cloud obscures the radiant scene,  
There not a tear of sorrow flows.

In vain the curious, searching eye,  
May seek to view the fair abode,  
Or find it in the starry sky,  
It is the dwelling place of God.

L. C. Everett

## I WISH YOU BAD LUCK

No, that is not a typo. While a somewhat strange title for an editorial, it is borrowed from a commencement speech given to a 9<sup>th</sup> grade high school class in 2017. The commencement speech was given by John Roberts, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, to his son's high school.

While Justice Roberts encouraged the students on this milestone of their achievements as commencements typically do, his speech also included some rather unusual statements for such an occasion. Speaking of what such speakers often say, Justice Roberts added the following:

“Now the commencement speakers will typically also wish you good luck and extend good

wishes to you. I will not do that, and I'll tell you why. From time to time in the years to come, I hope you will be treated unfairly, so that you will come to know the value of justice. I hope that you will suffer betrayal because that will teach you the importance of loyalty. Sorry to say, but I hope you will be lonely from time to time so that you don't take friends for granted. I wish you bad luck, again, from time to time so that you will be conscious of the role of chance in life and understand that your success is not completely deserved and that the failure of others is not completely deserved either. And when you lose, as you will from time to time, I hope every now and then, your opponent will gloat over your failure. It is a way for you to understand the

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importance of sportsmanship. I hope you'll be ignored so you know the importance of listening to others, and I hope you will have just enough pain to learn compassion. Whether I wish these things or not, they're going to happen. And whether you benefit from them or not will depend upon your ability to see the message in your misfortunes."

Quite interesting. And certainly different than commencement speeches I've heard before. Such speeches I've heard are generally congratulatory and full of hope and encouragement for the future. At first glance, we might think Justice Roberts' speech strikes a negative tone, wishing times of difficulty and hardship on the students. However, it quickly becomes clear that the end of his desire for these youth does not conclude in their difficulties but that future trials would bring forth blessing, growth and maturity.

While perhaps an unusual speech, I think most of us can relate to Justice Roberts' thoughts regarding these young people. In fact, the more we consider his statement, the more

wisdom we might see in it. After all, when we consider our own past, we might see that many of our blessings, and steps of growth and maturity were often preceded and accompanied by seasons of trial. While we may not look forward to times of difficulty, in retrospect we can often see their resultant benefits. The times of trial may not have seemed pleasant in the moment but we often come to appreciate the mature fruit of them. It appears that this is what Justice Roberts was speaking to.

Scripture tells us: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb 12:11

Seasoned believers should not only be aware of this, but through experience, be familiar with it. Even so, we can question the purpose and timing of life's difficulties. Does God see us in our struggles? Has he forgotten us or overlooked the misfortune that has come our way? Well, do these things elude an all-seeing and all-knowing God? Or is

more likely that He is behind the scenes at work, bringing forth blessings, growth and maturity?

As we consider these things, we might know the answer to these questions. However, knowing the answer doesn't always easily settle the issue in our hearts and minds. We may know the answer, but we may not like it. If we wrestle with contentment through our difficulties, we have role models to follow in scripture who endured great difficulty with contentment, such as Paul. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil 4:11-13

The key here for the believer seems to be a continuing spirit

of unconditional contentment from a heart that knows the Lord and trusts in Him for strength to endure and grow. With this in mind, perhaps it's easier to understand how it would be possible to not only stay content but to glory in tribulations: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" Rom 5:3-4

While I don't know what Justice Roberts believes about the Lord, his commencement statement seems to contain wisdom and in ways, corresponds to what we find in scripture. While we all enjoy easy times, strength and growth often come through difficult times. It would appear that Justice Roberts understood this when he wished bad luck upon the students, that might not be bad at all.

K. Brock

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## THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW, WHEN TOMORROW IS TODAY

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of 4. See the June 2023 issue for Part 1 and look for Parts 3 and 4 in the August and September 2023 issues.*

### Part 2 of 4

#### In The World

Partially due to the previously mentioned issue, partially due to other inputs and problems, could it be that we, the church, have lost our direction? While we may be raising generations of people to live Godly lives, and die Godly deaths, is this all that God has called us to do?

We are influenced by philosophies of past generations, some perhaps overly predicated on fear of becoming like the world. In fear, many have adopted an ideology of “isolationism”, one where we live our normal lives, perhaps witnessing to our coworkers, perhaps doing some charity. When the issue of outreach to the world comes up, the common responses are “I just don’t feel called to do mission work.” or “If everyone goes to foreign countries, who will witness here?”. It has led to an apathy that runs deeper than a desire for change, a root so deep that rare is the one who can pull out of it.

The Lord has called us all out of our comfort zones, into the world. In our desire to stop the influences of the world, we have become like it. Complacency and apathy can ruin our lives. How can men stand up in a bog of resistance? How can women raise their children to be God-serving, not just God-fearing, if they themselves stay put?

To claim that one can ignore such a fundamental and simple command as “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,” based on an unprovable and volatile reason such as conviction, or lack thereof, exposes a deep sense of fear. I am not advocating for the

dissolution of conservative Christian churches and that everyone pack up and leave, but to live life with the sole purpose being the pursuit of eternal bliss at the end of it falls short of God's calling.

Nietzsche famously proclaimed that "God is dead", he meant this in as literal of a way as a philosopher can. It was a sad proclamation, not one of joyous applause. He knew that something of great importance was lost to us.

We look at that proclamation and laugh, for we know that God is still very much alive in the realest of senses. He is more alive than any of us; however, we might lack the understanding that from a psychological and philosophical sense, he may be correct.

God exists outside of man and time. He always has and always will. But man's sin yielded dominion over the earth to the devil. The curse has in some ways, made it Satan's plaything. We are God's church, a shining beacon on a hill, and it is our job to bring His message to the wilderness. In that philosophical sense, God is only as real and alive as His church is. When it dies, so too does His influence and light. It is vital to note that I am not putting boundaries and limits to God. If every Christian died immediately, He would surely make his presence known and raise up a new church. This argument is purely made from a philosophical perspective.

When we as a church stop bringing God to the lost, in the eyes of the lost, He never existed. How can something exist that one has never known? Much as America never existed to the west before Columbus, so too is God to the unsaved. The world truly believes that God is dead and without being proven otherwise, to them He is. The church and the intellectuals have been fundamentally separated.

So where did this disconnect occur? I honestly could not say. One could likely do a deep dive into the great thinkers of the church and the divide between them and the academics of the world, but

I personally feel that is of little consequence in this case. What we do know, is that there very much is a definite gap present now.

At some point it seems that many have adopted a seemingly faith-only stance to God, one where one can question things, but the fundamental ideal of God is purely based on faith. We pretend to not have this stance and claim that everyone questions His existence, but at the end of the day much of our belief is based on faith alone. This is a fundamental divide between academics and the church, as modern teaching dictates not to take anything at face value, and to question everything. However, we are oft told to strengthen our faith when we question, to not look for science and philosophy to back up the existence and reality of God, if you cannot believe at face value, perhaps you don't truly believe.

*To be continued in "Part 3 – Defending the Faith" in next month's issue of the Bible Monitor*

Ashton Koval  
New Carlisle, OH

## GO AND SIN NO MORE

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35

In the classic novel *Les Miserables*, by French author Victor Hugo, the principle character is a man named Jean Valjean. A poor man, his only crime was the theft of a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving children. He served nineteen years and was turned out of prison penniless into the

street. Unable to find work, he makes his way to the home of an old bishop, who invites him in, feeds him, gives him a bed for the night, and generally treats him like a king. He serves him on silver platters, which Valjean sees are very valuable, along with beautiful candlesticks.

Yielding to temptation, Valjean steals the silver plates and slips away, but is soon caught and taken to the bishop's

home by the police. When shown the plates, the bishop says, "Why I gave them to him!" and turning to Valjean says, "You forgot to take the candlesticks! Take them and become an honest man! You no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul for you. I give it to God."

Valjean accepted the gift, not just as valuable silver, but as an expression of love without measure.

This story should ring clear with the believer. Like the thief Valjean, we are not worthy to be taken in by the Lord. We are not worthy of his gifts of

blessing. Through his mercy and grace, the bishop told Valjean to become an honest man. Similarly, through God's mercy and grace, we have been bought by the Lord. Our lives belong to Him.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" I John 3:1

"Sing, my soul, His wondrous love,  
Who from yon bright throne above,  
Ever watchful o'er our race,  
Still to man extends His grace."

Lynn H. Miller  
Newmanstown, PA

## WHAT IS YOUR FAITH FOUNDED ON?

Many years ago, as an atheist, I was not suicidal but the escape route of death did not seem repugnant to me if I were ever to be in a tragic situation of material loss. I would watch movies in which the character lost family, fortune, and health and I would contemplate what I would do if I were in their shoes. No response was off the table in my mind.

Later, as a new believer, one of the most profound thoughts I

had was that if everything and everyone in my life was taken away that I could actually start over again even if the only one left in my life was Jesus Christ. It was a radical shift in my thinking and was only possible through a spiritual renewing of my mind. The idea that the redemption provided by Jesus Christ is enough – in every situation. What joy! Jesus is and was HOPE embodied to me!

As a brand new believer, I



didn't yet know that there was a book in the Bible written to document this very test; in the life of Job. What an amazing account of a man who continued to have faith in the Living God despite devastating loss of all he held dear, including his own health and flesh.

This leads me to the question, "where does our faith lie"? We are living in times in which the foundations of our civil society are being tested and found crumbling. To some degree we have all put a portion of trust in our government, law enforcement, educational systems, medical care, insurance, banks, and even supply chains. Likely you can think of recent examples from these sectors that have shown each to be decidedly un-trustworthy. I'll go a step further and say that you may also feel disappointed in church brothers and sisters if they don't consistently live up to your expectations. Perhaps you have placed someone on a pedestal who never belonged on one in the first place. Perhaps you placed your trust in man and traditions rather than God.

When weakness is exposed

in foundations of society or in brothers or sisters that we've trusted, how do we feel? Unsettled? Afraid? Anxious? Exasperated? If these are our reactionary feelings when these things occur, perhaps it reveals to us that we are putting too much hope and trust in temporary things and not enough in the eternal.

I have certainly been doing some deeper thinking lately. The word of God tells us to cast all your care upon Him. (1 Peter 5:7). We also know that "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Do verses such as these lead us to a state of apathy or inaction? God forbid! On the contrary, these verses should remind us that we need to continually invest our hope and trust in that which will last forever. We are to use each day we are given to forward His kingdom and share the love of Jesus with all who will hear.

If you find yourself focusing too much inwardly or on the perceived inadequacies of your fellow believers, I encourage you to find a way to serve in a fresh way in your church and community. Consider it as an

offering that challenges you and requires sacrifice of your comfort and time. Don't overlook the importance of humble service as Jesus modeled for us throughout His earthly ministry. There is something transformative in giving without the thought of acknowledgment.

If you find yourself feeling discouraged with earthly

organizations or the state of the world, remember these things are temporary but God's kingdom is never ending! It is the same yesterday, today and forever. Let us put our trust in the eternal, rather than the temporal and remain faithful as He has been faithful to us.

Melissa Brock  
Stryker, OH

## **WELL DONE! WELCOME TO THE PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG**

I have seen a lot of God's creation. Some in person, some in pictures, documentaries etc. Recently I was enjoying a 4-dimensional ride where it felt like you were in an airplane flying over America. They piped in smells, sound, and a bit of water spray to give you a realistic experience. It was a 7-minute experience that highlighted a lot of the great scenery that America has to offer.

My mind wondered as to why God created all the things He did. Why the variety, the diversity? Colossians 1:16 "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,

whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" That verse says they were created for Him. For Him to enjoy? I say yes, however I believe they were also created to point back to Him, the creator of all. Psalm 19:1" The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." Revelation 4:11" Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

I also believe they were created to bring enjoyment to His most prized creation and

possession; humans. If we take the time to notice, God is in everything and everywhere. I love to see what He has for us in creation. Then my mind wonders to the things He has in store for us that we can't see with the physical eye, but only by faith. The things of this world will pale in comparison to heaven. There is a song with the lyric that says, "What will it be like?" .... "I have waited my whole life to hear you say, 'Well Done'."

In our daily lives, pursuits, and jobs we work hard to hear "good job" or "It looks great", but nothing will compare to hearing our Lord and Savior say those

words "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord!" I believe the world is ripe for harvest, the time is getting short and soon the Lord Jesus Christ will return, parting the sky, to right the wrongs and reign forever. He won't be coming back to suffer and die, but to rule and make all things right. Are you ready for that day? Are you excited for that day? Will you have done your part to let your circle know about Jesus? Carry on and be eagerly expecting to hear, "Well Done!"

Joe Cover  
Dallas Center, IA

## A PLAN WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

David was a very interesting man in the Old Testament. Most of us can relate to David at some point in his life. He was not a perfect man, but he had a perfect heart for God, which makes all the difference in the world.

David was the kind of person that looked beyond his own limitations to focus on God's abilities.

For example, David went out to meet Goliath and didn't seem overly concerned about Goliath's

strength or ability. When he met Goliath, he did not meet him on his terms, but rather on God's terms. For a young man that was a very remarkable move.

Not everything he did was perfect and pleased God. He made mistakes, sinned and had to repent. As bad a sinner as he was, he was a better repenter, which brought him into favor with God.

If you follow David throughout his life, you will

notice the amazing victories he accomplished in God's strength. When he was where God wanted him to be, doing what God wanted him to do, God's favor rested upon him. His sin with Bathsheba was because he was not where God really wanted him to be.

David had one glaring attribute. That was, he was not afraid to own up to his sin. Can you imagine how Nathan felt when he had to approach David and confront him with his sin? Most other kings would have cut Nathan's head off.

But David, when confronted with his weakness, acknowledged it, repented and sought the favor of God. Perhaps that is the thing that made David such a man of God.

You cannot read his Psalms without catching the idea that he had such a passion for God. Nothing so filled his life than being in the presence of God. And with David, the only thing that really mattered was God's will.

The reason he was able to do this was because of the level of his surrender to God. All through the Old Testament when we read of David, we find

underneath everything was a dynamic, uncompromised commitment to God, a notable difference from King Saul.

It is very important to understand that when I surrender my plans to God, he often then reveals his plans for me. How often I am caught up with my plans and want to present them to God for his approval. And sometimes my plans are good plans. The problem with my plans is they may differ from God's plans. When I am focused on my plans, I am not focused on God's ability to use me for his glory. I think I am giving to God something that will impress him. God, however, cannot be impressed by my plans no matter how grandiose they might seem to me.

Towards the end of David's life, he had a plan of building the temple for God. It was a noble plan and ambitious. The wars had ceased, and David now had time to think about God as he had never thought about God before. The thought that dominated his thinking was to build a house for God; the temple that would reflect the glory and majesty of God as David knew him. At the time, David had all the

resources necessary to build a temple, unlike any other temple in the world at that time. He had resources at his disposal that he could do what he had planned.

With all of his excitement and enthusiasm to please God, David came up with a plan that likely impressed everybody around him. He gathered around him the best people for the job. The treasury of the kingdom was unlimited as far as this temple was concerned. Nothing would stand in the way of David building this temple for God.

Except for one thing. The one thing standing in the way of David building this temple was none other than God himself.

Sometimes we have the idea that we can build something for God, and the plan in itself is an excellent plan. I am sure David's plan was magnificent. The problem was, it was not in God's plan for David to build the temple.

David, as far as God was concerned, had bloodied hands. He was a man of war and God used him incredibly to lead Israel to victory after victory after victory. He was the warrior king for sure. But he was not the man to build the temple.

I do not believe God objected to David's plans. I do not think God objected to David pulling together all of the resources of Israel to build this temple. Maybe all of that was okay. But David was not the person to build the temple.

The one who was supposed to build the temple was David's son, Solomon. Solomon took all of David's plans and the resources he had gathered and was able to build the temple to the glory of God.

The thing that amazes me about this is who Solomon was. Solomon's mother was Bathsheba. Solomon was a result of David's sin. Of course, the first baby died. David repented and I think that the verification of his forgiveness was in this son, Solomon. Solomon was able to fulfill the dream that David had. Of course, it was called Solomon's Temple but behind the whole production was David.

As we are involved in God's plans, may we always remember that God is in control. We are His servants under His command.

James L. Snyder  
Ocala, FL

**WHERE JESUS REIGNS**

Where Jesus reigns there is no night,  
 For He is Wisdom, Love, and Light;  
 No raging sea, no tempest dread,  
 But quietness and calm instead.

No anxious care, no blind unrest,  
 No heavy heart but guilt oppressed;  
 No discontent, nor gloomy days.

But brightest hope and sweetest praise;  
 No stumbling oft, nor galling chains,  
 No shame, no sin, where Jesus reigns.

*Melville Wynans Miller*

Selected by Lynn H. Miller,  
 Newmanstown, PA

**CONNECTIONS**

*As members of the Bible Study Board our hope in writing monthly articles related to the Adult SS Lessons is that we all see afresh different points of connection that reveal the Word made flesh.*

While John 11 is a momentous chapter especially for Lazarus, Jesus was busy not just with raising the dead back to life, but also ministering to Martha's heart. In the Bible, Martha is commonly known as the one who is worried and troubled, (Luke 10: 38-42), referring to the time that she prioritized work over time with the Lord. She had spent

so much energy providing for their needs that she neglected to satisfy the needs of her own heart. Upon receiving the news that Lazarus is sick, Jesus states in John 11:4, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," and not only raises the dead to life, but also brings spiritual life to Martha.

As Jesus approached Bethany where they lived, Martha went out to meet Him, delivering the news that He was too late, and Lazarus was dead. "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee" (John 11: 21-22). Even in the midst of her grief, Martha demonstrates immense faith in Jesus. Her spiritual growth since her appearance in the book of Luke shows a softened heart. Though she is once again worried and troubled, her faith gives her peace even in the midst of her turmoil.

Martha (along with today's readers) may have been wondering why Jesus did not come sooner, and there have been theories as to how his delay would be used "for the glory of God" (v. 4). There is a Jewish interpretation of scripture that has led them to believe that after a person has died, their soul lingers near their body for three days before finally making its ascent into Heaven. Some speculate that Jesus had delayed coming to Lazarus's rescue until four days after his death so that he might

prove to the unbelievers that he could bring the dead to life, even after their soul is no longer lingering on earth. However, while many believed on Jesus after he had raised Lazarus from the dead, Martha's conversion happened before the miracle took place. Ministering to her heart, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (v 25-27). In this chapter, Jesus not only performs the incredible miracle of bringing a dead man back to life (a fine foreshadow of what was to happen to Himself in a few months), but he also brought a soul back to life.

At the burial site, Jesus prepares to bring Lazarus back to life. "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days" (v 39). Martha still has not realized that Jesus intends to raise Lazarus back from the dead, and steps in to warn him

of the smelly situation, to which Jesus replies, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (v 40). Often we come to a place where, like Martha, we acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, and through faith open the door of our hearts to Him. However, as He begins to walk through our hearts and shed light on its darkest corners we say, "Oh, don't go into that room back there, it stinketh! That's an area of my life that I

have not been able to control. That's a room that is full of sin that I can't seem to conquer. If you open that door, you may decide not to stay here after all." However, isn't it through our most broken places that Christ is best able to show His glory? He knows the state of our messy hearts, and by His power we can become more like how God created us to be.

*On behalf of the Bible Study Board*  
Brother Micaiah Johnson

## PHIL'S PONDERINGS

As we "study to shew *ourselves* approved unto God..."  
July 2023 Bible Study

### July 2 - John 9:24-41 – Blinded by Pride

As we continue our study of the blind man, one question comes to mind. What did Jesus mean when he declared neither the parents nor the blind man sinned and the root cause of his blindness? Rather, his blindness was meant to reveal the works of God. Now that is a glorious thought but it is not playing out as we would tend to expect. Now the blind man is better off for being able to see but far worse off in almost every other regard. His parents barely acknowledge that he is their son because they fear the hostility of the Pharisees. They have no clue how their son now sees. The man who was blind only knows that a man named Jesus had made clay, anointed his eyes, and told him to wash the clay off in the pool of Siloam. But Jesus is nowhere to be found. The result is that the former blind man keeps being asked the same questions over and over again as the hostility level rises.



Why are so many so hostile? Their basic presupposition is that the healing of this man's eyes breaks the Sabbath laws that prohibit working on the Sabbath. Therefore, Jesus is a sinner and the claim of healing this man's eyesight is fraudulent. The spiritual reality is that those who ought to know, turn a blind eye to the works of God.

As we observe this spiritual blindness let us also be aware that we can be just as blind. Sometimes our presuppositions blind us to the realities of God's work in us and amongst us. Instead, we allow our hostilities, in the name of God, to cloak God's holiness. Though God desires to give us His righteousness it can only be received with humility. We have done nothing to deserve it. Apart from the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus we have no other hope of salvation.

The healing of the blind man is the prelude to the spiritual insight he also receives. His simple testimony about what has taken place reveals the spiritual bankruptcy and blindness of those who denounce the works of God through Christ Jesus.

### **July 9 - John 10:1-21 – I AM the Good Shepherd**

Thieves and robbers have one common aim. They seek to take what does not belong to them. Whether by stealth or brutal strength they make their plans. How do mere sheep avoid such treachery? They only follow the voice of the good shepherd. They will not be lured away by the voice of a stranger. They know they are safe because he calls each one by name. He will protect them from wolves that would scatter and kill the flock.

The good shepherd is no hireling who will bolt and run when danger approaches. He will lay down his life to protect his sheep. In truth, He has already done so. Our shepherd is Jesus who has laid down his life for you and me. Our task is to listen to his voice and to follow wherever he leads. It is important to note that we are not a part of that original fold. We are the other sheep but we have the same shepherd. That we are now a part of the same flock is a testimony to the greatness of his love for you and I. In this present

moment we are already beginning to experience life in Christ Jesus. The abundance of his life cannot be contained in this moment but overflows into all eternity.

### **July 16 - John 10:22-42 – I AM the Son of God**

We often focus on the suffering of Jesus having in mind the physical torment he experienced. Yet, most of us struggle with the rejection we may feel when someone speaks to us in a derogatory fashion. Inwardly there is pain of all types. Our minds may spit out rebuttals, spoken or not. We are on edge and easily lose our composure. We lash back with hurtful words or withdraw into tearful sorrow. Regardless of how we respond there is a feeling that we are trapped in our present circumstances.

In this passage we see once more Jesus being assaulted with words. The seemingly constant barrage is meant to break down his defenses in the hopes that he will misspeak somehow. He will be trapped by his own contradictions. But this bandying of words never rattles Jesus into misspeaking the truth. Nor does their increasingly threatening behavior (picking up stones to throw at him) elicit some similar behavior on Jesus' part. They cannot hurt him or scare him into losing his composure. But Jesus does know that their frustration will ultimately lead to his death. It is a death that fights for their hearts to see the love of God offered as the perfect sacrifice for their self-righteous sins. It is also a death that challenges us to go beyond our hurt feelings to caring about and loving those who wound us through their words and actions. Such composure allows us to thank God for tribulations. They become a source of spiritual growth that reflects the depth of the love of Christ for each one of us.

### **July 23 - John 11:1-16 - The Purpose of Lazarus' Death**

As is usual there is always more that we would like to know. John tells us that Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. There are a few glimpses of that love relationship recorded in the gospels. But the closeness of their friendship leaves us wondering about how

they came to know each other. Were they acquainted with each other as youths who saw each other during the celebrations of various feasts?

Our answers will have to wait. At the least it should be comforting to us to know that Jesus enjoyed the company of many during his earthly life. He experienced the joy that close relationships afford us. In his humanity he fully experienced the depth of love and care for others. But what is the purpose of such relationships? Is it not for the purpose of stretching our faith beyond the typical comfort zones of daily life? Can we encourage one another to risk growing in our relationship with our God and Father through His Holy Spirit?

Just like Jesus' disciples we are quick to point out the dangers ahead. "Don't you remember the rocks they were getting ready to throw at you?" Or downgrading the need to act. "If Lazarus is sleeping, we shouldn't disturb his sleep. He will get better quicker if we just stay here." Or like Thomas we can only see darkness waiting for us ahead. "We shall go together and die with Lazarus." But if we are willing to grow in faith, we must remember what Jesus tells us. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

### **July 30 - John 11:17-37 – I AM the Resurrection and the Life!**

Nothing in this life touches us quite so deeply as death. Other things may seem more miserable. Death may even come as a relief from our misery. Yet everything else is temporary and may hold some small measure of hope for the future. Death, however, is final. We may be well prepared for it or it may come swiftly and give us no time to prepare.

A friend once described a car accident with another vehicle trying to pass him using the side berm as a passing lane. The young woman driver pulled back into his lane too soon and bumped fenders, sending her spinning into an oncoming truck. From the time she decided to pass him till she was dead was 6-7 seconds. Though not at fault, the sorrow he felt was very real.

Mary and Martha were comforted by their faith. But their sorrow was genuine. They had lost their brother who loved Jesus. If only Jesus had come sooner he would still be alive. Such thoughts can torment us in spite of our faith. Even Jesus deeply felt the loss of Lazarus. His spirit was grieved, and he wept. His emotions were real. So are ours. With the sorrows we feel we must also cling to these words of Jesus. John 11:25-26 *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

This is our hope. It is not a hope fixed on this life. It is in the life that is coming and growing within us. It breaks in on our sorrows with the promises that are eternal. Our last breath in this life is followed by our next breath in eternity. We haven't died. We have just stepped from this life into God's everlasting life. Joy takes the place of our sorrows. The King of kings and Lord of lords, the creator who has made all things, sits on the throne. Him we worship with every bit of our being. Come, Lord Jesus.

## OBITUARY

Lillian Deshnod Litfin was born on May 10, 1934, on the Navajo Reservation in Shiprock, New Mexico, to Dish Nose (Deshnod) White and Tobah White. She passed at her home in Newberg, Oregon on May 29, 2023, under the watchful care of her daughter Rhoda, into eternity to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus.

She was preceded in death by her parents and all her siblings. Lillian was brought up on the reservation. She would tell me, as a child, she helped watch the sheep, care for her younger siblings, gather wood, and help Bima (her mom) around the house. She told of taking the sheep to summer camp and getting up one morning and seeing a bear walking up the other side of the mountain. She told of countless other adventures as a child until she had to go to boarding school. Throughout boarding school, mom learned about our Lord and Savior and the Bible.

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Eventually, mom gave her heart and life to Jesus. After graduation from school, it was Lillian's passion to share the love of God through Christ Jesus with her people.

While serving on the mission field, Lillian met a young man, Galen Litfin, who was serving there as well. They were married at Torreon on April 6, 1958. While serving the Lord in Torreon, Roy, Lee, and Miriam were born in Cuba, New Mexico. We've heard many stories of the personal impact Galen and Lillian had on the Navajo people in the Torreon, Tinian, and Ojo Encino area and beyond. Many times, I've been told Lillian lead someone or their family members to the Lord.

After moving to Oregon in 1962, Ted, Ben and Rhoda were added to the family of six siblings, making a family of eight. Even while making life in Oregon, our parents continued to serve the Navajo people by taking in foster children from the eastern Navajo Reservation.

Mom loved to travel. Even after dad went to be with Jesus, she'd love the occasional trip to the Oregon coast. She loved her time at the Newberg Senior Center, where she enjoyed playing games with the others. She became quite the pool player; I'd venture to say even better than all her children.

Lillian loved and prayed every day for her 6 children, 16 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. Recently, when mom and I were talking about our eternity with Jesus, knowing that she prayed for us all every day, I asked her "who's going to pray every day for all of us when you go to heaven?" She gave me that sideways look, a mother gives when she knows I already know the answer: "Well, of course you all are." was her reply.

Lillian Deshnod Litfin, she faithfully loved God our Holy Father through Jesus Christ, receiving the Holy Spirit, as evidence of God's salvation. 2 Tim 4:7-8 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid

up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Ted Litfin  
Torreon, NM

## NEWS ITEMS

### Invitation to Write

Avid readers of the Bible Monitor know that most of the content of the Monitor comes from a handful of regular writers and a handful or two of occasional writers. We very much appreciate those that diligently contribute material for the Monitor. There have recently been some new writers contributing, including some younger writers and that is very encouraging.

If you haven't written for the Monitor before or haven't in a while, this is an invitation to consider doing so. We welcome appropriate articles, poetry and news items. While many of our articles are devotional, other topics for publication may highlight topics such as youth, parenting, outreach, women's interests, etc. If you aren't used to writing and struggle with sentence structure, grammar or the flow of writing, the editor can help with rewording, corrections and general polishing before publishing. After all, that is his job.

Please send all materials for intended publishing to the editor by email at [kenbrockbd@gmail.com](mailto:kenbrockbd@gmail.com) or by regular mail to 1520 County Road 2260, Stryker, Ohio 43557. Any questions can be sent to the editor by email, mail or phone (text or call) to 419-515-3396.

**New Elders**

Bro. Jason Carpenter of the Juniper Hills congregation in New Mexico, Bro. Clem Bowman of the CornerStone congregation in Ohio and Bro. Kidron Crist also of the CornerStone congregation were all recently ordained to the eldership. Please pray for these brothers and their families as they step into and serve in these positions.

**Bible Monitor Submission Schedule – Articles and News Items**

When submitting an article for publishing in the Bible Monitor, please try to submit it to the editor by the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month prior. For example, please try to have an article submitted by August 1<sup>st</sup> if you would like it to be published in the September issue. Likewise, for shorter writings such as news items, please try to submit them by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month prior. It is preferred that materials for publishing in the Monitor be submitted by email to [kenbrockdb@gmail.com](mailto:kenbrockdb@gmail.com) However, they can also be submitted by regular mail to 1520 County Road 2260, Stryker, Ohio 43557.

## **ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR August 2023**

### **August 6 - John 11:38-57 - From Death to Life!**

1. What are some of the contrasts between the humanity of Christ and His divinity revealed in the resurrection of Lazarus?
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2. Is there any correlation between Christ being raised unbound from His graveclothes and Lazarus raised still bound?
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3. Caiaphas unknowingly and selfishly prophesied that one man should die to prevent all men from dying. Can God use evil leaders today to carry out His ultimate divine plan?
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### **August 13 - John 12:1-16 - From Bethany to Jerusalem**

1. On the evening before entering Jerusalem, Jesus visited His friend's home. What are some key take-aways as He ate with them and was anointed by Mary?
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2. Judas opposed this anointing. Why?
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3. On Lamb Selection Day, Jesus entered Jerusalem. What does this divine timing mean to you?
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**August 20 - John 12:17-33 - But for This Cause**

1. Many people sought after Jesus to kill Him, many out of curiosity, and some out of faith. Why do you seek Jesus?
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2. Jesus describes His own death as a fulfillment of the first fruits described in Lev. 23. What is the importance of Jesus fulfilling this old prophecy?
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3. What is the magnitude of verse 32 to you?
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**August 27 - John 12:34-50 - The Divine Illumination**

1. Isaiah spoke specifically of this day. Why did educated men not see Jesus for who He really was?
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2. Many rulers did believe in Jesus (vs.42), yet they chose to keep their faith a secret (vs. 43). Do we sometimes hide our faith? If so, how?
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3. What are some key elements of faith that Jesus speaks of in these last few verses before going to the cross?
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