

BIBLE-BASED READING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Via



Via

Vol. 37

On the Cover: *Minter Gardens, Chilliwack, British Columbia.*

Via Magazine is published annually by a group of Christians who desire to share with you the good news of God's salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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editorial

We all need a True Friend to guide us through this world that is full of misleading information. We learn of this Friend in the Bible. Families and individuals suffer greatly, because we are often enticed to chase after things that really do not matter, instead of preparing for the future.

Eternity is a reality. In the centre pages of this magazine you can see that peace with God is found when we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as our Lord and Saviour. We can know peace with God and have a sure foundation for our life. The cross, where the Lord Jesus died for our sins, divides us in our destinies. If we accept the Lord as our Saviour, we are sure of going to be with Him in Heaven: the perfect place prepared for those who are saved. If we reject the Lord Jesus, we are bound for Hell.

Sometimes it takes one of life's tragedies to give us an appreciation of how small and insignificant we are, as compared to an infinite God. It is a comfort to our troubled hearts to learn that when we are completely without strength, we can turn to the Saviour. He loves us enough to take the punishment for our sin. Only God's Son can take our load of sin and make us right with God.

Friends help us through life's difficult moments. The True Friend that will never leave us is the Lord Jesus. He is coming again to take those who are saved to Heaven. Don't be left to face God's judgment.



"What's going on here? Why is my car behaving this way?" Instantly the traffic ahead veered out of control as the concrete broke up and disappeared. Those few fleeting seconds of disbelief must have been horrifying.

Every day approximately 140,000 vehicles drove over the Interstate 35W Bridge between Minneapolis and St. Paul. Construction crews were on the bridge re-decking two of the eight lanes. Buses, trucks, cars, vans and motorcycles were passing over. It was the evening rush hour.

And then, the bridge collapsed. Vehicles plunged into the Mississippi River along with tons of crumbling concrete. Loved ones perished and many people were injured. Did the construction crew, while working on the surface, know that it was unsound below? In 2005 the structural integrity of the bridge was given a rating of 4 on a scale of 0 to 9.

The Lord Jesus told a story about a foolish man who built his house upon sand (Matthew 7:24-29). The other

person, who was wise, built his home upon a solid rock foundation. The home on the sand was swept away in the storm. The house upon the rock survived. It was structurally sound.

People live their lives concerned about the 'aesthetics' of life - a good career, a life partner, or a good retirement plan. But what is your 'house of life' built upon? Things on the surface may be maintained, but is the spiritual structure of your life unsound? Would it be given a rating of 4 on a scale of 0 to 9?

The bridge was structurally unsafe below. Seconds after the tragedy, did it really matter that the lanes were re-paved? When death, the greatest of all storms, crosses your path, will it matter then if you have wealth, fame or education? *"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* (Mark 8:36).

Your first priority must be to care for the very foundation of your life. Sin has structurally damaged every one of us. If a person dies having never found the Rock, which is Christ Jesus as security, they will perish in their sins in Hell.

The foundation that will survive the storm is not a religious building, a set of religious rituals or a collection of good works. The only house that will stand is the one resting on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are building your life upon Christ, the storms of life will not sweep you away into eternal darkness, for *"He only is my rock and my salvation"* (Psalm 62:6).

Make sure you are building wisely with the footings of your life resting on the Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4).

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BATTLING 'AFFLUENZA'



During 1918-19 more than twenty million people worldwide died in just 120 days as a result of the influenza virus, or what was commonly known as Spanish Flu. Statistics show 12.5 million of these deaths were in India, and half a million in the United States, including more than one-half of the population of Alaska. It spread quickly and in many cases was deadly.

Another type of virus has found its way onto our continent. No, I am not speaking about AIDS or of some type of flesh-eating disease. I am speaking of 'affluenza.' Have you heard of it? It is a disease that can control a person and cause them to make poor choices because of their desire for wealth. These people have a continual hunger for bigger and better 'things.' They are never really satisfied with what they have. They are blind to the fact that their family relationships may be suffering as a result of their greed. Far worse than that, their eternal destiny and relationship with God is at stake.

In Luke 12:16-20, we read of a farmer who had a huge harvest, which was really from the Lord. He thought he was self-sufficient for many years

to come. His attitude concerning his life was eat, drink and be merry. He had no thought of God, nor was he thankful for the blessings he received from God. God called him a fool (Luke 12:20). He died and, in spite

Living to please oneself is a typical attitude today.

of his full barns, faced God with all his sins. He was unprepared to meet God. The riches of this world have absolutely no value in eternity (Matthew 6:19-21).

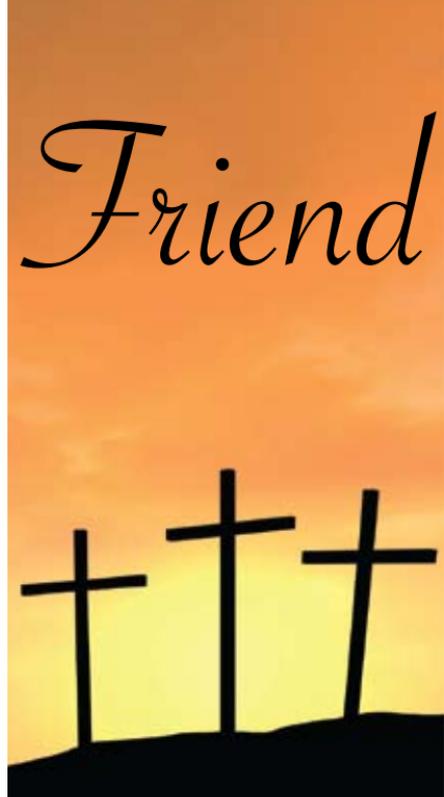
Living to please oneself is a typical attitude today. People are failing to prepare for their future when they must meet God. Not only that, they are missing out on what life is really all about. The Bible says we are not to "trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17). God wants you to enter into a relationship with Him (John 14:6). This is only possible because of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's Word, the Bible, says "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). We do not know what tomorrow will bring.

A True Friend

It was an unforgettable sight that burned its image into my brain. The place was in the city of Philadelphia, which means 'Brotherly Love.' He was tall, gaunt, unshaven, and his whole body was literally wrapped in rags. That same morning, I had viewed homeless people sleeping on top of sewer gratings, in an effort to keep warm during the chilly hours of the night. They had no friends, even though they were living in the city of Brotherly Love. I lifted my heart to God and thanked Him for my True Friend.

I personally value friends. How often they have given me good advice, comforted me, and helped me in trying times. But we are all human, and sometimes friendships can turn sour. However, there is One that I would like to introduce to you that is the most unique Friend any person could ever have. He is *"a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"* (Proverbs 18:24). That Friend is the Lord Jesus Christ, who came from Heaven to a world steeped in sin and darkness, and *"being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Philippians 2:8). Through His death we can obtain the forgiveness of sins.

A true friend is one that will seek to help you even if it may hurt. God's Word says, *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend"* (Proverbs 27:6). The Lord Jesus Christ as the True Friend, faithfully wounds us, so that we will seek Him! Notice how His words wound one's



self-esteem. To the proud He said, *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:5). To those who rejected Him He said, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"* (Matthew 25:41). To the morally upright He said, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).

However, the same One that wounds us, also loves us! *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13). Our True Friend, the Lord Jesus, died for us. We were not worthy of such love, *"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

Is this True Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour? He will be if you trust Him for your salvation.

Robert Surgenor

A CHANGED DESTINY

When I met Randy, he was sitting on a park bench in Great Falls, Montana. He was holding a bottle of beer and looked totally miserable.

I listened to his story. When he was quite young, he had lost his sister in a tragic accident. For him, alcohol was the only way he could escape his sorrows. His drinking soon turned into a terrible habit. He began to steal to support his addiction. Now in his 40s he was homeless, without a job, and rejected by those he loved. His life seemed so hopeless.

Do you ever feel that way? God wants to meet you in your struggle with the sin that controls you. You may not have an alcohol problem, but you do have a sin problem! We all do.

If you realize you are without strength and in need of forgiveness, why don't you look to the Saviour who took the punishment for your sin? Without Him, there is no hope for eternity and no power in this life (Romans 5:6).

That night, Randy was invited to a tent meeting where he heard that *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Timothy 1:15). He took his place as a guilty sinner and by faith,

quietly trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. After the meeting Randy joined us as we sang some hymns.

Those songs had a personal meaning for him, because he had experienced God's amazing grace in salvation. He was no longer lost, but now was found (Luke 19:10).

My friends took Randy to a hotel, because he didn't have anywhere to go. We didn't hear from him for two days, and wondered how he was doing. On the third day, we saw his name in the obituary column in the paper. That night in his hotel room, Randy had had a massive seizure that took his life. He had entered eternity. I am confident that I will see Randy in Heaven, because of God's promise to each person who trusts Christ as his personal Saviour.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

What have you done with God's Son? Have you rejected opportunities to hear and obey the gospel? Please do not harden your heart to God's love. You do not know what may come tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1).





IT'S DOCTOR DEATH'S TURN TO DIE

Dr. Jack Kevorkian graduated from medical school in 1952 as a pathologist. For decades, he had a keen interest in death, and in the late 1980s he advertised his 'death counseling' services in a Detroit newspaper. In 1998 he defiantly administered a lethal injection to an ALS patient who had consented to end his life. Doctor Death, as he had become known, was charged with murder and started a 10-25 year prison term.

Kevorkian sarcastically mocked the belief of life after death when he wrote, "How forbidding that dark abyss! How stupendous the yearning

Heaven and Hell are real places where real people end up.

to dodge its gaping orifice... After all, how excruciating can nothingness be?" But now Doctor Death is facing death. He is terminally ill and has been released from prison. It was one thing to mock the seriousness of death when he was well, but now the defining moment is fast approaching for Dr. Kevorkian himself.

Medically, Kevorkian knew how to **hasten** death and **end** life, but that does not require much ingenuity.

The question is, does he know how to avoid death?

Death cannot be avoided. After death is it really 'nothingness' as Kevorkian states? Absolutely not! The Bible says, "*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27). The Lord Jesus provided us with a glimpse into eternity when He told the story of two men who died. One awoke in the flames of Hell, fully conscious, and we are actually told what he was experiencing in that awful place. The other man died and awoke in Heaven, a place of eternal bliss (Luke 16).

Heaven and Hell are real places where real people end up. Romans 5:12 says, "*...by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*" The only One who could overpower death was the One who never sinned. Jesus Christ came into the world to deal with the problem of sin and death. By dying He paid the penalty for our sins. Because of His death, God can offer the complete forgiveness of our sins and eternal life in Heaven.

Make sure when you have to die, that dying is all you have left to do. It must be terrifying to realize you are dying and to be frantically scrambling to make a last minute deal with your Maker.

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HOW GOD SEES US

People are inclined to be pretty self-inflated, don't you think? A while ago, I was listening to an inspirational talk from a big company executive. "Our greatest challenge," he said, "is understanding how great we are." Self-inflated?

This is how I think about that comment: I imagine a grasshopper, living happily and successfully with his peers. I picture him now in front of a grasshopper audience, his beady green brow creased with fervency. "Our greatest challenge," he exclaims, thrusting his grasshopper-fist into the air for emphasis, "is understanding how great we are!"

Do you find the image ridiculous? The little orator would be right, I'm sure, that grasshoppers are great as far as grasshoppers go – but when you consider his claim from your own perspective, doesn't it begin to look

foolish? Couldn't you step on the proud little beast if you wanted to, squashing him forever beneath your tennis shoe?

With this in mind, think about what the prophet Isaiah wrote in the Bible: *"To whom then, will you liken God...? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers"* (Isaiah 40:18,22). See what I'm getting at? I'm not sure how you react when you start to understand how small you are in the presence of an infinite, powerful God, and to realize that you are absolutely at His mercy, just like a grasshopper. But when I caught my first glimpse, I became extremely conscious of all the ways in which I had offended Him.

He asked me not to tell lies, but I could recount times when I had been dishonest. He told me to put the interests of others before my own;

but there is no question that most of my life had been plain selfish. It was obvious that what the Bible said about **everybody** was actually true of **me**: *"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

So now I not only felt like a grasshopper, but I felt like a guilty wretch of a grasshopper – and the combination made me tremble. I hope you're starting to wonder about these same things, and to see that your guilt is actually a terrifying problem. In the Bible we learn that the one crucial solution can be found in the Lord Jesus, God's own Son.

Consider what the Apostle John tells us: *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him"* (1 John 4:9). So what does it mean – *"that we might live through Him"*? Why should it be necessary for the Son of God to come into the world, in order for **us** to live?

The Lord Jesus *"bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness"* (1 Peter 2: 24). So this is what God thinks of you: Even with all your self-inflated thoughts, He loves you. He sacrificed His only innocent Son so that your guilt could be taken away. God wants to take away the bug-sized smallness of your own existence, and replace it with something breathtaking and infinite. Amazingly, He wants you to *"live through Him."*

I pray that you will humble your heart in view of God's true greatness, and that you will confess to Him all your smallness and your sin, and accept the awesome offer of life through His own great Son. It's **so** much better than a grasshopper world, I promise.

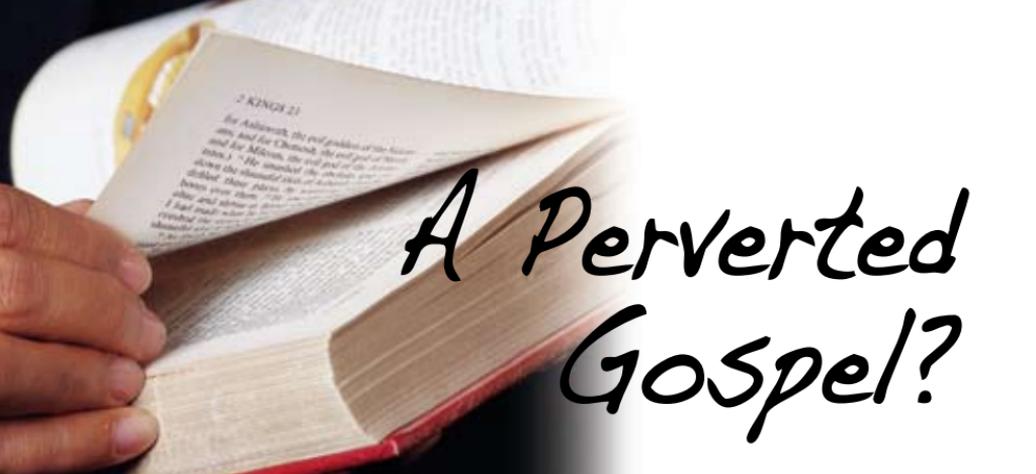
Snow is used as a standard of whiteness and purity. Many years ago a photographer became interested in photographing snowflakes. After taking hundreds of pictures of different flakes, he concluded that no two were exactly alike. Sadly, when these beautiful flakes come in contact with earth they soon become soiled.

Like snowflakes, no two humans are identical either. Even their fingerprints and DNA are unique. Man also becomes contaminated by the world. This is what God calls sin. A poet once described a man's life "as a snowflake on the river. A moment there, then gone forever." The flake goes back to the element from which it came. *"Man dieth and wasteth away...and where is he?"* (Job 14:10).

When God created man in the Garden of Eden, He formed him *"of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul"* (Genesis 2:7). When we die, our bodies return to dust, but unlike the snowflake, we have a soul that will live on forever, either in Heaven or in Hell. If you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you can be sure your soul will be in Heaven for *"the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).

In Isaiah 1:18, God says, *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."*





A Perverted Gospel?

Gospel means 'good news' and it is generally used of the Christian message concerning Jesus Christ. Even in very early days there were those that tried to change the message the apostles were teaching. The Apostle Paul wrote, *"There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ"* (Galatians 1:7).

What was this perversion concerning which Paul warned his readers? They were saying that belief in Christ was not enough, but one must also keep the law in order to be saved. It must be Christ plus works.

Today there are still many who teach that faith in Christ is not enough, but that repentance and faith must be followed by baptism and a continuing life of good works. They teach that salvation is a process, and one can only know he is saved at the end of life. Baptism is viewed as washing away ones sins and as giving new life, the beginning of this process of salvation. This produces an attitude of permanent insecurity. One can never know that he has done enough.

The gospel that Paul and the other apostles preached stated that the sinner is saved if he repents and trusts the Lord Jesus Christ, believing that on the cross He suffered for his

sins. Christ's death was adequate to pay for *"the sins of the whole world"* (1 John 2:2). *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1). Justification is viewed as completed,

The sinner who trusts Christ gives up working as a way to get right with God.

not as a lifelong process. Repentance and faith are not viewed as works but as a change of attitude. The sinner who trusts Christ gives up working as a way to get right with God. *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"* (Romans 4:5). Salvation is instantaneous.

Have you been trusting in your baptism and good works in order to be made right with God? No one will be in Heaven on that basis. We have all sinned and deserve eternal punishment. It is only Christ who can take our load of sin and make us right with God. Turn from your sin and trust Him. Christ is enough: *"He that hath the Son hath life"* (1 John 5:12).

Precious Seed

Do You Have *Peace* With God?

God's Plan for Everyone

There is nothing more wonderful than having peace with God.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

God loves you and wants you to have peace and eternal life. Do you have it?

Man's Problem is Separation

God made man in His own image. He did not make him a robot to automatically love and obey Him, but gave him a will and freedom of choice.

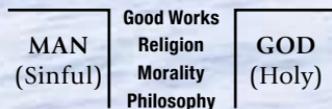
Man disobeyed God and went his own way. This SEPARATED man from God... NO PEACE!



Man's Remedy – Failure

Man has tried to bridge this gap in many ways, but without success.

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "The wages of sin is death (separation from God); but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).



"For by grace (His kindness) are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

God has provided the only remedy for this problem. You must choose either to accept or reject that remedy.

No God – No Peace

God's Remedy is the Cross

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is the ONLY answer to this problem. When He died on the cross, He paid the penalty for sin and bridged the gap between God and man.



God is on one side and men and women on the other; and the Lord Jesus Christ has made peace between them.

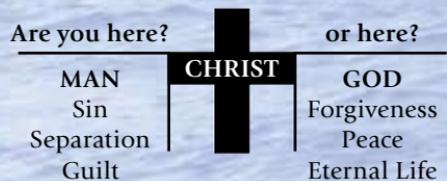
"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5,6).

Man's Response – Receive Christ

To know peace with God we must trust the Lord Jesus Christ and receive Him by personally accepting Him as our Saviour. Is there any good reason why you cannot receive Him right now? He says, *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him"* (Revelation 3:20).

What must I do to be saved?

- Admit I am a sinner
- Repent and turn from sin
- Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for me
- Receive Him as Saviour and Lord
- Thank Him for saving me and giving me everlasting life.



God's Assurance – His Word

The Word of God gives definite assurance of salvation to all those who trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

"God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11,12).

Know God – Know Peace



My family has just moved to a new home. We loved our old home but we found it was no longer suitable for our growing family. With prayer and caution we searched until we found a house that met our needs. Once we bought it, we had to work hard to clean it, ready for occupancy. Then came a long day of moving all our belongings. I really did not realize how much 'stuff' we had accumulated in fifteen years.

Now that we are living in our new home, we have discovered some little flaws that were not obvious when we looked around prior to purchasing it. There are missing vent covers, missing ceiling tiles, and missing window cranks. We have discovered that you cannot run water anywhere else in the house if someone is in the shower. We love our new home but it is not perfect.

My Grandad is also going to a new home. He is in the hospital, terminally ill with cancer. He is looking forward with anticipation and assurance to his new home in Heaven. He knows that his new home is perfect. There are no flaws there. As a young man, my Grandad heard the Gospel and responded to its message. He confessed

his sin and asked for forgiveness and help to live his Christian life. His burden of sin was lifted. He was made a new person in Christ Jesus. Grandad can sing,

***Wonderful Saviour, wonderful friend,
Wonderful love that never shall end;
Wonderful place, He's gone to prepare;
Wonder of wonders, I shall be there.***

The place that the Lord Jesus has prepared for my Grandad is perfect with nothing missing, nothing wrong. Grandad will not have to clean it or move years of accumulated items into it. It is ready, just for him. Jesus said, *"In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2). In spite of his circumstances just now, my Grandad can have joy as he focuses on the splendor of God instead of on his own suffering. 1 Corinthians 2:9 tells us, *"... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."*

Do you know where you are going after you die? You, too, can be assured of a place in Heaven if you trust the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.



Have you Seen a Hummingbird?

God's Little Wonder

Have you ever thought of the wonder of wings? A flying pelican takes it easy at about one beat of his wings per second. A crow does a lazy two or three beats per second. It's really comical to see a crow being chased by a little red-winged blackbird. Although the poor old crow hunches forward, trying frantically to pick up speed, he is no match for the speedy dive-bomber on his tail. But the speed-king of the feathered kingdom is the hummingbird.

Flashing its colours in flight, it can fly forward, backward, up, down, sideways or sit in sheer space between its blurred wings. The male ruby-throated hummingbird has a wing-span of about 10 cm and weighs approximately three grams – about

the same as a copper penny. It beats its wings in a figure eight no less than 53 times per second in normal flight, turning them completely over on the backstroke. But in courtship dives, they pour it on and accelerate to 220 beats per second. Hummingbirds are marvelously maneuverable. They can change instantaneously to a new direction, and launch and land at full speed.

After spending the winter in Central America, many ruby-throats make the long journey each spring from Panama to Canada. Twenty hours of the trip are spent flying 800 kms non-stop over the Gulf of Mexico. When on land, they have been clocked at 100 kms per hour.

Now, just how did this fantastic little creature happen to have not only wings and the motor to beat them so fast, but the sensitive controls which can vary the angle of its wings and even reverse them at will? How does it find its way across so many miles of water and land from its winter to its summer home?

The God who created this tiny bird is the same God who created you. Even an insignificant little sparrow cannot fall to the ground without God seeing and knowing. *"Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows"* (Matthew 10:31). If the Lord God knows all about these birds which He has created and cares for, He certainly knows all about you. He wants you to trust in Him by accepting His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the One who can save you from the penalty of your sin. Have you done this?

IN A WORLD OF INFORMATION OVERLOAD

HOW TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE

Internet, newspapers, television, cell phones, radios - there are so many loud and contradictory messages in the world today, that most people are confused about what to believe. Here is a guide to help you separate the true message from empty and harmful messages.

Don't be satisfied with anything less than the truth: If you never seek the truth you will never find God, because God is truth. Much of the information we receive is only half the story and sometimes purposely misleading. God tells us the full truth even though that means we must learn that *"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). The Bible is God's Word and the ultimate source of His truth.

Be prepared to acknowledge the truth: Many messages appeal to us because the senders tell us what we like to hear. We need to be ready to accept the truth even when it is not convenient. God makes bold

statements. He states that *"the soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezekiel 18:4), a solemn fact that should motivate us to seek the Lord today.

Act on messages that will meet your need in the fullest and most permanent way: Many messages describe solutions that are only temporary or only address one aspect of our lives. Many of our problems are symptoms of an underlying disease. The complete and permanent solution is offered by the Lord Jesus Christ who said, *"I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish"* (John 10:28).

Respond appropriately to statements of urgency: Messages today try to motivate us to act even when they cannot tell us the results of such action. God also wants us to act now but He is very clear about the need, the required action, and the result. The Lord Jesus Christ said, *"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28).

Stay with the source that has met your need: Once you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible will guide you through life. There will be no further need to be confused by misleading ideas and partial information.

God is searching for those who are responsive to His message. *"He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life"* (John 5:24). Will you hear and believe?

SHOW ME THE TRUTH!

I had good parents, but they were not considered 'religious.' I *had* to attend Sunday School until I was 12 years old.

At the age of 14, I started listening to music that later formed the foundation for the early life decisions I made! Soon I began experimenting with what some

call 'soft drugs' such as marijuana and drinking. Like many others, I discovered that there is no such thing as soft drugs. They are gateway drugs.

I had fun being with the crowd, but late nights and heavier drinking with harder and more dangerous drugs, inevitably led to less interest in school and my family. My marks nose-dived until I just scraped through my final school year.

By this time my 'sin choice' led me to drug abuse practically every night and most days as well. During this period, a couple of my friends committed suicide. That shook me up, but only temporarily.

While on a trip to Toronto, as an 18-year old, I over-dosed and ended up wandering the streets. The Ontario Provincial Police picked me up and I was admitted to the Lakeshore



Psychiatric Hospital for treatment. I was warned to stay away from drugs and drink, but within six months after returning home, I went back to my old habits. I had no control or will to get off this suicidal path. I was not consuming drugs and drink – they were consuming me.

Despair crept in, leading to weeks of depression and hopelessness. I remember going to nightclubs after using drugs and drinking and just standing among hundreds of people, feeling very alone and tired of life.

Finally, I decided to buy a Bible. In my darkness I challenged God: "If you are God and you are what the Bible says you are, **show me the Truth!**"

A friend of mine was also searching for truth, and we talked about God in a general sense. She eventually found salvation in Christ and started to witness to me. For the first time someone actually told me about the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving grace! She invited me to attend her baptism, and I accepted.

On that sunny Sunday afternoon I felt my prayers were heard. There were approximately 100 people at the lake

witnessing the baptism, and every one looked different – they were happy! I thought to myself, “I want what they have!” That night I was invited to hear the Gospel message for the first time in my life. It seemed like the preacher knew everything about me. Of course he didn’t, but God did and He was doing a work in my soul. No one had to convince me that I was a sinner, but the best part of the preacher’s message was that **God loved me and proved it by the cross at Calvary.** I realized

then and there that Jesus died for me!

I knew I needed salvation. I had to get my sin debt settled. I read verses like “*Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart*” (Jeremiah 29:13), and “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*” (John 14:6). That evening I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, and I passed from death unto Life.

Ron Mills

TEEN # TALK

How old are you? Fifteen? Seventeen? Perhaps nineteen? You are beginning to think things out for yourself. Have you ever asked yourself the question, “Why am I alive?”

The sun, the stars and the whole of nature, even your own capacity to think, tell you that there is a God and that He gave you life. One day you will answer to Him for how that life was lived.

Yes, but this doesn’t answer your question, “Why am I alive?” The Bible says, “*O Lord... thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created*” (Revelation 4:11). No one is able to live up to this great purpose. God is holy and cannot allow sin in His presence. The Bible says, “*There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not*” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Because God wants you to be able to enjoy Him now, and to be with Him for all eternity, He gave His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to die upon the cross to meet His holy claims against you a sinner. All that God requires is that you repent and trust His Son for your salvation.

The Lord Jesus Christ bore the judgment due to sinners when He suffered under the hand of God in the darkness of the cross. “*Christ died for the ungodly*” (Romans 5:6). God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead and received Him into Heaven to prove His total satisfaction with the payment made on our behalf at Calvary (Hebrews 10:12).

Through faith alone in the Lord Jesus you can know that you have peace with God, and that God will never bring up your sins against you.

Truth and Tidings

GRANDMA *was* AN ~~A~~THEIST

Max lived in Russia with his parents and his grandmother who was a committed communist. In her younger days, she had earned her living by holding meetings with female factory workers. She tried to deceive them into thinking that the Bible was wrong, and that they should not believe its message about God and salvation. She used a Soviet State manual of so-called errors in the Bible to help her teach atheism.

Shortly after the fall of communism, Max heard the gospel and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. His grandmother's world had crumbled when she heard about perestroika (when Russia began to change its communist economic system into a capitalistic system). But it completely fell apart when he told her that he believed in God and was on his way to Heaven because the Lord Jesus Christ had died for him. For months she argued that he was making a grave mistake and that he should change his mind.

Max was faithful in telling her about God's love, and she became convicted about the truth of the Bible and the harm she had done to others by her wrong teachings. Finally she asked him to pray and read the Bible to her, and soon she accepted the Lord as her Saviour. A hardened atheist was now on her way to Heaven.

Men and women often spend a lifetime being blinded. Some are blinded by social ideologies like



communism or humanism. Others are blinded by fame and fortune, and still others by pride because they believe they are good enough.

If you do not have a concern about meeting God, then it is likely that something has blinded your mind. Many, like Max's grandmother, feel that they cannot change. They try to defend the error that has deceived them. However, God wants old and young to be receptive to the message of the gospel and to know His forgiveness. For those who believe in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the God "*who forgiveth all thine iniquities*" (Psalm 103:3).

Just as God heard and answered the prayer for forgiveness of Max' grandmother, He waits to hear your prayer and to grant you forgiveness and life through the Lord Jesus Christ. Won't you acknowledge your need of the Saviour today and seek eternal life through Him?

THE Rapture

Did you know that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again to take all who have been redeemed by His blood to be forever with Him in Heaven? We learn of this exciting event, known as the rapture, from the only authoritative source of information about the future – God’s Word, the Bible.

We also learn from this Book that certain conditions will exist in the world just prior to and following the rapture. Because we see these signs of the ‘*last days*’ (2 Timothy 3:1-5) so prevalent in our current society, we can say with assurance that Jesus is coming soon. All is in readiness for the rapture (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20).

The Rapture of the Believer

The purpose of the rapture is to take to Heaven every one who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. The first man, Adam, sinned and as a result all mankind is subject to the wages of sin, which is eternal death and judgment. But God provided a Saviour for man in His Son. The Lord Jesus took the sinner’s place when He died on the cross.

All who trust this blessed Saviour, believing He died for their sins and rose again, are cleansed by His blood from every sin, and have eternal life (John 3:15, 16). These are the ones who the Lord Jesus Christ will

rapture when “*The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout*” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The Rapture and the Unbeliever

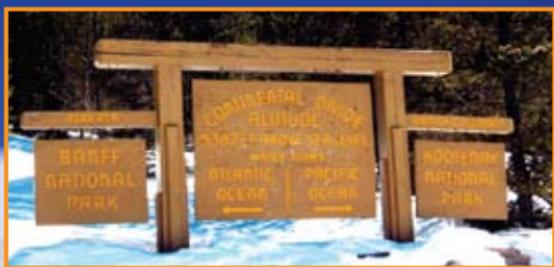
After the rapture, the unbeliever will be left on earth for judgment, and his eternal doom will be sealed. Many will then seek salvation, but the door to Heaven will be shut (Matthew 25:1-13). God says that all who have rejected Christ before the rapture will be sent “*strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Ultimately, all unbelievers will be brought to face Christ as their Judge, and will then experience eternal spiritual death as they are cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

The Rapture and You

Will the rapture be the greatest day of your experience or will it be the beginning of unspeakable horror and suffering for all eternity? It all depends on whether or not you have seen your need as a sinner, and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31).

Moments with the Book



THE GREAT DIVIDE

On a trip through the Canadian Rockies, I was awed by the majestic mountains and captivating scenery. We have a living, powerful, creative God who has made a wonderful world.

Beside the Yellowhead Highway, near Banff, is a sign showing the location of the Continental Divide. At this point in the mountains, water flows either to the Atlantic Ocean or to the Pacific Ocean. A raindrop in the mountains may fall on one side of the divide. It will join with other raindrops, trickling into a mountain stream, gushing into a river and finally foaming into the Atlantic Ocean. Another drop falls, potentially only millimeters away, on the other side of the divide. It will join with other drops, slowly gather momentum, flow into a mountain stream, on into a rushing river and finally into the Pacific Ocean. A similar origin, but very different destinations.

The Continental Divide separates raindrops. In a similar way, the cross divides people. The cross is where the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, laid down His life to pay the penalty for our sins. He freely gave Himself for us. All who

accept His gift will be made right for Heaven.

So just as the Continental Divide directs raindrops to their final destination, the cross is the point where your ultimate destiny is determined. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and trust Him as your Lord and Saviour, then you know you are Heaven bound. If you reject the work of the Lord Jesus, in the time you are given, your final destination will be Hell.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, two thieves were also crucified, one on either side of Him. The cross divided the thieves in both their attitudes and their final destinations. One thief believed that the Lord Jesus was going to die for him. He believed that the price for his sins would be paid. The Lord declared "*Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise*" (Luke 23:43). The thief on the other side of the Lord rejected Him. He mocked the Lord Jesus and did not accept Him as Lord and Saviour. That thief would find himself in Hell.

What is your final destination? Will you, one day, like the believing thief, be in Heaven?

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