

GLENNA SALSBUARY

More
Heavenly
Treasures

Hope for the Future



*Experiencing the
Transformational
Truth of God's
Sovereign Grace
and Eternal
Purpose*

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GLENN A SALS BURY



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To the faithfulness of God's Spirit in anointing His Word to my heart and life.

To the unfailing love of Jesus Christ, Who continually draws me to Himself.

To the sovereign purpose of the Father, Who sent the Son into the world to seek those whom He loved; I am grateful to be one of those recipients of unconditional, electing grace.

And to my family, all of whom have been called into His family, and whose unconditional love remains the joy of my earthly experience.

Preface



So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

—Romans 10:17

HOW OFTEN WE long to have greater faith! Yet I find it easy to forget that the only Source of power is the living Word of God. Christ Himself is alive to us in His Word. We cannot hear Truth unless the Spirit anoints our ears to hear. And the only Truth in the universe is the Word of God.

As the world scene continues to grow darker, I believe our greatest comfort rests in hiding God's Word in our hearts and lives. But the *earth dwellers*, those who do not know Christ (though they may be religious), struggle desperately and in vain to find human, earthly solutions to their dire situations (Revelation 13:12–14). The Lord Himself described the days of worldwide turmoil and *distress* that will precede His return to earth: "For there shall be great *distress* in the land...and upon the earth *distress* of nations, with perplexity...Men's hearts failing

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them for fear...” (Luke 21:23, 25, 26, emphasis mine). King David, in the midst of his circumstances wrote, “In my distress I called upon the Lord, And cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple...” (Psalm 18:6). Believers know the One Solution to dire situations!

The Word of God reveals the character of the Lord to us. We discover His unconditional love, the riches of His grace, His sovereign power, and His continual faithfulness. The Lord draws us to Himself through His Word. We learn to trust Him; we begin to *hear* His voice.

Yet there are very few believers who are discovering or hearing the foundational, doctrinal truths that produce transformational living in Christ. The Word of God is often overshadowed by programs and worldly enticements to gain a crowd. *Nothing* has the power to produce faith and a joy-filled life except the Word of God. Christ Alone, the living Word of God, is “the Author and Finisher” of faith (Hebrews 12:2).

The greatest gift the Lord can give us is the revelation of Who He is. Therein lies salvation. Yet He is infinite; He is God. He has revealed Himself in His fullness in the written Word. And it is this Truth that sustains us.

I have written this second book of “treasures” because God has given me a passion to share the riches of His Book. I continue to be lifted above my own distresses, earthly preoccupations, and personal challenges by the transforming truths that are hidden in that Book.

May your own heart and life be enriched beyond measure as you meditate on the pages that follow.

Resting in His Grace,
Glenna

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Section Five

Hope for the Future

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing
of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

—Titus 2:13



Chapter 107

The Hope



For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.

—Colossians 1:5

THAT SEEMS LIKE a strange statement, doesn't it—to think of *hope* as something concrete that is reserved for us, right now, in heaven? The Greek word for “laid up” is *apokeimai*, and it literally means *stored away*. We have *hope* on layaway!

What exactly is *the hope* that is laid up for us? The apostle Peter writes that *the hope*, the concrete expectation we have, is that of *living again*. And the *reason* that this is a concrete reality is because Christ rose from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). This is the hope we discovered “in the word of the truth of the gospel.” The essence of the gospel is the fact of Christ’s death and resurrection on our behalf (1 Corinthians 15:1–4). Christ is alive in heaven

at this very moment. And because we rose with Him, so are we! (See Romans 6:4–11; Ephesians 2:5, 6.)

In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul often discusses *the hope* (literal translation in the Greek). He writes, “Now the God of [*the*] *hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in [*the*] *hope*, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:13, emphasis mine). We believe in our eternal future in Christ by “the power of the Holy Ghost.” This *hope* is ours by revelation.

Again, Paul tells us we are “*saved by hope*” (Romans 8:24, emphasis mine). The Greek word for “hope” is *elpis*, and it is very close in meaning to the word “faith.” Both *hope* and *faith* are gifts from “the God of *the hope*.” Paul went on to tell us that the “hope that is *seen* is *not* hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Romans 8:24, emphasis mine).

In his letter to Titus, Paul says that our “blessed hope” is “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). And Paul reminded Timothy that “Jesus Christ...is our hope” (1 Timothy 1:1). Because Jesus lives, we live—eternally!

How are we to be encouraged in our daily lives by this knowledge, this awareness of *the hope* that is “laid up” for us in heaven? Perhaps we need to spend more time *focusing* on our heavenly future...and less time being preoccupied with the things of earth. King David described how he lived each day on earth joyfully because of his focus on the hope of heaven. He said, “I have set the LORD always before me: Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: My *flesh* also shall *rest* in

The Hope

hope...In Thy presence is fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:8, 9, 11, emphasis mine).

Oh, Holy Spirit, set our eyes on the hope of heaven as we walk in Your Presence here on earth.

Chapter 108

The Hope of Righteousness



For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

—Galatians 5:5 NASB

WHAT DOES THE apostle Paul mean here—“waiting for the hope of righteousness”? The Greek word for “waiting” is *apekdechomai*, and it means to fully expect. This is much like how we sometimes wait expectantly and eagerly for a plane to land safely that is carrying our loved one who is returning from a trip. So Paul says we are fully expecting “the hope of righteousness.” In 1 Timothy 1:1, Paul says that Christ Jesus is our hope. And in Colossians 1:27 we read that Christ in us is the hope of glory. This, “the hope,” is Christ Himself; we are awaiting “the Hope.”

And Christ, the Hope, is described as the “Hope of Righteousness.” In Hebrews we read, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that *look for* Him

The Hope of Righteousness

shall He appear the second time without sin, unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28, emphasis mine). The same Greek word for “waiting” is translated *look for* here. True righteousness is to be without sin. Christ is the Sinless One, and He is our only “Hope of Righteousness”!

Consider what the first century saints experienced in terms of daily, expectant hope in their lives:

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own...

—Philippians 3:20, 21 NLT

And even we Christians...wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

—Romans 8:23 NLT

You are...awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—1 Corinthians 1:7, 8 NASB

...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

—Romans 8:18, 19 NASB

...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.

—Titus 2:13 NASB

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In our earthly lives we often “hope” in other sources for our joy or our satisfaction—a new house, a new career, a different mate, a financial windfall, a few less pounds...But King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, reminded us, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2). The king, who had everything his heart desired, discovered that, ultimately, the things of earth will grow strangely dim and be unsatisfying in the long run.

True joy here on earth is experienced when our ultimate hope is the confident assurance of the heavenly fulfillment that is yet to come, “the hope laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:5 NASB).

Lord, give us a fresh awareness of our true Hope!

Chapter 109

Waiting for the Son



...to wait for His Son from heaven.

—1 Thessalonians 1:10

THE CITIZENS OF this world generally are waiting for a new job, better health, an exciting vacation, more money, or some major change in their circumstances. In the lives of those who are earth dwellers, happiness is basically dependent upon happenings.

There is a completely different focus for those who are alive in Christ. The event, the happening, for which we are standing on tiptoe every day is the arrival of Jesus Christ. Or are we?

The saints of the first century provide us with a clear reminder about heavenly focus. In Romans we read, “For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are...All creation anticipates the day...” (Romans 8:19, 21 NLT). Imagine that! The birds, rocks, trees, bees, lions, and lambs all are eagerly waiting for Christ’s

return. His creation knows Him, and all of creation knows what to focus on for freedom and fulfillment. Romans 8:21 says, “All creation anticipates the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay” (NLT). Then Paul added, “And even we Christians... We, too, wait anxiously for that day... we eagerly look forward to this freedom... we must wait patiently and confidently” (Romans 8:23–25 NLT).

Does that describe your daily mindset, an eager, confident anticipation of Christ’s arrival?

Paul wrote these words to the Corinthians: “Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:7 NLT). And he reminded them, “It will happen in a moment, in the blinking of an eye...” (1 Corinthians 15:52 NLT). And to the Thessalonian Christians he said, “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout... Then... we who are still alive... will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air... So comfort and encourage each other with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 NLT).

The Lord Himself talked at length about the signs of His return. He encouraged the believers to watch for and recognize the signs. And as we see the days growing darker, we are to “look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28). The Greek word for “redemption” is *apolutrosis*, and it literally means *a loosening away*. We will be set loose from this earth, caught up to meet Him.

The apostle John reported Jesus’ words to him: “Surely, I come quickly.”

Waiting for the Son

And John responded, “Even so, come Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

Lord, You are coming. Give us grace to wait eagerly and expectantly for Your soon return. May this be our daily expectation, our greatest desire, the worthiest of all happenings!

Chapter 110

Living Triumphantly!



Now thanks be to God, Which always causeth us to triumph
in Christ...

—2 Corinthians 2:14

THE APOSTLE PAUL regularly thanked the Lord for the many manifestations of His love and grace in our lives as believers. In this passage from 2 Corinthians, Paul uses the illustration of a familiar sight in Rome: Victorious Roman rulers returned from war and led their captives through the city in a victory parade. There were often two kinds of captives, those who were going to be spared and those who would be put to death. Those who were going to be spared were being led in grace. They were “trophy of grace” who would serve among the citizens of Rome.

Paul was using this metaphor to describe God’s grace to us. We have been “captured” by Christ Himself. “When He

Living Triumphantly!

ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8). This literally can be translated, “Christ led a body of captives” into the heavenlies. He rescued us; we were being held captive within Satan’s realm, and Christ brought us out of that “far country.”

What is perhaps even more miraculous is that we have the promise that we will triumph over the enemy because we are in Christ, Who has triumphed over the enemy of death itself. Paul says that God always causes us to triumph in Christ. The Greek word for “always” is *pantote* and literally means at all times and forevermore!

Do you sometimes feel like you are not very triumphant? Our daily lives and circumstances can be very disheartening at times. We feel defeated rather than triumphant. Yet Paul is stating that God is bringing us to victory in every situation and in every circumstance.

What would it take for us actually to believe what the Word of God proclaims as truth? It is in believing that we experience the sense of victory or triumph over our situations and circumstances. Sometimes it is helpful to ask ourselves this question: “How would my feelings and thoughts change if I actually believed that God was going to bring me through this triumphantly?” Listen to the Spirit in you. Are you aware of the potential relief from stress that is yours when you relinquish your resistance to resting in His Word of Truth?

Sometimes the Lord seems to be “growing us” into a more meaningful walk of faith by placing us in circumstances beyond our control. Then He brings us a fresh supply of His Truth and encourages us to “walk on the water” of believing His promises. As Paul, “the prisoner of Jesus Christ,” assures us, God “is able

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to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”
(Ephesians 3:20).

*Lord, grant us the faith to walk through our daily situations
with the firm knowledge that You always will cause us to be
victorious because we are in You, the Victor over all!*

Chapter 111

Age after Age



That is why all glory belongs to God through all the *ages of eternity*. Amen.

—Galatians 1:5 NLT

IF WE READ this same verse in the King James, it says, “To Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Those words translated “forever and ever” in English convey a rather different meaning in the Greek language. The words in Greek are *eis tous aionas ton aionon*. Translated literally, it reads: “to the ages of the ages.” Our familiar word *eon*, a period of time, comes from the Greek word *aion*.

So how might these insights help us personally? Often we have the idea that eternity is one long, linear period in which everything is quite static, even viewed as boring by some. Quite the opposite is true. Looking back in history, we realize that there have been a series of eons, periods of time or ages, in which God’s plan was revealed uniquely.

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For example, there existed the Antediluvian Age. That was the early age of human history, before the flood (ante = before; diluvian = deluge). An entire civilization existed with people who knew the Lord like Abel, Enoch, Methuselah, and Noah. Yet the Ten Commandments did not exist, nor did the nation of Israel exist. Later came other periods of time, such as the Age of the Patriarchs that focused, biblically, on the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Twelve Tribes. Then later came Moses and the Age of The Law.

In the New Testament, there is reference to “this present evil world [aion]” (Galatians 1:4). There also are many references to “the powers of the world [aion] to come” (Hebrews 6:5). Christ taught often of the coming age in which He will set up His kingdom on earth. And even beyond the coming age of Christ’s kingdom on earth is the Age of the New Heaven and New Earth; “the first heaven and the first earth” will have passed away (Revelation 21:1).

Currently we are living in “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25). The Law has been fulfilled in Christ, the Lamb of God. Therefore, we are in a very special age, during which the Lord has revealed the glorious “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). Those of us who are alive in this age and who have heard this gospel of grace have ages upon ages ahead of us of reigning with Jesus Christ through endless *aions* in which God will continue to work out His unending, infinite plans!

Even now in this present age, we are being prepared for our individual assignments in the ages to come. We will be using our own unique gifts and talents in every age yet to come. “For God’s gifts and his call can never be withdrawn” (Romans 11:29 NLT).

Age after Age

Adam had assignments before the fall. According to Genesis 2:15, he was to dress the garden of Eden and keep it (i.e., preserve the garden). He also was given the assignment of naming every living creature after they were designed and produced by the hand of God (Genesis 2:19, 20).

The twelve disciples understood that they would have special responsibilities in the coming age. They would reign with Christ over His kingdom on earth. Matthew 19:28 states that they “shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (The disciples knew this was so true that they even argued about who among them would be “greatest” in this coming age (Mark 9:34)!

Perhaps we would view our spiritual growth with greater interest and intensity if we realized we are being groomed, prepared, and trained to serve with Christ in the future ages. Maybe we would be more interested in discovering and knowing specifically what “gifts and callings” are ours personally. Second Timothy 1:6 urges us to “...fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you...” (NLT).

Each one of us has been given “special abilities” by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1 NLT). All glory belongs to God, throughout the ages, because He alone is the Gift Giver. He alone knows how to prepare us to reign with Him.

Lord, let us embrace all that unfolds in our lives in this present age in joyful preparation for our eternal assignment with You, in the ages upon ages yet to come.

Chapter 112

The Glory to Come



I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me...with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

—John 17:4, 5

THE SON KNEW He had come to earth to seek and to save those the Father had given Him (John 17:2). He had completed His assignment, and He knew that His next great blessing, after enduring the agony of the cross, would be entering into the glory of God.

In the Old Testament we find several references to the fact that glory follows the finished work of a believer. Exodus 40:33, 34 says, “So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” In 2 Chronicles 7:11,12 we read, “Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord...And the Lord appeared to Solomon.”

The Glory to Come

The glory of the Lord is the actual presence of the Lord Himself. This glory often is described as blinding light that results in people falling on their faces in worship. To experience the glory of the Lord is to experience being in the very presence of God.

Paul tells believers, you and me, “Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later” (Romans 8:18 NLT). And again, he says, “For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them...he called them to come to him. And he gave them right standing with himself, and he promised them his glory” (Romans 8:29, 30 NLT).

Imagine, we who belong to Christ will not only see His glory, but also we will enter into and participate in His glory. We will be “glorified.” Those “whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Romans 8:30).

The apostle John, like Paul, had the privilege of actually seeing the glory of the Lord. He stood with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. He saw living saints who were standing in that glory, Moses and Elijah. And it was this same John who wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him...” (1 John 3:2).

The eternal reign of believers with Christ in heaven is described in the book of Revelation. John described heaven: “And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 22:5).

The apostle Paul had his heart and his hope set upon finishing his work and entering into the glory of God. He wrote, “Giving thanks unto the Father, Which hath made us meet to be partakers

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of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12). Also, he encourages us to be: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God...” (Titus 2:13).

Do we think about being recipients of God’s glory? Do we picture reigning in garments that shimmer with the light of His glory? Do we take seriously the promises of the Word of God?

O Holy Spirit, show us these realities more clearly, for Your glory!

Chapter 113

Evaluating our Certainties



For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and...in my flesh shall
I see GOD.

—Job 19:25–26

THE PATRIARCH JOB lived in about 1500 B.C. He did not have access to the truths of the Jewish prophets or to the prophetic teachings of the New Testament. In addition, his life was in shambles. He had lost everything, including his ten children. He had lost his fame, his fortune, and his family. But he had not lost his faith. In the face of unthinkable trials and circumstances, Job was certain of his future.

Let's take a careful look at the facts about which Job was certain. In Job 19, he states that he knows that his Redeemer lives. Job was certain, 3,500 years ago, that Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah, was alive at that time. But how did he know this?

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Many Bible scholars believe that Job was a descendant of Noah's son Shem (Genesis 10:23; Job 1:1). Noah and his three sons lived on for several hundred years after the time of the flood. Noah lived to be 950 years old (Genesis 7:11; Genesis 9:28). He was the great grandson of Enoch, a Gentile prophet who lived in about 3,000 B.C. Enoch prophesied that the Lord would come with ten thousands of His saints and execute judgment on the earth (Jude 14, 15).

Through the truths provided by these earlier believers, Job knew the truth of the coming Messiah, God in the flesh. And he understood that the "coming saints" who were accompanying the Lord would be resurrected saints, believers who already had gone into the heavenlies. In fact, Job knew that Enoch himself had been raptured, lifted in his flesh into the heavenlies! (See Genesis 5:24.) And, prior to entering heaven, Enoch had, like Adam, actually walked on the earth with God Himself (Genesis 3:8; Genesis 5:24). Job had faith in the truth about God, spoken by Noah, his sons, and their descendants. As Romans 10:17 says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

In Job's faith statement, he refers to the Lord as Redeemer. This indicates his understanding that humans are lost, trapped in sin. Even though we once belonged to the Creator, we now have to be "bought back"—redeemed. Job knew that Adam and Eve were redeemed by the shedding of blood. God Himself sacrificed animals, and He Himself clothed Adam and Eve, covering their nakedness (Genesis 3:21). God taught the earliest saints that life is in the blood (Genesis 9:4).

In Job 19, Job speaks of the Redeemer as "my Redeemer." He had a personal relationship with the Coming One. He even knew it was this very God Who had brought on his calamities,

Evaluating our Certainties

using Satan as His instrument (Job 19:21). Yet this was the One in whom He had faith. Job knew he would be resurrected and stand face-to-face with the Lord in a flesh and bone body. “He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though...worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25, 26). Job’s entire hope was based on his certainty of a future life that had purpose and meaning, in which he, in a resurrected body, would participate with the Lord.

How about us? Is that our certainty today, our daily mindset in the face of our current circumstances? True faith is solidly based on biblical realities that far exceed human reasoning. The key is in knowing these truths and experiencing the kind of solid conviction we see demonstrated in Job’s life.

Lord, give us a hunger for Your Word!

Chapter 114

The Supernatural Life



We are seated with him in the heavenly realms...

—Ephesians 2:6 NLT

IF WE REALLY could grasp who we are in Christ, our entire earthly experience would be wonderfully different. If we have received the gift of faith, delivered miraculously by the Holy Spirit, we are “new creations.” We are no longer earth dwellers. We are actually heavenly beings existing among earth dwellers. Perhaps we need to ask the Lord to open our eyes so that we can see this reality and to enhance our faith to believe the biblical facts about who we are in Christ.

Paul, the apostle, writes, “...those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT). And in Galatians he writes, “I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20 NLT). Do we actually believe that we are totally new creations born from above?

The Supernatural Life

Jesus explained this miraculous transformation to Nicodemus, a religious earth dweller, a law-keeping human being. Jesus said, “I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God...Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven” (John 3:3, 6 NLT). Jesus was explaining to this religious man that humans, in their normal state, never will qualify for heaven. Something totally supernatural has to occur.

In the great faith chapter of Hebrews (chapter 11), we discover that all those who had faith in the promise of God regarding the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ) had a very unique view of themselves. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They knew that they belonged to a heavenly kingdom. Abraham even had a vision of the heavenly city of Jerusalem! (Read Hebrews, chapter 11.)

The apostle Paul contrasts the lives of unbelievers and believers. He says about earth dwellers, “...and all they think about is this life here on earth.” And then of saints he says, “But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives” (Philippians 3:19, 20 NLT).

What do we primarily think about? Are we living each day with a preoccupation with our homeland? Are we speaking the language of heaven? Do we live with a focus on faith as our daily outlook? Do we have our minds set on things above?

Again, Paul exhorts us as saints, “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven...Let heaven fill your thoughts...” (Colossians 3:1, 2 NLT). And it is Paul who tells us that at this very moment, if we know Christ, “we are seated with him in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 2:6 NLT).

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Christ Himself told us that in the same way that He is not a part of this world, we are not a part of this world. John 17:16 says, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

Lord, teach us to think like who we really are: citizens of heaven. Draw us to Your Word and renew our thought patterns. Open our eyes to recognize that we are heavenly beings designed for an eternal experience side by side with You. And give us the grace to grasp this truth. We are, at this very moment, reigning with You in the heavenlies. We are not earth dwellers by nature any longer. May we see what is unfolding in this world through Your eyes and Your Word.

Chapter 115

Every Knee Will Bow



At the name of Jesus every knee will bow...and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

—Philippians 2:10, 11 NLT

THIS IS AN amazing, thought-provoking reality. And the context in which Paul places this truth is a sweeping, all-encompassing statement: “Every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth...”

Have you ever thought about what is “under the earth”? Scripture indicates that every human being who ever has died is considered buried, or “under the earth.” And there will come a day that even unbelievers will be raised from the dead and will agree (confess) that Christ is Lord (God of the universe). And then “anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life” will be separated from the Lord forever (Revelation 20:11–15 NLT).

And there are other beings “under the earth.” Scripture tells us that there is “a bottomless pit,” a satanic abyss, under the earth, which contains demons and fallen angels (Revelation 9:1–11). These, too, will recognize Christ as God when the armies from heaven descend to defeat these armies from hell (Revelation 19:11–21). And even in their defeat, they will see and confess Christ as Lord.

The apostle Paul was quoting the prophet Isaiah when he wrote the words in Philippians 2. The Old Testament Jewish prophets understood that God was going to enter the world as a Man, the Messiah, the Anointed One. And they, too, recognized that one day all of creation would see this to be true. Isaiah 45:21–24 says, “Who hath declared this from ancient time?... have not I, the Lord? and there is no God else beside Me; a just GOD and a Saviour... Look unto Me, and be ye saved... unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear... and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed.” These are sobering truths in a world that speaks often of political correctness and tolerance. Yet the Lord has spoken His Word. He has issued warnings to all who hear His Word.

The apostle Paul was highly educated and Jewish by birth. He clearly understood the sacredness of the Word of God. He longed for all to come to Christ while there was yet time. He wrote, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9). And, “Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 10:11).

The call of Scripture is for every person to bow before the Lord today. We should, by faith, confess that Christ is Lord *today*, while we still are above the earth.

Every Knee Will Bow

Lord, grant us the grace to bend our knees before You, confessing that You alone are Sovereign God and Creator of all that is. And may we, gracefully, lift up Your Word so that others may hear and “be saved” while there is yet time.

Chapter 116

Ready to be Revealed



Who are kept by the power of God through faith...ready to be revealed in the last time.

—1 Peter 1:5

THE APOSTLE PETER gave us incredible truth, packed tightly in his two small letters. In his first letter to the Jewish Christians that were scattered throughout Asia Minor, he reminded them of who they are in Christ and what their future will be. These truths apply to each of us as believers. To fully grasp what Peter was saying is to experience life-changing peace and hope.

First, we read that these believers are the “elect” of God, “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1:2). The Greek word for “elect” is *eklektos*, and it means to be chosen. Jesus also spoke of believers as the elect of God (Matthew 24:22, 24, 31). And Paul said that he endured “all

things for the elect's sakes" (i.e., for the sake of believers). (See 2 Timothy 2:10.)

Peter went on to explain how the elect were chosen by God. He said that they were chosen by the *foreknowledge* of God (1 Peter 1:2). The Greek word here is *proginosko*, which means to know beforehand. The root word *ginosko* means to have an experiential relationship, to really know a person. The word "foreknowledge" does not mean that God knew who would choose Him so He chose them. If that was what it meant, the Greek word *oida*, which means an intellectual knowing, would have been used.

This is a huge mystery that is repeated throughout the Word of God. The apostle Paul, speaking of believers wrote, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world...Having predestinated us..." (Ephesians 1:4, 5). And in Romans 8:29, it says, "For whom He did foreknow [*proginosko*], He also did predestinate [*proorizo*, foreordained]." There is clear evidence that believers were known by the Lord before we entered the world!

Because God the Father chose us, He set us apart for Himself. Peter said that the elect have been sanctified by the Spirit of God (1 Peter 1:2). The Greek word for "sanctification" is *hagiasmos*, which means to be set apart for God Himself, to be made holy. The apostle Paul said this very clearly: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit..." (2 Thessalonians 2:13). We as human beings can only have a relationship with God if we are holy. Yet no one in the natural human state can make themselves holy. Holiness is the sovereign work of the Spirit of God that is executed on behalf of the elect.

Peter explained that the elect are not only set apart (made holy) by the Spirit, but also they are the ones for whom Christ's blood has been shed, "through...sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:2). The blood is a picture of death, and Christ's death brought redemption to believers.

Peter went on to say that God in His "abundant mercy hath begotten us again" (1 Peter 1:3). That is a fascinating statement. He was reminding the elect that God sovereignly created us ("begat") a first time as we entered the world as humans. Then, He Himself sovereignly created ("begat") us a second time by His Spirit. This is what it means to be "born again" (John 3:3, 6). The Lord does a second creative work and makes us a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is how we experience becoming the elect of God.

These truths are completely illogical to the natural mind. As 1 Corinthians 1:27 says, "But God hath chosen the foolish things...to confound the wise." "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness..." (1 Corinthians 1:18). However, Peter said that the day is coming when the elect of God will be revealed to the unbelieving world and these mysteries will be understood.

Peter explained that the elect will be "revealed in the last time." The Greek word for "revealed" is *apokalupsis*, and it means an unveiling. He said this will occur "in the last time," which refers to the time of Christ's return, the revelation of Christ Himself. We are familiar with the end of the world as we know it being called the Apocalypse. That is what Peter is describing.

Peter was encouraging the elect, the believers, who were being persecuted for what they believed. He was saying, "Don't worry. The glory of God, Jesus Christ, is alive in you. When the

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Truth is revealed to the world, who you are will become apparent to all who persecuted you.”

The sanctified saints, the elect, will be revealed “at the appearing (*apokalupsis*) of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7) Until then, we are “kept by the power of God” (1 Peter 1:5).

Lord, may we be found in You, standing ready for the unveiling of the saints.

Chapter 117

*The Restitution of All
Things*



And He shall send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto you: Whom heaven must receive until the...restitution of all things...

—Acts 3:20–21

THE APOSTLE PETER was preaching an evangelistic message to unbelieving Jews in this passage. He explained to them that they killed “the Prince of life, Whom God hath raised from the dead...” (Acts 3:14, 15). He went on to explain that Christ has gone to heaven for now but He is going to return, and when He comes, He will “restore all things” to their original created perfection. Peter also urged them to believe that Christ is the Messiah for Whom they have been waiting and that this Messiah will return again and set the world in order.

The Greek word for “restitution” actually means restoration. The Hebrew word for “restore” is *shub*, which means *to cause to turn back*. It also can mean *to make whole or complete (shalam)*.

The Restitution of All Things

It is interesting to note that in the parable of the prodigal son we see the son restored to his father. The son turned back after he “came to himself.” The Spirit of God actually caused him to turn back. Restoration was the result (Luke 15:11–32).

Another aspect of “restore” appears in the Hebrew word *chayah*, which means to make alive. In 2 Kings 8 we read of the woman “whose son...Elisha restored to life” (2 Kings 8:1, 5). When the Prodigal Son was restored to his father, we read, “For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again” (Luke 15:32). Christ Himself was restored to His Father through having died and become alive again.

How might this concept of restoration be significant in our lives? Scripture tells us that before we came to know Christ, we “were dead” (Ephesians 2:1). Believers are described as those who “are alive from the dead” (Romans 6:13). The Holy Spirit quickened us and brought us to life in Christ. We have been restored to our heavenly Father. We have been lost “in a far country” (the world), and we have been brought back to the Father through being resurrected from the dead. “And since we died with Christ, we know we will also share his new life” (Romans 6:8 NLT).

The apostle Peter said, “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). Jesus spoke of our prior relationship with the Father before the foundation of the world: “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me” (John 17:6). “Father, keep...those whom Thou hast given Me...those that Thou gavest Me I have kept” (John 17:11, 12). Jesus also said that He came to seek His lost sheep: “I am the Good Shepherd,

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and know My sheep, and am known of Mine” (John 10:14). The Shepherd calls His own sheep by name, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.

The apostle Paul gave us a glimpse of how it is possible that we once belonged to the Father and we once were familiar with the voice of the Shepherd. He tells us that those whom the Father knew before the world began are those the Shepherd called (Romans 8:29). Paul called them “God’s elect” (Romans 8:33).

As believers, we miraculously have been found and been given the gift of eternal life; we are restored to the Father, here and now. God has given Christ the power to “give eternal life” to those who belonged to the Father before the world began (John 17:2; Ephesians 1:4).

The apostle Peter, as he preached, was pointing the Jews to the coming of the Messiah, Who alone has the power of restoration. The Prince of Life will make restitution of all things, and once again the Father will say of the creation, “It is good.”

Father, we praise You for the mystery of our restoration to You through Your Son. May we treasure this miracle anew.

Chapter 118

My Inheritance



I say to myself, “The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him.”

—Lamentations 3:24 NLT

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH had a very difficult, dismal life. He preached, and no one listened. Instead, they turned on him, threw him in a cistern, and castigated him with words.

Jeremiah described his miserable experience: “He has broken my bones. He has attacked me and surrounded me with anguish and distress. He has buried me in a dark place...He has walled me in, and I cannot escape...And though I cry and shout, he shuts out my prayers” (Lamentations 3:4–9). Jeremiah knew that his Sovereign Lord was the Author of his pain.

Rarely have any of us been placed in circumstances as desperate as those through which Jeremiah was called to live. Yet most of us can relate at some level to feeling abandoned by

the Lord. The most significant truth for us to grasp, however, is how clearly Jeremiah knew that the Lord was the Author of his miserable circumstances! The saints of old recognized that the Lord's sovereign hand is at work in every event that unfolds in our lives. It was Joseph, who had been sold into slavery by his brothers, who could later say, "...ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Genesis 50:20).

Our humanistic thinking often fails to see that the Lord's sovereignty in all things is not contradictory to His character of love. The saints of old took refuge in the reality that God was at work behind the scenes in every circumstance they encountered. This truth that God "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" provided them with peace and hope in the midst of bleak circumstances (Ephesians 1:11).

When we read what Jeremiah wrote right in the middle of expressing his anguish and sense of abandonment, we discover how very true this is. Jeremiah said, "Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The unfailing love of the LORD never ends... Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day. I say to myself, 'The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him'" (Lamentations 3:21–24 NLT). And he went on to say, "For the Lord does not abandon anyone forever. Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion according to the greatness of his unfailing love" (Lamentations 3:31–32 NLT).

It is interesting to note that Jeremiah had to talk to himself! He wrote, "I say to myself, 'The Lord is my inheritance.'" He had to remind himself of where his true hope was placed. He knew that focusing on and thinking about his circumstances was very depressing, so he recalled the truth, and he talked to himself about right thinking.

My Inheritance

Sometimes it is important for us to remind ourselves of the truth regarding the character of our Father. He loves us with an everlasting love. He is working all the things in our lives together for our good. He Himself is our inheritance. We will reign with Him forever.

Lord, let our hope be only in You. Enhance our ability to speak Your Truth to our own minds.

Chapter 119

*All of Creation is
Groaning!*



For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth
in pain together...

—Romans 8:22

IN ROMANS 8, the apostle Paul is describing the condition of all of God's creation as a result of Adam's sin in the garden of Eden. Not only did we as humans fall under the curse. The ground was cursed. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake...Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth" (Genesis 3:17, 18). The animal creation is also under the curse. Romans 8:20 says, "Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse" (NLT). And Paul also said that "even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us...groan to be released from pain and suffering" (Romans 8:23 NLT).

Are there days when you find yourself groaning? What are we longing for? Paul answers that question: "For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his

All of Creation is Groaning!

children really are... We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised” (Romans 8:19, 23 NLT). Although we are new heavenly creatures in Christ as believers, we still are trapped in a mortal body. We are waiting to be liberated from this state of “betwixt and between.”

In 2 Corinthians, Paul describes this same groaning. He writes, “We grow weary [we groan] in our present bodies, and we long for the day when we will put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing... Our dying bodies make us groan and sigh... We want to slip into our new bodies...” (2 Corinthians 5:2, 4 NLT). Do we realize that some of our earthly discontentment and groaning is actually a deep longing for our heavenly bodies? We often feel incongruent and unfulfilled because of our trapped condition!

Paul says that we, along with all of God’s creation, one day will “be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21). But while we are here on earth, we are burdened with a body of death and decay.

Paul himself groaned in agony over the burden of this earthly predicament. He was torn up over the fact that: “When I want to do good, I don’t. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway” (Romans 7:19 NLT). Paul cried out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). And he answered his own cry: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25). Paul knew that our freedom will come in the day that Christ releases us from our earthly corruption.

The apostle John wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know

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that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2). Perhaps the Lord is encouraging us to focus more on the day of His appearing, knowing that we are indeed going to be set free...and focus less on our groaning! As the nineteenth century theologian William Newell wrote, “Now the saints are wrapped up in the common brown paper of flesh, looking outwardly like other folks. But the whole creation is waiting for their unveiling at Christ’s coming, for they are connected with Christ, one with Him, and are to be glorified with Him at His coming.”¹

*Father, let us live in the light of our heavenly freedom in You
that is yet to be revealed but promised with certainty.*

Chapter 120

Christ's Return



Therefore, *comfort* and *encourage* one another with these words.

—1 Thessalonians 4:18 AMP

*M*OST OF US would welcome some *comfort and encouragement* on a daily, regular basis. Wouldn't you agree? The apostle Paul indicates that there is a *specific* topic of conversation that will bring comfort and encouragement to us every single day of our lives. What do you think that topic of conversation might be?

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. Then we, the still living who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in

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the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord! Therefore, comfort and encourage one another with these words!”

—1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 AMP

There we have it! Paul says that the key to comfort and encouragement is to talk about the return of Christ, discuss the day of His appearing, and anticipate being caught up alive into the clouds.

So, is Christ’s return part of your regular conversation? Are you comforted and encouraged by the very thought of His return? Paul indicates that preoccupation with Christ’s return is one of the signs of a healthy believer!

In his letter to Timothy, Paul said that he was looking forward to meeting the Lord. He said that “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” (2 Timothy 4:8). Do you experience the emotion of *loving* the thought of Christ’s return?

Perhaps one of the factors that keeps some saints from fully rejoicing in the reality of Christ’s return is that they do not fully grasp the truth of God’s mercy and grace. There is an abundance of bad theology that associates Christ’s return with a *negative* experience, a scene of shame and judgment. But the fact is that for those who have died with Christ on the cross, been buried with Him, and now are risen to new life in Him, this is a time of total rejoicing! (Read Romans 6:3–11.) Sin no longer is an issue for those of us who are in Christ. We are not “under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14).

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The Word of God gives us marvelous promises related to the Lord's return. Here are just a few:

Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him...

—1 John 3:2, emphasis mine

For the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

—Romans 10:11

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...this corruptible must put on incorruption...thanks be to God, Which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

—1 Corinthians 15:51–53, 57

Even when we were dead in sins [He] quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

—Ephesians 2:5–7

I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.

—John 14:2, 3

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Finally, it is good to remember that the apostle John actually *saw* in a vision everything that is going to unfold in the day of Christ's appearing. And John's closing words in Revelation are, "Amen (so let it be!) Yes, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20 AMP).

Lord, give us a fresh enthusiasm for looking up, knowing that the time of our completed redemption draws nigh (Luke 21:28). And may Your coming become more central in our conversation, that we may experience enhanced comfort and encouragement in You.

Endnotes

Chapter 119

1. William Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1938), 320.

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