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MARCH 2024

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SPIRIT-LED LIVING

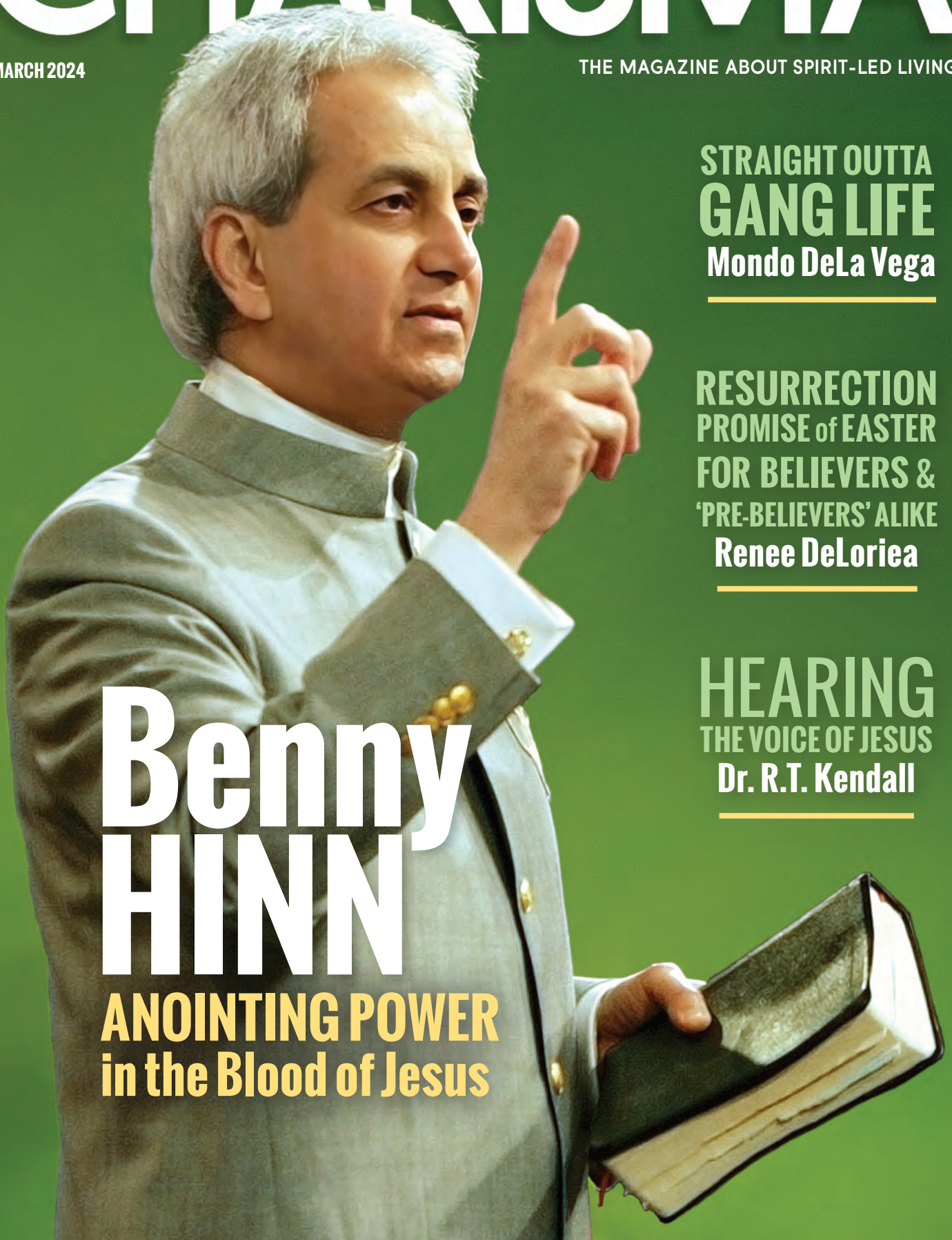
STRAIGHT OUTTA
GANG LIFE
Mondo DeLa Vega

RESURRECTION
PROMISE of EASTER
FOR BELIEVERS &
'PRE-BELIEVERS' ALIKE
Renee DeLoria

HEARING
THE VOICE OF JESUS
Dr. R.T. Kendall

**Benny
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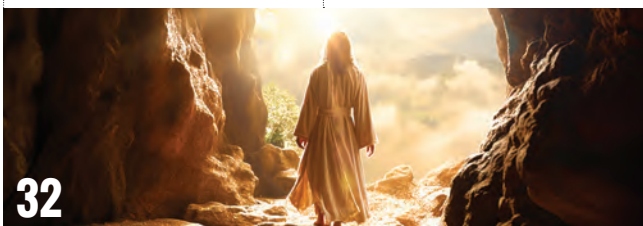
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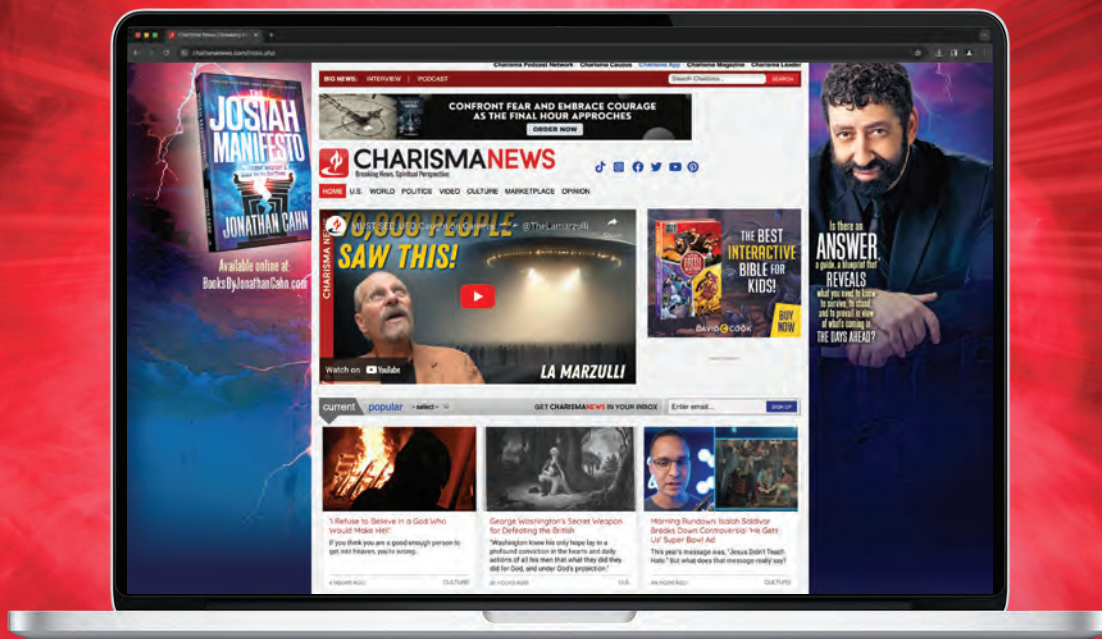
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"It is absolutely the most powerful thing I've ever read. I just had to call and tell you. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your magazine."

—Carol Raybur

"MOST POWERFUL THING I'VE EVER READ"

I've gotten *Charisma* magazine for 20 years, maybe longer. I have never read an article as strong as Senator Josh Hawley's ("A Man's Battle," *Charisma*, July/August 2023). It just takes my breath away. It is absolutely the most powerful thing I've ever read. I just had to call and tell you. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your magazine.

Carol Raybur, via phone

CLAIMING INDIA

Thank you for your dedication to delivering excellence. Learning how Holy Spirit is moving in India was fascinating, ("Claiming India for the Cause of Christ," *Charisma*, January 2024). I look forward to every issue of *Charisma* and more of your enlightening and enriching articles.

Sallford Thackletwaite,
Moorfalls Township, ID

COLBERT'S WELLNESS OVER ILLNESS

I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for the outstanding article recently featured in *Charisma* titled "Supercharging Your Well-Being for Vibrant Health and Harmony," (*Charisma*,

January 2024). It truly resonated with me, and I felt compelled to convey my gratitude. Thank you *Charisma* and Dr. Colbert.

Paul Plumborne, Nipseyville, OK

DARK DAYS, BUT WISDOM FROM LEE GRADY

I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the outstanding article from Lee Grady in your recent issue of *Charisma* Magazine Online, ("Lord, Deliver Us from Evil," *Charisma*, January 2024). It was informative and engaging, sparking my interest in the end times and today's current events. Please keep up the good work.

Schwartz Fluvenuven, Milwaukee, WI

NEW WEBSITE

The new *Charisma* website is getting better. As a longtime subscriber, it's reassuring to know *Charisma* magazine is progressing with the times. It's a little bit bumpy sometimes, but new birth always comes through delivery pains. I pray the Lord leads *Charisma* confidently into the future.

Rosemarie Neurochelle,
New Southport, PA

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What you *believe* determines who you will *be* and how you will *live*

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Choosing a Path Different from the World's

We live in a world where evil is called good and good is called evil. Right is considered wrong, and wrong is considered right. Everything is being turned inside out and upside down. But if you have a personal relationship with God and are being led by His Spirit, you can stand strong and thrive, even in an upside-down world.

What do I mean when I say we can be led by the Holy Spirit? Spirit-led living is following a different path from what the world says you should pursue. It is boldly stepping into the future without fear, knowing who you are in Christ and having confidence that the Holy Spirit within you is greater than anything you face in this world. It is knowing God intimately, which results in learning to hear His voice. Spirit-led living is following God's leading so you can fulfill every bit of potential He has designed for your life. And Spirit-led living is the peace of knowing that no matter what following Him costs, it will be worth it.

Living in the Spirit isn't easy, but it's not something we must accomplish by ourselves. The Holy Spirit fuels us by His power. He gives us spiritual gifts that enable us to gain victory in life and minister to the world. And as we surrender to Him, His fruit becomes more and more evident in our lives.

I do not want to do anything without the presence of the Holy Spirit. Living a Spirit-led life is the key to moving forward successfully in this upside-down world and accessing the fulfilling life God has planned for us.

If I were addressing a group of young people eager to progress in life and the things of the Spirit, I would explain that when I say "Spirit led," I'm not speaking of mere human intuition or gut instinct. Mood, diet and even hormones can influence these natural, sometimes helpful, prompts. This makes them undependable at best, and they may even be misleading. Rather, being Spirit led is being guided by the Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity, the navigator abiding within the core of the born-again believer.

When we give the Holy Spirit full rein in our lives, He transforms us. You may ask, "How do I become a person who is led by the Holy Spirit?" It starts with getting to know the Holy

Spirit the same way you would get to know a friend. Think of your relationships with friends or your spouse. How did you get to know them? By spending time and talking with them. To get to know the Holy Spirit, you spend quiet time waiting for Him to communicate with you in your spirit. He desires to commune with you and to lead and guide you in all things.

Being led by the Spirit isn't something we do passively; it's a conscious decision we make to be different from a world that thinks those who live according to the Bible are backward and out of step. It's a choice to trust God's Word and stand against the woke culture that rejects what Scripture says about marriage, sexuality and even gender. It means staying married and raising your kids according to biblical values, and having integrity in all your relationships, both personal and professional. It means speaking up on moral issues

and not just going with the flow. And it means realizing that reaching others for Christ is our main responsibility.

Being led by the Spirit isn't a matter of being conservative, and it's not a political position. I use those examples to convey that when we live by the power of the Holy Spirit, we don't just go along to get along. We live a different way.

Decades ago the culture at least had a facade of religiosity. It was good for business to go to the right church and make people think you were a good person. Of course, there was a lot of hypocrisy, and Christianity in those days was very shallow. But today the tide has turned. It's not easy to walk a different way when the culture not only doesn't support Christianity but pulls us away from God instead of toward Him.

This happens in every aspect of life—entertainment, education, government and business, where there are so many ways to compromise and be dishonest. The family is being shattered, and even the church is becoming more and more reprobate. Even some evangelical churches are pushing ungodly woke doctrines such as critical race theory and gender fluidity, even though the Bible clearly says God created us male and female.

How do we not only survive but thrive in such an upside-down world? It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit, but first we must get to know who the Holy Spirit is as well as what the Bible says about His power, His gifts and the fruit of walking with Him.

It starts with getting to know the Holy Spirit the same way you would get to know a friend.

Stephen Strang has seen major changes in the church, the culture and technology since he founded *Charisma* magazine in 1975. In addition to being CEO of Charisma Media, he hosts a Strang Report podcast live on YouTube and Rumble at 4 p.m. EST every Tuesday and Thursday. His important new book *Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-World* is available wherever fine Christian books are sold including online at mycharismashop.com.

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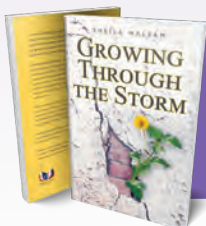
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Don't Look for Loopholes When You Surrender to God

About 26 years ago, I found myself at a church altar in Orlando, Florida. God had been dealing with me about leaving my comfort zone. I had a great job with nice benefits, yet I felt spiritually unfulfilled. I knew there was an amazing adventure in front of me, but I had placed serious limitations on my obedience.

As I buried my head in the carpet in that church, I realized God was requiring unconditional surrender. He wanted me to wave a white flag. I knew what I had to say, but it was difficult to form the words. Finally, I coughed them up. I said the same thing the prophet Isaiah prayed long ago: “Here I am, send me!” (Isa. 6:8b).

This is what I call a dangerous prayer. It should include a warning label!

I believe when you utter these simple words, heaven takes a picture of you with your hands up—and an amazing process begins. God closes in on us in order to crush our fears and demolish our selfishness. Then He gives us the holy boldness to obey.

When I prayed this prayer in 1998, I immediately had a vision while I was still on the floor. I saw a sea of African faces. I knew I'd be going to Africa, and I was scared to death. I had no idea how I would get there, what I would say or who would pay for the trip. So I swallowed hard and prayed again: Here I am, send me!

Less than two years later, I stood on a huge stage in a sports arena in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, speaking to 7,000 pastors. I did not enjoy the bumpy flight across the Sahara, and my knees were knocking when I preached. I felt as if I had been pushed way out on a limb.

But even though I was terrified, my fear was mixed with incredible joy. The Lord had overcome my resistance, and He was using me. Since that trip, I have ministered in 39 countries. This week, I will preach in Uganda—all because I prayed a dangerous prayer.

Grace is so amazing. God not only gives us the power to serve Him; He plants in us the desire to surrender to His will even if we are scared of the consequences. This is what the apostle Paul described when he said: “For God is the One working in you,

both to will and to do His good pleasure,” (Phil. 2:13).

God has an uncanny way of wooing us into obedience and submission. Our flesh may protest; our fears may paralyze us. But in the end, if we lift our hands in surrender, grace takes over. He gives us power, strength and a willing heart. And the results are supernatural because it is God at work in us.

Jesus taught His disciples to cultivate this willing spirit and to pray another dangerous prayer found in Luke 10:2. He told them: “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest,” (Modern English Version).

This is what I call a trick prayer. You pray it at your own risk. When we ask the Lord to send workers into His fields, we usually pray that God will send others. (“Here I am, Lord. Send Mike, Denise or Jeff.”) But the Lord of the harvest will likely tap you on the shoulder and say, “I want to send you.”

The church has advanced throughout history because of people who surrendered to God. One of them was David Brainerd (1718-1747), a brave missionary to American Indians during

the First Great Awakening. Although he died of tuberculosis at age 29, his legacy of total consecration lives on in his journal, published by his friend Jonathan Edwards.

Brainerd recorded this very dangerous prayer in his diary: “Here am I, send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness; send me from all that is called comfort on earth; send me even to death itself, if it be but in Thy service, and to promote Thy kingdom.”

We rarely hear prayers like that today. Brainerd's passion would be considered politically incorrect fanaticism today. We don't promote self-sacrifice; we have a new gospel of self-fulfillment. We don't talk about carrying a burden for lost people; we ourselves are lost in our comfortable materialism.

I wonder what would happen if all of us prayed Isaiah's prayer with full sincerity. What if you raised your hands and left all your fears, worries, excuses, stipulations, limitations and conditions on heaven's altar—and invited God to use your life in any way He wants? I invite you to take the risk. Pray a dangerous prayer, and see how God will use you.

*If we lift our hands
in surrender, grace
takes over.*

J. Lee Grady was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years and now serves as senior contributing editor. He directs [The Mordecai Project](#) an international ministry that protects women and girls from gender-based violence. His latest books are *Follow Me* and *Let's Go Deeper* (Charisma House).

THERE IS A GLOBAL CRISIS IN PASTORAL TRAINING

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Discover the Power of Hope

Romans 15:13 says, “May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope,” (AMPC).

Over the last 45-plus years I’ve spent traveling and teaching God’s Word around the world, I’ve met many incredible people from nearly every walk of life. Some were doing great, seemingly on top of the world. Others confided in me that they were barely getting by, living day-to-day, trying to make ends meet. And many others were dealing with circumstances so difficult that, quite frankly, they felt defeated and overwhelmed by life.

We will all battle hopelessness at some point in our lives. And no matter who we are or what our situation, HOPE is one thing we all desperately need. The reason is: hope is powerful!

Hope is more than a motivational thought or a fading daydream—hope is a nothing-is-impossible-with-God firestorm refusing to be quenched. It’s an awareness that God is actually expecting, looking and longing to show you His goodness. Hope is what stabilizes your frantic thoughts and emotions—it’s an awareness that there is no problem big enough to keep God from rescuing you.

These days, it’s easy to be worn down by hopelessness. People lose hope when they experience overwhelming loss, repeated failures, impossible situations or when they’re hurt by people they trust. Like most of you, I understand what it’s like to feel hopeless. I spent 23 years of my life filled with pain, abuse, disappointment, unfaithfulness and one bad thing after another.

Because of this, I wouldn’t get my hopes up. I used to say, “If I don’t expect anything good to happen, I won’t be disappointed when it doesn’t.” But when I got serious about my relationship with God and began studying His Word, I discovered real hope. I learned why hope is important, and how powerful hope can be.

Hope is a positive expectation that something good is going to happen to you because of God’s great goodness. It is not a wishy-washy, vague, wait-and-see attitude, but an action we must choose to take on purpose each day. Hope and faith go hand in hand.

Hope also enables us to endure hardships and long waiting

periods, and God uses these times to develop character and endurance in us. Psalm 27:14 says, “Wait and hope for and expect the Lord; be brave and of good courage and let your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord,” (AMPC).

Hope dares us to believe! It thinks, “You know what? Things might just work out after all.” It’s the sometimes unexplainable, but always undeniable, feeling that today would be a bad day to give up.

Isaiah 40:31 tells us: “But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint,” (ESV).

Regardless of who you are or what condition your life is in, you can’t function successfully without hope in God. If circumstances are bad, you surely need hope. And if they are good, you need hope that they will stay that way!

Hope energizes and motivates us to take action by causing us to step out in faith and act in obedience with God’s Word. Hope believes boldly, decides daringly, speaks firmly and perseveres passionately. When we embrace hope on purpose, it influences our thoughts, our

attitudes, our outlook and the way we speak. Hope builds us up as we wait on God.

Hope releases joy, and the joy of the Lord becomes our source of strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Never assume that where you’ve been or where you are is as good as it gets. And when your goal or your situation seems impossible, keep in mind that nothing is impossible for God.

In Matthew 19:26, Jesus said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible,” (NIV). It doesn’t matter what the situation looks like around you; God is greater than any obstacle you may be facing. Everything that has never been done is impossible until someone does it, so why can’t it be you?

Don’t allow your mind to become a hindrance to the things you can accomplish in life. Think big—the way God does! Choose to believe God is going to do something better in your life. So, go ahead and get your hopes up! God is leading you to something better than you can imagine!

Go ahead and get your hopes up! God is leading you to something better than you can imagine!

Joyce Meyer is a *New York Times*’ bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored 130 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and her newest devotional, *Quiet Times With God* (FaithWords). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit joycemeyer.org.

Simply Christ

Gospel Insight

with Keith Surface

Pornography is Adultery

Religious surveys from several years ago told us that 68% of men in evangelical churches along with 53% of the pastors regularly view pornography. You would think that exposing such numbers would cause shock and repentance, but actually the opposite is true. When people see that such a large percentage of church people are involved in such a thing, they feel consoled that they are not the only one partaking of the uncleanness. It's as though they think if so many are doing it then it must be normal or even acceptable. This is what the Apostle Paul called "strong delusion." II Thessalonians 2:11.

The use of pornography is adultery! The use of pornography is an act of fornication. There is no statement that is more supported by the word of God than this. Jesus himself told us, "*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" Matthew 5:28. What is the use of pornography but the act of looking upon an unclothed woman to stimulate and fulfill your lusts?

According to Jesus' words, a married man that uses pornography is an adulterer before God. An unmarried man that uses pornography is what the Bible calls a "*fornicator*" or "*whoremonger.*" The same is true for women who use pornography. If both a man and a wife use pornography together, they have what is called an open marriage. They have perverted the sanctity of marriage by bringing the uncleanness of others into their own bed.

What is equally if not more shocking, is the percentage of pastors who confess to using pornography. If these survey percentages are true, then over half the pastors in evangelical churches are adulterers and they are ministering their adulterous spirit to those who hear them. Some of these pastors think because they openly admit it, they are somehow demonstrating their humility. No! These are those the Apostle Paul spoke of whose "*glory is in their shame.*" Philippians 3:9.

Those who tell you that adulterous lusts are normal for a child of God are lying to you. They may believe it, but it is still a lie. The Apostle Peter told us the redeemed have "*...escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*" II Peter 1:4. The very essence of salvation is the cleansing of our hearts from sin by the work of the blood of Christ. I do not present myself as your example, but I can honestly tell you that Jesus washed the filth out of my unclean heart over forty years ago, and has kept it clean from lusts all these years.

Those involved in pornography are in danger of eternal damnation and most do not even know it. They are dangling over the Lake of Fire, hanging only by a thread which could break at any time. Their pastors and teachers tell them they are alright, but it is not the truth. The word of God is clear, "*...but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*" Hebrews 13:4. Paul also told us "*Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, ... shall inherit the kingdom of God.*" I Corinthians 6:9-10. Those who tell you differently are the ones deceiving you.

I speak these things to those involved in this perversion because I care for your soul more than I care for your admiration. Jesus Christ shed his blood to take away your sin and purify your heart. You can continue ignoring God's word, and join those of whom the Bible says, "*... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*" II Thessalonians 2:11-12, or you can be one who lays hold of Jesus Christ in repentance and faith until he washes the uncleanness from your heart. Your eternity hangs in the balance.

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Jesus say we
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"...how sayest thou, Ye shall
be made free?"
John 8:33

by Leroy Surface

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Prophetic Awakening: Revival Fires Set to Ignite Around the World

In this pivotal year, a resounding imperative echoes through the hearts of true believers: “Put oil in your lamp.” This timeless call is a compelling reminder, urging believers not to settle for lukewarm faith but to actively fuel the flame within. As the Lord’s return draws near, the message is clear—an invitation to cultivate and sustain a vibrant, unwavering faith. The symbolism of putting oil in one’s lamp emphasizes the intentional effort to ensure spiritual fires burn without ceasing. This directive is a call to action, a plea to keep the light of faith shining brightly amidst the encroaching darkness.

The admonition prompts believers to be vigilant, standing guard against spiritual apathy or complacency that might otherwise dull the fervency of their relationship with God. The urgency of this message is palpable, leading believers to stay actively engaged in their faith journey, maintaining a radiant light as they eagerly anticipate the return of the Lord.

Revelation 4:1 says, “After this I looked. And there was an open door in heaven. The first voice I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this,’” (MEV). This Scripture offers a profound glimpse into the visionary experience of the Apostle John. In this moment, he describes looking and witnessing a remarkable event, the opening of a door in heaven. The imagery of a door symbolizes access to realms beyond the earthly, a portal to the realms of God’s glory and revelation. The voice that follows is described as resembling a trumpet, a powerful and attention-grabbing sound often associated with divine announcements in biblical literature. This voice issues a compelling invitation: “Come up here.”

This invitation isn’t just a physical ascent; it carries a deeper spiritual connotation, an urging to ascend to a higher level of revelation and understanding. “I will show you things which must take place after this” is indicative of a revelation of future events. John is granted a prophetic insight into the unfolding of divine plans and the culmination of God’s purposes in the course of time.

There is an imminent outbreak of supernatural revival and the kindling of God’s transformative fire, sweeping across America and resonating worldwide, particularly among the younger generation. In this move of the Spirit, a mighty army of spirit-filled believers is poised to arise, becoming vessels for the manifestation of evidential miracles that will testify to the power and presence of God. Anticipate the emergence of a spiritual awakening that transcends geographical boundaries, transforming lives and communities. The epicenter of this revival will be the hearts of the youth, as God ignites a fervent passion for His presence, His Word and His miraculous works. The flames of revival will not only warm the hearts of believers but also draw

countless souls into the transformative embrace of divine love.

A distinctive focus of this revival will be the university campuses, where the Spirit’s fire will blaze brightly. Watch as young minds are captivated by the awe-inspiring presence of God, leading to unprecedented encounters and a surge

of spiritual hunger. Evidential miracles, tangible signs of the supernatural, will become a hallmark of this revival, testifying to the reality of God’s power in our midst. The anticipation for this divine outpouring in 2024 stirs hearts with hope, as believers prepare to witness and participate in the extraordinary move of God that transcends generations, borders and expectations. Get ready for revival—its flames are set to illuminate the world, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and lives of those who encounter the all-consuming fire of God’s love and usher in a massive harvest of souls before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Expect a major prophetic shift this year as new kingdom voices emerge, poised to wield significant impact and challenge the status quo within religious systems in churches. These voices, divinely ordained, carry a transformative power that challenges conventional norms, ushering in a fresh perspective and dynamic influence on the spiritual landscape. As these emerging voices resonate, they become catalysts for change, prompting a reevaluation of established structures and calling believers to embrace a deeper, more authentic expression of their faith.

*Get ready for revival—
its flames are set to
illuminate the world!*

Apostle **Bible Davids** is leading a spiritual revolution in America. His Mass Deliverance Campaigns draw thousands, becoming a focal point for a fresh move of the Spirit and a widespread revival. He is the Founder of Supernatural Life Center and Bible Davids Ministries in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, Texas.

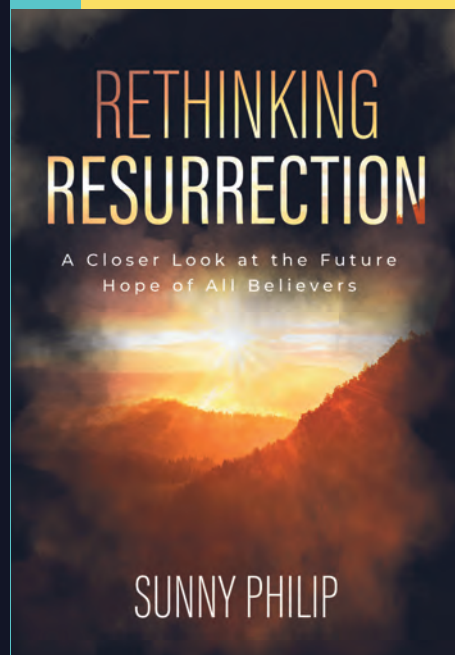
DO YOU STILL BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION STORY?

This is a question I had to face many times over the years as a speaker at conferences. I have faced this question from Christians and non-Christians. It gave me an opportunity to tell them that I am a Christian today only because I believe in the resurrection story.

As many are busy repeating clearly refuted false stories about the resurrection of Jesus, and even Christians are struggling with this question, I felt it was time to open up and write about it from my heart. I am confident that this book will give you answers to some of the questions tormenting you and strengthen your faith walk.

**Available at Amazon and
christianbooks.com**

Dr. Sunny Philip is the senior pastor of Gateway Christian Center in Long Island, New York, a multicultural Pentecostal church. He also provides Apostolic oversight for over 630 full gospel churches in India.





Christ for All Nations to Hold 50 Gospel Campaigns in Africa

Evangelistic events celebrate the organization's 50 years of ministry

Christ for All Nations, the gospel-focused ministry founded by the late evangelist Reinhard Bonnke and now led by evangelist Daniel Kolenda, will mark its 50th anniversary this year by holding 50 gospel campaigns in Africa, the continent of its primary focus. Known for its massive evangelistic efforts across the continent, CfaN tracks and documents salvation decisions through the use of signed decision cards used to connect new converts with local churches. By that count, the ministry has now seen nearly 90 million people receive Christ.

The year's events launched Feb. 18 in Cape Town,

South Africa, in honor of Bonnke's prophetic rallying cry, "From Cape Town to Cairo, Africa shall be saved!" CfaN's first campaigns will take place in Aba, Nigeria, where the team will conduct four giant evangelistic events in under two weeks. By the end of the year, the ministry will have conducted campaigns across the continent, including some areas previously off-limits to the organization.

"The vision for 2024 is going to require 'all hands on deck,' not only from our team worldwide, but from every financial partner of the ministry as well," Kolenda says. "Together, we will see prophecy fulfilled and a greater harvest than we've ever witnessed before."

Georgia Educator, Coach Earns 2024 Branch Rickey Service Award



Patia Rountree accepting award

Patia Rountree of Statesboro, Georgia, a longtime Fellowship of Christian Athletes support and ally, has been awarded the 2024 Branch Rickey Service Award. The award, named after the longtime baseball coach and driving force behind the creation of FCA, honors Rickey's legacy of eternal impact on the lives of coaches and athletes.

"The Fellowship of Christian Athletes has played a key role throughout my life," says Rountree, who has used the platform of FCA to minister to many young students who have walked through her classroom throughout the years. "I will never feel deserving of such a high honor, but I am grateful that others see something reflected in my life that makes them think I am."

"I am thrilled that Patia is a recipient of the FCA Branch Rickey Service Award," says Karen Carr, area director for Coastal Plains FCA, adding, "Integrity is evident in every email, letter sent home and training she provides to her students and parents."

'Pastor Donuts' Delivers Blessings to Bus Drivers

The chaplain's real name is Paul Ransberger. But to the 90 or so school bus drivers for the Lindale Independent School District in Texas, this Assemblies of God pastor, 71, is simply "Pastor Donuts." Continuing a ministry he began in 2018, Ransberger shows up every month with dozens of donuts for the drivers, who are often underappreciated and rarely recognized, to enjoy.

"He relates to everyone," says Pete Ridge, transpor-



Chaplain Paul Ransberger

tation manager, "everyone loves him!"

Ransberger was set to retire from the ministry in 2021 when God led Pastor Brad Williams, who leads The Church of Garden Valley, hired him as a staff member with school bus chaplaincy as part of his responsibilities.

"Everybody pastor Paul comes in contact with thinks the world of him," adds Ridge.

'Multiplied', to Hit Theaters in May, Takes the Pulse of Evangelism

New documentary explores a key question

"Multiplied," a new documentary by 24-year-old filmmaker Chris Worthington, explores the question: Is worldwide evangelism dead?

Worthington and his team made the groundbreaking film to document what the future of evangelism looks like, inviting the audience to join the filmmaker as he follows Daniel Kolenda, an American evangelist. The two attend a three-stadium Christian gathering in Brazil, get stranded in a West African dust storm, get

shot at on the way to a 400,000-person gospel campaign in Wari, Nigeria; and ultimately discover that Christianity is no longer about a few evangelists but an entire generation of people seeking the truth of the gospel.

"The Lord is at work all around the world, and it is my passion to bring that truth to viewers to inspire and encourage them," Worthington says.

"Multiplied" will be in theaters through Fathom Events May 20-21.

IDF Hero, Messianic Jew, Encourages Others Despite Critical Wounds

Amitay Argaman says his injury “wasn’t for nothing”

Despite suffering critical wounds in one of the first mass-casualty incidents during Israel’s ground operation in the Gaza Strip, Amitay Argaman, the son of a Messianic Jewish family, is encouraging others with his positive attitude.

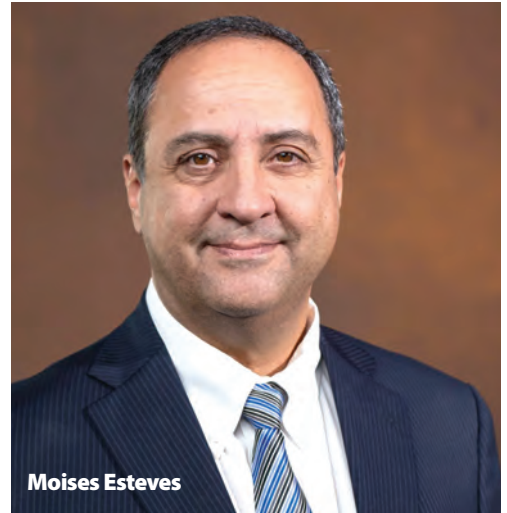
The explosion in a booby-trapped tunnel shaft that killed four Israel Defense Force officers and wounded four more left Argaman, who suffered the heaviest wounds in the blast, “injured in all the parts that aren’t crucial for life,” he says. Although he feared he would not survive the evacuation to the hospital, when he did, doctors made a decision that saved his life, amputating both his legs.

After serving in the IDF’s elite Maglan commando unit, Argaman took time off to travel internationally, returning to Israel on Oct. 6, the day before Hamas terrorists made a surprise attack on Israel border communities. Despite jet lag, Argaman prepared to serve even before IDF called him up. “That’s what’s expected of a fighter,” he says.



Amitay Argaman

His positive attitude has encouraged his family, friends and even the hospital staff, who received his thanks for the life-saving decision to amputate his legs. He says, “You must have some kind of inner resilience, which comes from an understanding that I was wounded in a just war; it wasn’t for nothing.”



Moises Esteves

Satan’s Lies Can’t Stop CEF Good News Clubs

What the Satanic Temple meant for evil, God is using for good

Not only does Christ have the ultimate victory over the enemy, but His followers are experiencing victory over the efforts of satanists to force the removal of Christian clubs from public elementary schools. In fact, Child Evangelism Fellowship Executive Vice President Moises Esteves says God is reversing what the Satanic Temple intended: Christian clubs are thriving throughout the country and around the world, and not even one has been shut down as a result of TST’s efforts.

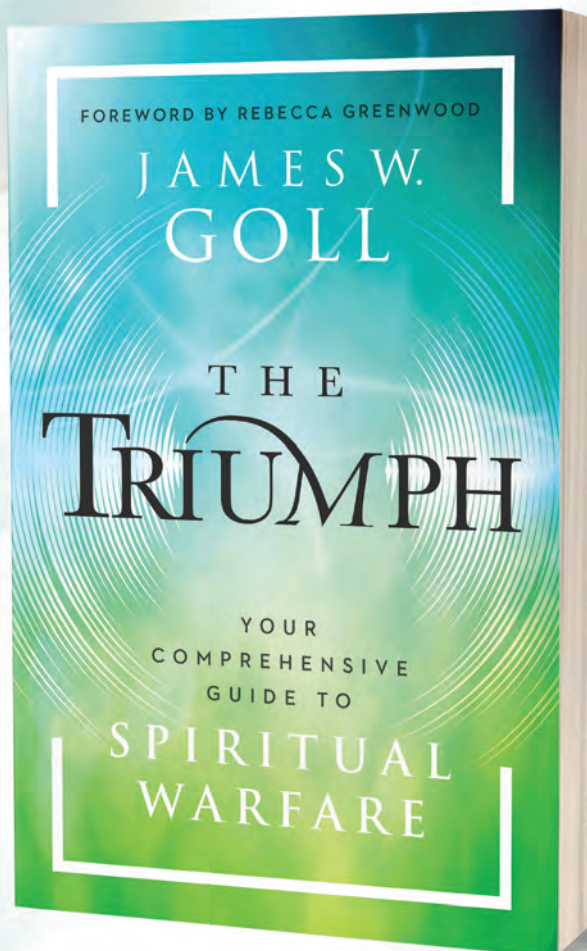
“Although even the very presence of After School Satan Clubs shows how far America has sunk into moral relativism, these so-called clubs are not succeeding in their goal, which is to scare school authorities into banning all after-school groups,” Esteves says in a press release, adding, “Parents simply won’t agree to send their children to a club whose mascot represents pure evil.”

Esteves adds that the publicity generated by TST has increased interest in Good News Clubs and has brought more volunteers their way.

WAGE WAR AGAINST THE POWERS *of* THIS PRESENT DARKNESS— AND WIN!



JAMES W. GOLL



EVERY PERSON IS BORN IN A SPIRITUAL BATTLE AND FOR A SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

YET SO MANY OF US ARE UNDER-EQUIPPED AND EVEN LOSING BATTLES WE SHOULD BE WINNING.

**SHOP
NOW**

THE BATTLE IS RAGING, AND IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE YOUR PLACE ON THE FRONT LINE.

BUT DO NOT FEAR:

**YOU WERE BORN FOR THIS—
AND MADE TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST JESUS.**



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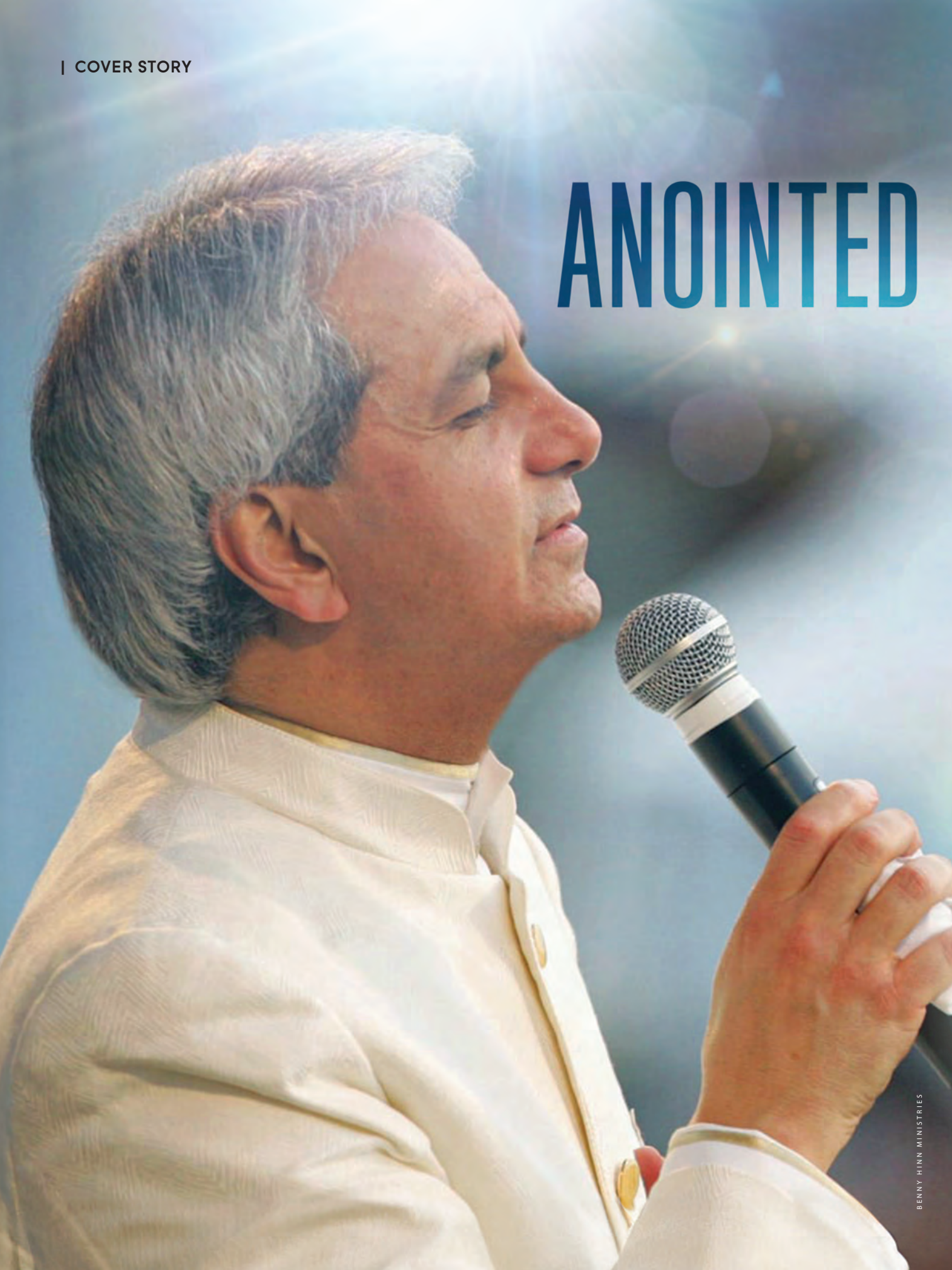


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| COVER STORY

ANOINTED



for Power in the Blood

Take hold of salvation, healing and miracles today

BY PASTOR BENNY HINN

Each day in prayer I thank God for the work of the cross and the blood of Jesus Christ. Because the blood was shed there for our sins, the Holy Spirit came, and today we can know and experience God's anointing on our lives and work.

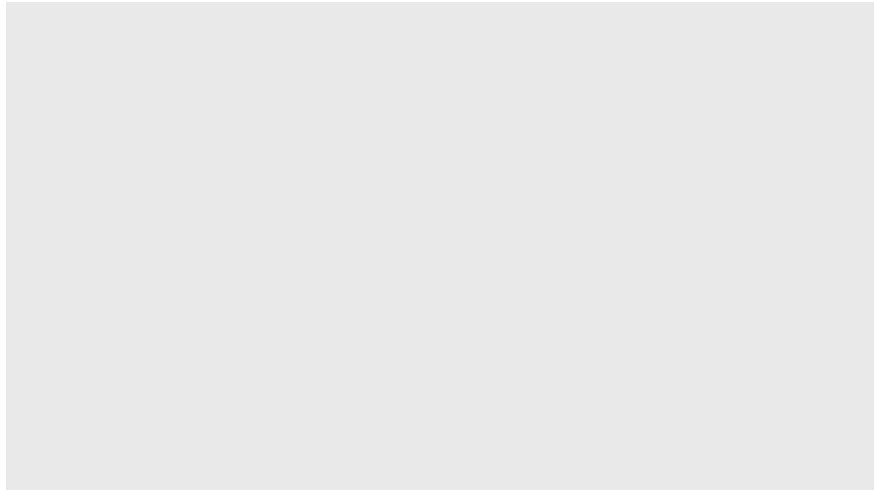
When we are empowered by the oil of the Holy Spirit, we are freed from the chains of bondage. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil," (Isa. 10:27).

Every time I am touched by the power of God, I feel like the psalmist who declared, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered," (Ps. 68:1).

The blood brought cleansing to the leper, who symbolized sinful man. But that was only the beginning. Look what happened to the leper next. The blood made it possible for him to be anointed.

When a man was allowed back in the camp (Lev. 14:8), he was directed to "take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log [about two-thirds of a pint] of oil," (Lev. 14:10).

continued »



The priest was to “take one male lamb and offer it as a trespass offering,” (Lev. 14:12) as a restitution for a specific sin. “Then he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering and the burnt offering, in a holy place,” (Lev. 14:13).

Did you notice that the man offered more sacrifices even after he was considered cleansed and allowed back into the camp?

In the same way, the Lord Jesus shed His blood once for the remission of our sins, but we continue to ask for the cleansing and protection that His

When the blood is applied to our hearing, we are shielded from the voice of our enemies. The psalmist cried out to the Lord: “Attend to me, and hear me; I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me, and in wrath they hate me,” (Ps. 55:2–3).

As believers we have power over verbal attacks of the enemy. The Bible says: “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall

Second, the priest then reached out to the leper and placed the blood “on the thumb of his right hand,” (Lev. 14:14). Our hands represent the work that we do. It is wonderful to know that the Lord gives guidance and protection to our work. David said: “And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands,” (Ps. 90:17). And God told Isaiah: “I will direct their work in truth, and will make with them an everlasting covenant,” (Isa. 61:8).

Finally, the priest applied blood to the leper “on the big toe of his right foot,” (Lev. 14:14). Our feet are symbolic of our daily walk with the Lord. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin,” (1 John 1:7).

Sprinkled and Poured

The application of the blood by the priest to the leper’s ear, hand and foot was first for cleansing, but it didn’t stop there.

As you will recall from Leviticus 14, the leper was cleansed from leprosy as the blood was applied seven times, and then the blood was applied to his earlobe, his thumb and his toe, symbolically speaking of his hearing, his work and his walk.

The moment the blood was applied, the priest was instructed to take “some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord,” (Lev. 14:15–16).

Wherever the blood was in the Old Covenant, the glory descended and consumed the sacrifice. For example, when Moses offered up the sacrifices, the Word of God says the fire descended and consumed the sacrifice. Whenever the blood was applied, the glory descended and the cloud filled the tabernacle.

If you want God to anoint you today, apply the blood afresh on your life.

The anointing oil throughout Scripture represents the work of the Holy Spirit in consecrating and empowering for service.

IF YOU WANT GOD TO ANOINT YOU TODAY, APPLY THE BLOOD AFRESH ON YOUR LIFE.

blood provides. The Lord Jesus even taught His disciples to say in prayer: “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,” (Matt. 6:12–13).

3 Application Purposes of the Blood

The priest applied blood to the cleansed leper three times. After considerable study, I believe God had a specific purpose for each application of blood.

First, “the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear” of the leper (Lev. 14:14).

condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord,” (Isa. 54:17).

Whose tongues arise against us? The lying tongues of the Lord’s enemies. But we can condemn those voices through the blood of Christ and the authority of His Word.

When someone tells me that the devil has been speaking to them, I remind them of the wonderful words of Jesus: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me,” (John 10:27).

It’s not the voice of Satan that we should be listening for but the voice of the Savior. That is why we need the blood applied to our hearing.

It is essential to understand that God anoints what the blood has covered. The anointing of the Holy Spirit follows the blood. The anointing oil was sprinkled seven times—God’s number of completion—to represent the reception of a total anointing.

What took place next may sound repetitious, but God was doing something totally new. The priest took the oil and anointed the leper’s right ear, right thumb and right big toe once again.

The blood was already there, but the anointing oil was placed on top of it. For where you find the blood of the cross, you will find the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I believe the anointing of the Holy Spirit multiplies and expands the benefits of the blood, enabling the believer to live an overcoming, victorious life.

Head to Toe

What did God command the priest to do with the remaining oil? “The rest of the oil that is in the priest’s hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord,” (Lev. 14:18). God wants to cover us totally from head to toe with the oil of His Spirit—our thoughts, our sight, our words and our entire lives. Not only do we have the atonement of the blood, but we have the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Many people, however, don’t think they are good enough for God’s anointing because of their past. Friend, let me tell you, the shed blood of Jesus is more powerful than your past.

A Covenant to Keep

The book of Psalms often speaks of “the Lord’s anointed.” While these verses point to the coming of our Messiah, Jesus Christ, they also speak of the blessings associated with the anointing of God, and describe the blessings each verse gives for the believer who has access through Christ’s blood and the indwelling Holy Spirit to the anointing of God:

- » Psalm 15:5
- » Psalm 20:6
- » Psalm 45:7
- » Psalm 84:9
- » Psalm 92:10

» Psalm 105:15

» Psalm 132:17

We have been redeemed and washed by the blood, but our walk needs to be cleansed by God’s Word every day (Eph. 5:26). Why? Because our lives constantly touch the dirt of the world every day. That’s why we need to come

and the blood has made you righteous.”

To many it sounds impossible that we can stand before God with the righteousness of Christ, but it is true. Because the blood of Jesus is pure, we become pure in God’s sight. The Lord cleanses our minds from the past and the present.

Millions of people live in a nev-

WHEN THE BLOOD IS APPLIED TO OUR HEARING, WE ARE SHIELDED FROM THE VOICE OF OUR ENEMIES.

back to the Lord daily and say, “Cleanse me anew and wash me again.”

Examine how the cleansing of the blood and the anointing of the Holy Spirit in your life can help you in each of these three areas: my hearing (thought life, mind and emotions); my hands (work, career and job); and my walk (spiritual disciplines, relationship with others and with the Lord).

The Blood and a Clear Conscience

The sins of your past cannot be erased simply because you want them to be. You cannot be freed from a sinful life by merely saying, “I’m going to forget about it.” God said He would “purge” us. The blood will purge your conscience completely—not only your transgressions, but also every thought connected with them.

Nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse your mind from thoughts of past and present sins. Since we have “a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,” (Heb. 10:21–22). What is an evil conscience? One that remembers yesterday and whispers, “You’re a sinner.”

But in heaven the Lord says, “Welcome! I have delivered you from your iniquities. You are forgiven. Only saints can enter here,

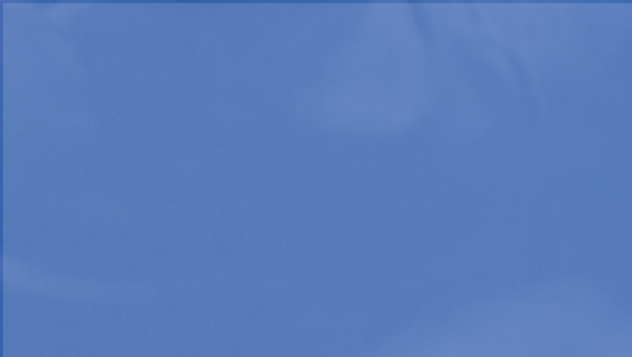
er-ending cycle of hopelessness and despair because they cannot forget about yesterday. They are tormented by memories that can lead to depression, mental anguish and even thoughts of suicide.

Satan is aware of our weaknesses. That is why he uses our past mistakes to torture and trap us. One of the devil’s greatest weapons against us is our past. When you understand the work of the cross and the power of the blood, those dead works will be removed from your conscience, “for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul,” (Lev. 17:11).

Do you realize how liberating it is to be freed from your past? Can you fully comprehend what it means to live without guilt or condemnation? Let these words sink into your heart: The moment the shed blood of Christ has been applied to your heart—your past is buried. It is gone forever and no longer remembered in glory. ◀

PASTOR BENNY Hinn is a noted evangelist, teacher and the author of best-selling books, including *Good Morning, Holy Spirit; Prayer That Gets Results; Blood in the Sand; and his newest book, The Blood: Revised Edition.* His television program, *This Is Your Day*, is among the world’s most-watched Christian programs, seen daily in 200 countries. Pastor Benny continues to take the message of God’s life-saving and miracle-working power around the globe.

STANDING STRONG ON THE WORD OF GOD!



Charisma Magazine

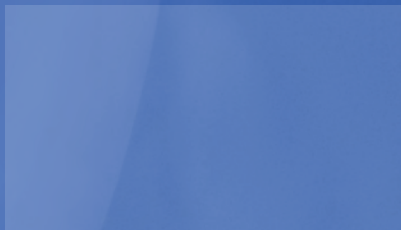
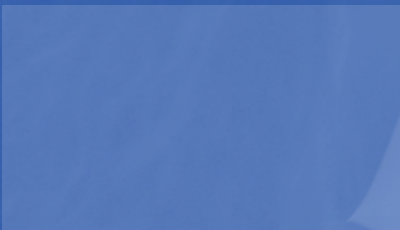
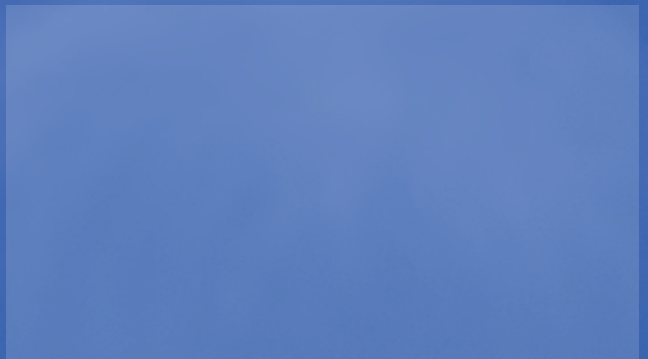
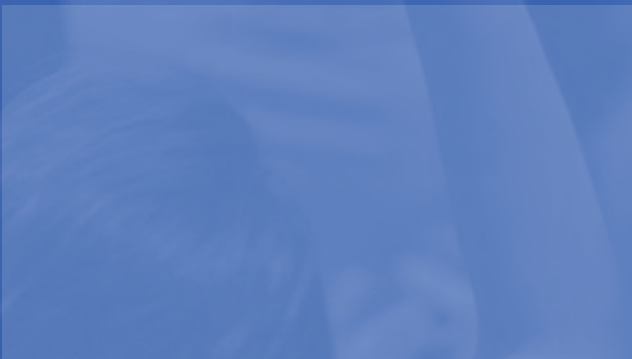


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STRAIGHT

OUTTA

GANG LIFE

How the power of Jesus's love delivered a gangster from destruction to grace

BY MONDO DE LA VEGA

The old, Hispanic church building on Wilshire Boulevard was only a few minutes away, but it felt like miles. Walking on the sidewalk nearing the building's parking lot, I began noticing people I'd seen around the neighborhood. All the while, I was on high alert, staying aware of my surroundings at all times, just in case I was being followed.

The area was surrounded by some of the most notorious Los Angeles gangs, who wouldn't think twice about taking a life in front of these people. They did drive-by shootings that sprayed bullets like a fire hose. You've got to understand, drive-by shootings were the norm. They happened almost every day. I had on my bandana,

my Locs, a white shirt, black Dickies and Nike Cortez sneakers. People knew I was a gang member just by the way I was dressed.

It was now nearing 7 p.m. The temperature was mild, not hot or cold, yet I was sweating. Why was I so nervous about some church function? Something unusual was stirring inside me that I couldn't explain.

It Should Have Been Me

In the end Mom didn't have the heart to throw me out. My mother is the real hero in this story. God was rebuilding her life too as she tried to raise and provide for us. Because of her persistence, work ethic and faith in

God, she became successful in the nursing field. At that time, however, she was worried that her son would be killed or go to prison. She had good reason to be afraid. For me, death seemed to be stalking, watching for the perfect moment to catch me off guard.

One day when I was a teenager, a lowrider with three older homies pulled up for me to hop in. We couldn't have gone two blocks when suddenly, out of nowhere, this chilling uneasiness shot up and down my spine. Fear gripped me as I sensed something was wrong. Just weeks before, one of my best homeboys had died in my arms after being stabbed and shot in a drive-by. And for some reason sitting in that lowrider, I knew I was next. There was a bullet with my name on it.

We were cruising in downtown LA when my pager started vibrating. At that time, pagers were one of the main ways we communicated. When we got a page, we had to stop at the nearest pay phone and call to get our orders.

"Hey, I'm getting a page," I told the homeboy driving. "Pull over at the next pay phone. I need to make this quick call." I knew that if I could take care of this order, they would give me more responsibility, greater access in the hierarchy.

I BELIEVED THERE WAS A GOD, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I DIDN'T BELIEVE THERE WAS A GOD.

The vato who was sitting in the front seat on the passenger side got so frustrated at me he said, "Chale, homie. Let me go take care of the call, fool." I said again, "This is my job, homie. I gotta take care of this, ese." When I said that he exploded with rage. He snatched the pager out of my hand and bolted out of the lowrider toward the pay phone to make the call I was supposed to make.

As soon as he picked up the receiver we felt the explosion of noise as bullets unloaded on him—he dropped to his knees as if moving in slow motion and hit the ground. My boy who was driving put the lowrider in gear and took off.

"What about the homie?" I asked. "We can't just leave that vato like that, homes."

"He's dead, fool. We're not goin' back," came the reply. "Let the dead bury the dead, homie."

Inside, all I could think was, "What happened to the brotherhood?"

3 Questions That Changed My Life

My sister, Laura, is one of the greatest people of faith I have ever met. Her dedication to prayer became the center of her life. As I was growing in the gang, she was growing in her faith. My sister was living her own life. She had her own friends. She was focused and strong, smart, studious and beautiful. Guys in the neighborhood around us would call out to her, sweet-talking, trying to pull her in, and she was having none of it. She didn't pay them any attention, which was unusual because every other girl fell into the gang culture.

My grandmother, who had helped us escape from Central America years earlier, had moved to America, too. She started going to a Hispanic church that changed her life. Soon my mother and sister started attending. Not long afterward, Laura sensed the call of God on her life, and she began to develop a profound prayer life. While I was devoting my life to violence and crime, my sister was devoting her life to prayer. Involved in Bible studies, worship meetings and retreat centers, she was experiencing new life. While I was running the streets, my sister was in the prayer closet praying for me.

She was a different person after she found Christ. Her mindset was different. Her desires became different. She was even dressing in a way that spoke to the values she had adopted. Most importantly, though, she began to read and study what most of us were afraid to get into—the Bible. Of course, I believed there was a God, but at the same time, I didn't believe there was a God, if that makes sense. I was

not ignorant to the fact that there was a God, but I didn't believe in Him as I do now. I had faith that God existed, but I didn't want anything to do with Him. At that time, believing in Him meant I would have to change everything about my lifestyle, and I wasn't ready for that.

A lot of Latinos are religious. But in my opinion religious people were hypocrites who manipulated people. There were homies in the street who were sleeping around, doing drugs, committing crimes—you name it. And then on Sunday they were in church trying to be holy. But Laura did not seem like those religious people. At first, I was convinced she had been brainwashed and had fallen into a cult that was using her and manipulating her to give them money. Yet in the middle of all this my sister told me that she and her church were interceding in prayer for me. I had no idea what interceding meant, but my sister began to fast and pray for me. I firmly believe today it was those prayers that were helping save my life.

While Laura was fasting and praying one day, God spoke clearly to her heart that He was going to protect her brother, save her brother and do a work in his heart that would cause him to come to know Jesus. With that word came a strong faith that this would indeed happen. Yet in the natural I was as far away from God as you could get emotionally, physically and spiritually. But based on that word, my sister contended for my life in prayer and asked God to soften my heart.

One day my sister did what many feared to do, and that was to step into my world. She put her reputation on the line and even risked her life. She stepped up to me like no one had ever done. She came to me with tears in her eyes; she was looking at me with compassion, with eyes filled with hope. There was not a sense of judgment in her tone. She simply said, "Mondo, what if God is real? What if prayer works? What if you have a different destiny? God has chosen you and has protected you."

Those three questions would be a catalyst for change in my life. They pierced my soul, disrupted my thinking and got into my DNA. I could not shake those words for the next few weeks. I couldn't sleep well. I couldn't function correctly. "What if God is real? What if prayer works?"

What if the most beautiful kind of **faith** is the type that has been tested and tried?



As the visionary and cofounder of Daystar Television Network, Joni Lamb has had a remarkable journey. In her new book, *Through the Storm*, Joni candidly opens up about the relentless challenges she's overcome of establishing and growing the network to the personal struggles she's faced. But even in the midst of each obstacle, she unwaveringly sought the Lord to find rest in His goodness and mercy.

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What if you have a different destiny?" It gave me fear because I didn't know what was next. I didn't know if I could accept those thoughts. I didn't know what would happen to me if I accepted them. Where would I go? What would my life look like? I was fearing hope. I was fearing the hope of leaving the gang. I was fearing the hope of living, of believing something different could take place. I had never experienced that kind of fear. I'd had guns pointed at my face. I had been stabbed multiple times. But this fear was foreign and shook me to my core.

Those three questions my sister asked me began to haunt me. I realized how far I had fallen, how filthy and perverted I had become. I realized I had become disenchanted with life. I couldn't see how wounded I was until I stopped long enough to feel another kind of pain. It was the twisting pain of betrayal. The streets had abandoned me with their false love and false promises. I did not know how to heal with so much pain. I felt so much confusion and turmoil inside that I got lost. I could not escape the reality surrounding me. Where would I begin? I felt hopeless. I felt lonely. I felt scared and ashamed.

It's hard to come to the realization that you need God. I needed peace. I needed hope. And I couldn't get that on my own. I needed God.

Back to the End of the Wild, Wild West

At 7 p.m. that evening I arrived at the Hispanic church on Wilshire Boulevard, I could hear their music. It wasn't normal music I was used to. This sound was faintly familiar, wistfully reminding me of the music I heard years before as a little boy in the church where my mother received her prophetic word. Obviously some sort of celebration was going on.

Inside, the auditorium was jam-packed with about 500 worshippers, and it was hot. I'm still baffled by how these people could be in such physical discomfort and still be so joyful. I thought, "Look at what you guys are wearing. Look at the floors. Look at the chairs, the building." I was judging these people, yet they were so happy and joyful.

I stood all the way in the back, hoping to go unnoticed, and as the music died down, the man I was there to see took the microphone. He was dressed sharply, yet he too looked like a mobster. He had a teardrop tattoo under one eye. His face reflected life on the streets, and I could tell this guy was an OG. His eyes were mysterious, yet they were warm and piercing at the same time. The more I observed him, however, the more I recognized him as a former rival gang member. "What happened?" I asked myself, shocked by how this gang member could go from that to this.

He started by praying, and he talked

**I HAD FAITH THAT
GOD EXISTED, BUT
I DIDN'T WANT
ANYTHING TO DO
WITH HIM.**

to God as if He was actually listening. He said, "I know I'm supposed to be sharing my story tonight, but there's a young man here who needs to hear the greatest story that has ever been told." I didn't know who he was talking about; I was looking around, wondering, "Who is this young man?" I didn't think it was me.

He wasn't the greatest speaker, but he was real and spoke like one of us. He captured my attention, but the more he spoke, the louder he got and it made me nervous. The question raced through my head "Am I being set up?" I reached over again and felt my guns, two 9-millimeter Berettas. Yet the more this guy spoke, the more drawn in I became.

He began to talk about Jesus and how He suffered and gave His life for me. As the guy was moving around the platform, I gripped my guns so tight my hands started sweating. I was feeling heat, as if the room were boiling hot. I didn't know what was happening to me. I got so captivated with

how this former rival gang member was describing a man named Jesus. He began to talk about mercy and grace. But what got me the most was when he talked about the love Jesus had for me.

If there was ever something that got my attention, it was love. That was something I wished I could have shared with my father, but my definition of love had been so corrupted by the way he had treated my mother, my sister and me. Then it was poisoned worse by what the street had taught me love was.

There was a battle going on inside me between my past and the love this Jesus showed by going to the cross to die for me, for what the speaker called my "sin." It was as if the preacher was looking right through me and realized that all I ever wanted was to be loved and hugged. The preacher's words were reaching the core of my being, and as I realized there was no way he could have known all that was buried deepest inside me, the tears started to fall. For the first time I felt unconditional love, and I couldn't hold in my emotions.

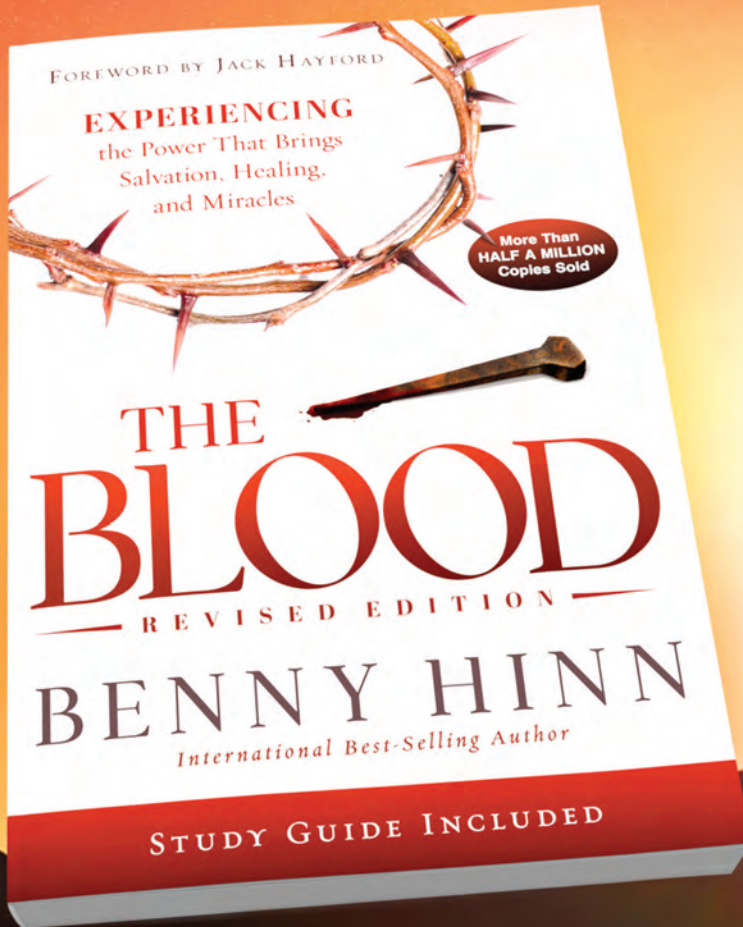
I could not deny the peace I was feeling when there had been nothing but turmoil. As my grip on the guns relaxed, so did the hate that had held my heart. I didn't need the guns to protect me anymore. Something about being loved made me feel protected.

There is power in love. I thought God wanted to punish me, that Jesus wanted to get even. Yet all He wanted to do was tell me I was enough and that I mattered. No feeling from the streets, no feeling from women, no amount of money or respect—no feeling ever compared to the love I was feeling from Jesus at that moment. And it changed everything. ◀

MONDO DE LA VEGA is cohost and executive producer of *The Jim Bakker Show*, host of *The Mondo Show* and executive vice president of television programming for the PTL Television Network. With the support of his wife, Elizabeth, and their twins, Mila and Mateo, De La Vega continues to follow the path God laid out for his life as he shares his story around the world. His new book, *My Crazy Life*, debuts this month, Mar. 5th, available here.

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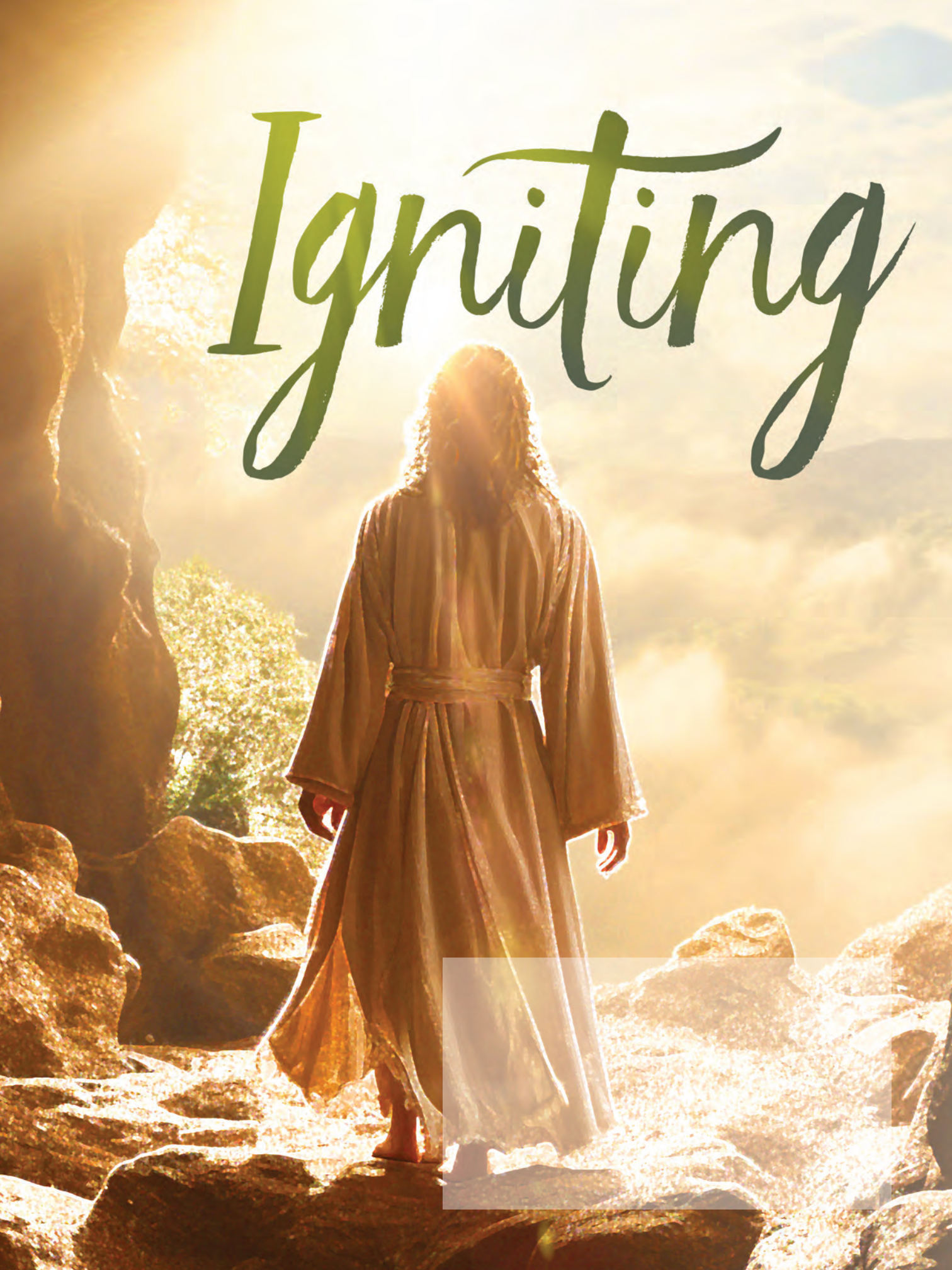


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Igniting



the Power of Faith

How the Resurrection of Jesus can transform belief into ACTIVE FAITH

BY RENEE DELORIEA

The Resurrection of Jesus is the power within Easter's celebrations. There is profound reverence and joy in the triumphant rising of Jesus Christ from the dead after His crucifixion, symbolizing victory over sin and death. It is a testament to the divine power of God, illustrating the promise of eternal life for those who believe on Jesus for redemption from sin. It is the tangible moment in which both Christ followers as well as "pre-believers" may take hold of hope incarnate, secure in knowing death is not the end but the shift forward to an everlasting future in heaven with God.

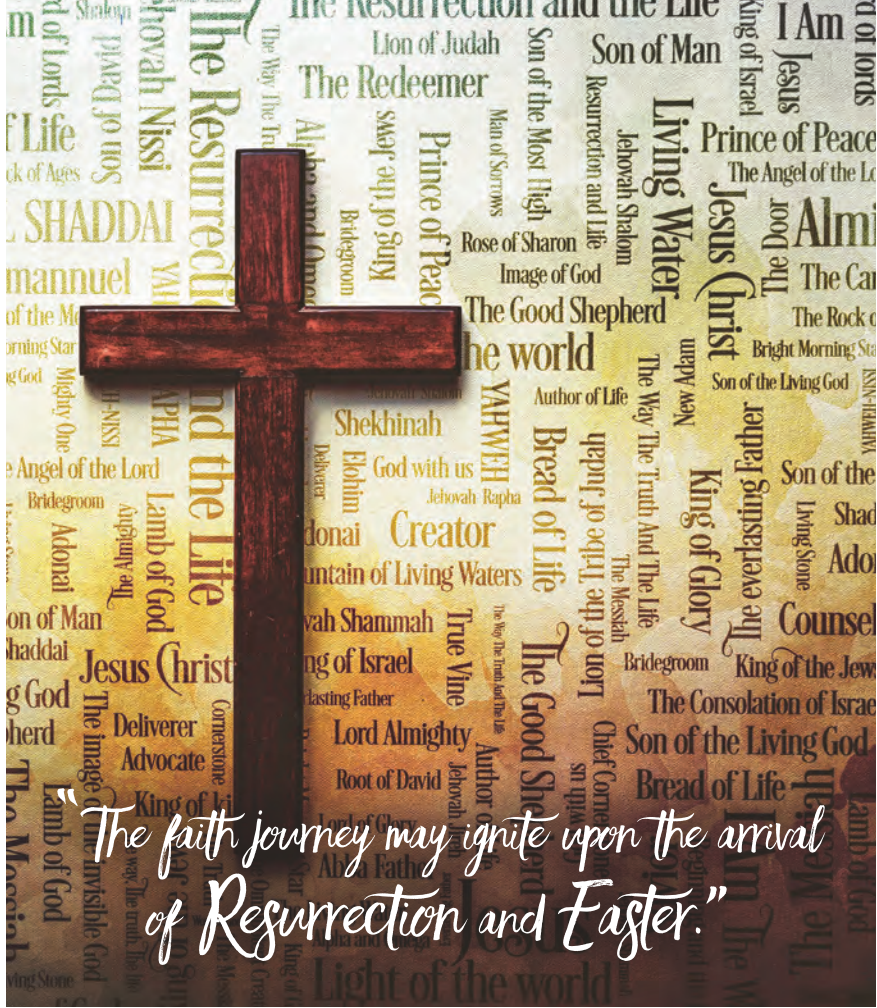
The Easter season therefore can be a threshold for believers, when faith blossoms like Springtime to grow into a joyful future of living out biblical wisdom for day-by-day Christlikeness, serving God's kingdom and glorifying His name.

Faith Sown and Tended for Bountiful Harvest

"I refuse to be an ordinary man because I have an extraordinary God who makes extraordinary people," said Smith Wigglesworth. At age 48, this ordinary plumber, who was born into poverty in 1859 in England, was baptized in the Holy Spirit.

He would be nicknamed "Apostle of Faith," but his faith journey was not as straightforward as some may assume. Instead, like all of us, he lived in the tension between faith and struggle. Like all of us, he did not become a giant in the faith overnight. Instead, he went from faith to more faith.

Wigglesworth moved from nominal faith as a child, to going with his grandmother



The faith journey may ignite upon the arrival of Resurrection and Easter."

meant. In fact, I was so clueless about it that for nearly two semesters in college, I drove past a huge "Jesus Saves" billboard every day and wondered, "What does Jesus save?"

The riddle was finally solved for me when three Christian missionaries briefly explained the power of the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ to me. I said, "Oh, now I get it, Jesus saves people from hell." I really had wanted to know and with a little further explanation about what it meant to be born-again, I confessed Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

To this day, I am thankful that these three young men were not timid about the truth. They had just returned from nearly a year on the mission field in the Philippines and wielded the sword of the Word of God with power and expertise.

Many years later, when I lived in Japan for a year and began offering classes on parenting from a Christian perspective, I discovered that other people (besides me) who seem unreachable may really want to learn about the gospel. When I posted flyers about the class, I did not expect anyone to come. However, to my genuine surprise, every single mother of the children I taught at the English immersion school in Kagoshima packed tightly into the room where I had arranged mats on the floor around a table. Each mother listened closely to my every word during all 16 sessions. Only one mom missed one of the sessions and apologized to all of us profusely. And each week I revealed a little more about blood sacrifices for sin in the Old Testament being fulfilled when the Word of God became flesh in the bodily form of Jesus Christ when He was born of a virgin.

After I felt that they had a good foundation on the Fall of Adam, the holiness of God and Old Testament sacrifices for sin, I described how Jesus paid the price for our sin when He gave his life on the cross. I could not help but notice how wide their eyes were as they realized that Jesus offered Himself up as the perfect sacrifice for the Adamic sin. I was relieved when they all said in unison, "Ahhh!"

During the last weeks of the class, I

to meetings where people would lie prostrate on the floor while praying for others. Later he grew to belief that God really heals people and then to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Once he was "stuck" leading a meeting on healing even though he was not sure he believed in it, only to end up praying for people and being encouraged when they were healed. This included 14 people who had died reportedly coming back to life when he prayed for them.

At times he was slow to embrace new areas of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. At one point he even started to falter in his faith when he returned to focusing on his work as a plumber. Then, when he was devastated by the untimely death of his beloved wife, he asked God to give him a double portion of anointing—his and hers. God was merciful and greatly increased the miraculous displays of His power in the broken-hearted evangelist's ministry.

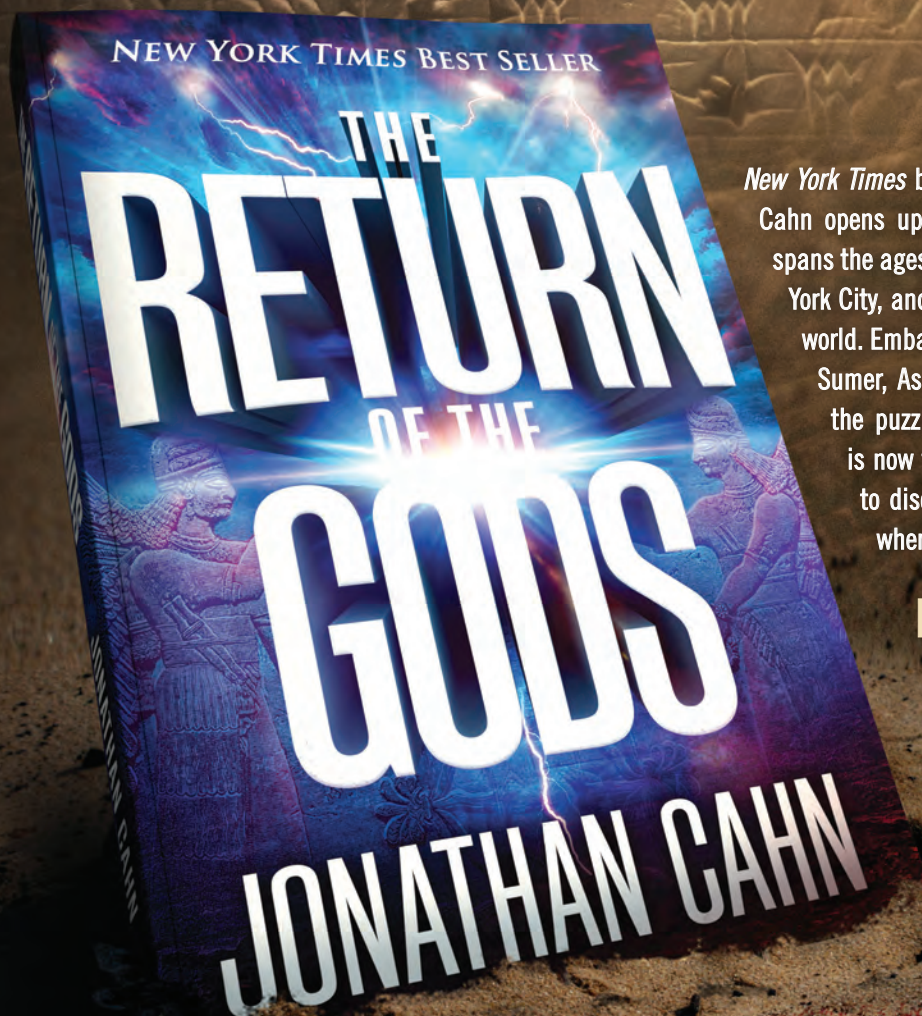
Even though Wigglesworth hesitated and pulled back at times, 80 years after his death, we continue to be

inspired by writings and recordings of his faith-provoking preaching and testimonies of miracles.

People Do Want to Know

Like Wigglesworth, we each have our own faith journey. For "pre-believers" on the path toward asking Jesus Christ into their hearts, Ephesians 5:8-9 teaches, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God," the faith journey may ignite upon the arrival of Resurrection and Easter, a conversation with a friend over coffee, or some life trial too heavy for their own strength. It is easy to assume that most Americans have at least some grid for the basics of the plan of salvation. However, we cannot assume that people have any clue about the Good News. For example, I was one of those who had grown up in the United States and went to Sunday School as a child. I had no idea what the words "Jesus Saves"

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explained that Jesus conquered hell, rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. At the end of the 16th class, the women all stood up and began weeping. I had no idea what was going on until my translator knelt in front of me and said that all the mothers asked her to represent them in thanking me for coming all the way from America to tell them about Jesus.

“Before you came, we only thought of Jesus as a baby,” she said. “Now we understand. And, I don’t want to just say that for them, I also want to thank you for myself,” she said before breaking into tears. Once I had gotten past the shock of what had just happened, my own tears flowed. Then, I stood at the door as, one by one, each mother took my hands in hers and thanked me before passing through the doorway.

Like me during my senior year of college, they had wanted to know; and so, they had come back week after week. Then, they even brought their husbands to an additional class session so that I could explain it to them.

During that time, I learned that my classes had been a main topic of

discussion for weeks. I later learned that missionary friends had started a home church near the school and some of the parents were attending.

Beauty For Ashes

Before going to Japan, I had a dark night of the soul when I took a Hermeneutics class at a Bible college. After learning about the wonders of the concordances, lexicons and commentaries, I bought every Bible study tool I could afford and hunkered down with them at my dining room table for a few months.

The effect was two-fold. On the one hand, I learned about God’s love. On the other hand, I came to realize that for many years I had been misled by very heavy-handed preaching that took Scriptures out of context and painted God as being cruel and distant.

A few more spiritual and emotional injuries later, I felt like my life had been a waste and I was devastated. Grief began to set in, but God did not leave me in despair. Slowly but surely, He led me to take baby steps back toward Him.

My first baby step was to hold my

Bible while I slept. Even though I was afraid to open my Bible, I found comfort in holding it. Then, I watched Christian television for 30 seconds a day for one week, and then week after week I added 30 more seconds. When I had reached five minutes a day at the end of the 10th week, I realized I had conquered a fear one baby step at a time. From there, I read a little more of my Bible each day and soon my love for reading and hearing God’s Word was deeper than ever.

It Would Have Been Enough

Recounting what God has done for us strengthens our own faith. Sharing our testimonies strengthens our own faith and the faith of other people.

During Passover seder a song called “Dayenu” is sung. The literal meaning of the Hebrew word, *Dayenu*, is “it would have been enough.” In life application it can imply that if God had only moved on our behalf one time, it would have been enough. The song recounts 15 different times in history when God miraculously moved on behalf of the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt to the building of the Temple in Israel. Each of the 15 stanzas that celebrates God’s intervention is followed by a chorus expressing that if God had only intervened that one time, it would have been enough.

We can also apply *Dayenu* with expressions of celebrations and thankfulness that if our salvation was the only way that God moved on our behalf, it would have been enough. In the words of Jonathan Edwards, capturing our lives made possible only in the Resurrected Christ, “The death of Christ was the greatest and most wonderful event that ever came to pass; but that has a great deal in it that is sorrowful. But by the Resurrection of Christ, that sorrow is turned into joy.” ◀

During the Brownsville Revival, **RENEE DELORIEA** was the managing editor of the Brownsville Revival Magazine, a columnist for the Remnant Newspaper and a freelance writer for Charisma magazine. Since then, she has edited books and written articles for numerous media outlets. She lives in Nashville.

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*5 Water
Sounds
that Capture the*
Voice
of
JESUS

*What did Jesus really sound like?
Scripture shows several ways of understanding*

BY R.T. KENDALL

I am convinced that the devil does not want us to understand Revelation because one of the most significant things about it is that it was the first direct word from Jesus to His church for more than 60 years. Think about this for a moment. Jesus died on the cross and ascended into heaven around A.D. 29 and the church began. (Its early history is described in the Book of Acts.) Then around A.D. 50, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the first of the Gospels, recalling the events and teaching of our Lord, emerged, as did the writings of the apostle Paul, which dealt mostly with doctrine. However, after that time Jesus did not speak *directly* to the church. Perhaps some believers wondered if Jesus had forgotten them. Christianity began to lose momentum to the extent that around A.D. 90 there was an increase in apostasy.

It was around this time that John was banished to the remote, uninhabited island of Patmos for preaching the Word of God. While he was there, something happened to him. He says, “On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,” (Rev. 1:10). From that point on Jesus Himself speaks directly through John’s vision.

What Did Jesus Sound Like?

When we attach someone’s voice to a person, a particular image immediately comes to mind. If I referred to the voice of Caruso, for instance, you would immediately think of a tenor, perhaps the greatest tenor that ever lived. Or if I were to mention the voice of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the older generation would immediately think of the voice they used to hear on the radio, especially during the war.

Have you ever wondered what kind of voice Jesus had? Did He have a high voice, a low voice, or one that carried for miles so people could hear what He said? The only way of knowing what the voice of Jesus was like would be to get a description from someone who had heard Him speaking when He lived on earth. Yet if we expect to learn the answer to the question in this way, we will be disappointed, for the Gospels are silent about this, and John simply says that His voice was like “the sound of many waters,” (Rev. 1:15, KJV). This description of Jesus’ voice is most disappointing to someone who wants to know what Jesus really sounded like. But we have seen that John’s description of Jesus defies human understanding. We can only understand the person of Jesus at the level of the Holy Spirit.

continued »

Have you ever wondered what kind of voice Jesus had?

Yet why did John compare Jesus' voice to "the sound of many waters"? I think the answer is simple and obvious: water can produce many sounds, depending on external conditions; similarly, the voice of Jesus is heard in many ways, depending on the conditions that confront Him. Although you could doubtless think of more, I want to put before you five ways in which the varying sounds of water describe the voice of Jesus.

Water Sounds in the Voice of Jesus

First, let us think of the roar of a waterfall cascading from a great height—the voice of power and authority. The best-known sermon that Jesus ever preached we all know as the Sermon on the Mount. When He finished that sermon, the immediate reaction of all who heard it was this: "He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law," (Matt. 7:28–29). In fact, the Bible tells us that the crowds who heard Him were "amazed at his teaching." We can well understand their surprise because, in making a series of statements, Jesus took issue with the popular tradition, and this is something that never fails to astonish.

It is interesting that many people admire the Sermon on the Mount at the level of their natural understanding and applaud Jesus for these teachings, particularly the last one. Loving one's enemies is a truly commendable ethic, they think. But they do not like the part about hell, and conveniently forget the Sermon on the Mount had more to say about hell than about heaven. However, if we are to see Jesus at the level of the Spirit we have to reckon with the whole of His word.

On another occasion it was said of Him, "No one ever spoke the way this man does," (John 7:46). Jesus had authority in His voice. It was with this authority that He went around healing people. Immediately after Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, a leper came to Him and, falling to His knees, said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean," (Matt. 8:2). The Bible tells us that "Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy," (v. 3). His words had authority.

A few days later the disciples took

Jesus out in their boat on the Sea of Galilee, and He fell asleep. Suddenly a fierce storm blew up and the sea became so rough that the waves threatened to swamp the boat. In panic, the disciples woke Jesus, crying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" Do you know what Jesus did? He rebuked the wind and the waves and at once there was a great calm. What authority! The disciples were overwhelmed. "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matt. 8:23–27).

Second, let us think of the sound of the water of a gentle, babbling brook—the voice of peace and forgiveness. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest," (Matt. 11:28). Does this description fit you? Are you weary and burdened and yet you don't understand why you feel this way? You may say that you feel guilty, depressed or anxious. People often use these psychological terms to describe their feelings. Perhaps that is the best way you know to explain your unrest right now as you wonder what life is all about. Perhaps you are in deep trouble; you may be in a situation nobody else knows about, and you don't know the solution to your problems. Maybe your marriage is on the rocks, or you are in danger of losing your home, or your job, or your family. Listen: Jesus has a word for you, "Come to me, and I will give you rest."

In case you did not understand that, He put it a different way: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me," (v. 29). This means that you recognize that your life is in turmoil and you need to submit yourself to Jesus' lordship and control. But receiving that help is not simply a matter of coming to Christ much as you would visit a doctor, who will, perhaps, give you a prescription to see you through a minor passing illness. Here, we are dealing with something far more serious. The root of your problem is sin; rebellion against your Creator by living in a way contrary to the way He ordained. The "yoke" Jesus speaks of is not to see you through "a bad patch"; it is for life.

Listen to the voice of peace and tranquility. Humble yourself; recognize the turmoil you are in and acknowledge the reason—your sinfulness. You are the kind of person Jesus had in mind when He

said, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” (Luke 5:32). Jesus was the friend of sinners, and He meets you when, in a broken condition, you truly repent. “A broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise,” (Ps. 51:17). Come to God as you are and you will find rest and peace.

Third, let us imagine a deep, still lake. The waters are quiet, almost soundless—the voice of assurance. You will find this assurance simply by looking at Jesus, who died on the cross. Perhaps, until now, you have simply considered Jesus at the level of your natural understanding. You saw a good man and admired His teachings and lamented His violent death. Look to Jesus on that cross again and see what was really happening. It was not something you can see with the naked eye. Even had you been present at the crucifixion, you would have missed it.

You will only understand when you grasp God’s Word and an inner voice convinces you that God’s Word is true. When this happens, the Bible will suddenly come alive and set you on fire as you read, and you will hear Jesus speaking to you. He will reveal to you what really happened at the crucifixion. You will see that Jesus, who lived a sinless life, willingly took the blame for your sins and God punished Him instead of you. You will realize that you must stop competing with what Jesus did on the cross, trusting that your own good deeds will save you; you will understand that Jesus did everything for you. And when you turn to Him and accept Him as your Savior, you will hear His voice speaking words of assurance and know that you are His.

However, you need to understand that when you become a Christian, you receive Jesus not only as Savior but also as Lord. Jesus will rule your life from then on. As Lord He has the right to deal with your life in any way He pleases. If you do anything that brings reproach upon His name, He has a way of reminding you that you are His child, and He can be severe. You may remember He said to the church at Laodicea, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline,” (Rev. 3:19). As I said, this only happens to those who

are Christians. It is a sign of God’s love. So when you feel His chastening, you remember that it is further assurance that you are truly His own.

Fourth, think of a raging storm at sea—the voice of anger and displeasure, which those who reject Jesus will hear someday when He returns to be their judge. Jesus said, “A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned,” (John 5:28–29).

Finally, consider the sound of relentless, pitiless rain—the voice of endless sorrow. Jesus referred to what follows the final judgment when He said, “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’” (Matt. 7:22). This means that among their number will be preachers, ministers, vicars and bishops, Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants. Along with many of their flock they may present Jesus with long lists of their good deeds, but these will count for nothing if they have not known Jesus as their Savior and Lord. They will hear a voice of wrath, a voice consigning them to the place of eternal punishment. Jesus said, “I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (v. 23). Then they will weep (Matt. 8:12; 25:30; Luke 13:28), but their tears will be too late.

Eternal Invitation

That final day has not yet dawned. Today Jesus’ voice, “the sound of many waters,” still pleads, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”◀

R.T. KENDALL was the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London for 25 years. Born in Ashland, Kentucky, he was educated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv) and Oxford University (DPhil). Kendall is the author of numerous books, including *Total Forgiveness*, *More of God, Word and Spirit*, and *We’ve Never Been This Way Before*. His new book, *A Vision of Jesus*, debuts this month, Mar. 5th, available here.

We can only understand the person of Jesus at the level of the Holy Spirit.

NORTH KOREA





HOPE FOR NORTH KOREA: CHRIST'S FREEDOM OVER COMMUNIST RULE

DESPITE TURMOIL, NUCLEAR THREATS AND RUMORS
OF WARS, HOLY SPIRIT WILL MOVE ACROSS THIS
IMPRISONED NATION AND SET HER PEOPLE FREE

BY LAWRENCE TATE

Sooner or later, the “hermit kingdom” must tear down its prison walls to welcome Christianity and join the 21st century.

North Korea, the secretive, oppressive, isolated communist prison under the leadership of the Kim dynasty, is notorious for a horrible record of human rights violations going back to the Armistice signed in 1953 at the concluding of the Korean War. The victims of the regime’s brutal policies run the gamut covering every people group imaginable, but Christians

continue to pose the most substantive threat to the regime’s existence and therefore face the worst of severe persecution, often in silence and hidden from the world’s view. They have been forced to meet secretly, routinely are rounded up and sent to labor camps—or just shot on sight because they do not worship Kim Jong-un as their god.

Last of the Cold War Holdouts

One of the last communist nations in the world, North Korea is known for its strict and

total control of every aspect of the regime, over information, communication and religious practices. The regime, as controlled by dictator Kim Jong-un, adheres to a state ideology called Juche, which prioritizes the supremacy of the state and its leaders over any other form of allegiance, especially religious faith. Any form of worship or religious activity outside the state-sanctioned ideology is considered a threat to the regime's control and is harshly punished.

Life in North Korea has been unbearable under Kim Jong-un. About six million citizens are starving and a third of North Korean children suffer from chronic malnutrition. (It is said that North Koreans are, on average, two inches shorter than South Koreans because of starvation.) Most people in North Korea don't have electricity, the internet or access to news from the outside world.

North Korean "democracy" is a farce; people "vote" in "elections" where only one name is on the ballot—and those who cross out Kim's name are herded and jailed. Even certain hairstyles are restricted! Meanwhile, if someone is convicted of a crime, he does not go to jail alone. His children and grandchildren are also imprisoned. The U.S. State Department has learned that as many as 40% of all people in North Korea's gulag system are Christians who are in jail because of their faith.

Yet in the midst of this oppression God has been working. Some defectors have reported that North Korean officials are worried that Christianity will defeat Juche and its state-sponsored worship of the Kim dictator clan. Something began to change when Kim Jong-un became dictator in 2011. His

cruel regime and the misery of famine and economic ruin caused people to become disillusioned with the phony utopia Kim claimed to rule over. "In the past, the people were told to worship the Kim family as their god," one defector told *The Telegraph*. "That means they are looking for something else to sustain their faith."

Extreme Persecution of Christians

Christians in North Korea face relentless persecution due to their religious beliefs. The regime views Chris-

forced to flee the country in search of religious freedom. Children grow up brainwashed such that expressing religious beliefs becomes not merely forbidden but can also endanger their lives. The psychological toll on families is grotesque as they live in constant fear, knowing that at any moment they could be separated or subjected to violence for their faith.

10 Ways Communist North Korea Is Completely Bizarre

If we step back and study how strange North Korea is—and how backward and barbaric—we would realize what an historic breakthrough it will be when the yoke of communism is destroyed. Consider these facts about this nation of 25 million and its bizarre government:

1) Christians in North Korea have been crushed by steamrollers and roasted over fires. North Korea has the world's worst record of religious persecution. Christian Solidarity International has reported that believers in Jesus are routinely taken to prison camps where they are tortured, subjected to forced labor or herded off bridges. One source has reported that women and children were forced to watch other Christians being shot by machine guns. Possession of a Bible is considered a crime punishable by death.

2) As many as 3 million North Koreans starved in the 1990s. The economy is so poor that as many as two in five, more than 10 million people, are malnourished today, according to the United Nations. One-third of all North Korean children are stunted because of starvation. North Korea's

**"IN THE MIDST OF THIS OPPRESSION
God has been working."**

**"NORTH KOREA IS OFTEN IN A STATE OF
blackout, THE ELECTRIC GRID IS SO
POOR THAT-SATELLITE IMAGES SHOW
THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IN *darkness.*"**

for individuals and their families.

The fear of discovery and subsequent punishment forces many Christians to worship in secret, making it a constant struggle to maintain their religious identity. Additionally, Christians face discrimination in various aspects of life, including education, employment and social interactions. The regime actively promotes a pervasive atmosphere of fear and mistrust. In many cases, families are torn apart as members are arrested or

communist government makes it one of the poorest countries on earth, yet it has an army of 1.3 million soldiers, twice the size of South Korea's military.

3) **Officially, North Korea is a necrocracy—a government led by a dead man.** Even though Kim Il Sung has been dead for 30 years. The communist regime says he assumed “the office of the eternal presidency” on the day of his death, July 8, 1994. His current successor, Kim Jong Un, reportedly had plastic surgery to make him look more like his grandfather.

4) **There are 34,000 statues of the late Kim Il Sung in the country.** That's one statue for every 750 North Koreans. The dead leader's embalmed body is on display in the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, and it is the most popular tourist site in the country. All citizens of North Korea are required to wear a badge that features Kim Il Sung's face.

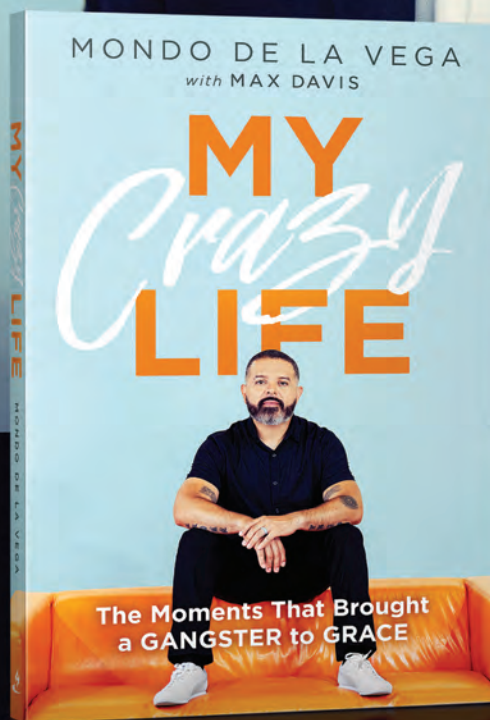
5) **In North Korea, it is not 2024.** It is the year 113. The nation uses what is called the “Juche” calendar, which marks time according to the birth of Kim Il Sung in 1912. Any North Koreans who were born on July 8 or Dec. 17 are not allowed to celebrate their birthdays—because Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il, died on those days.

6) **The country is called a “democratic republic,” but there is nothing democratic about it.** Elections are held every five years, but only one name appears on the ballot. If a voter wishes to choose someone else, he or she can cross the name out, but the ballot is not secret. There is no court system in North Korea, and no private property.

7) **Kim Jong Un's loyal subjects believe he can control the weather.** The government's propaganda machine has convinced the population that a new star appeared in the sky when the 42-year-old leader was born. An official biography published by the government also says Kim learned to walk and talk before the age of six months and that he can control the weather with his moods.

8) **North Korea is often in a state of blackout.** The electric grid is so poor that most people have no light, mycharisma.com

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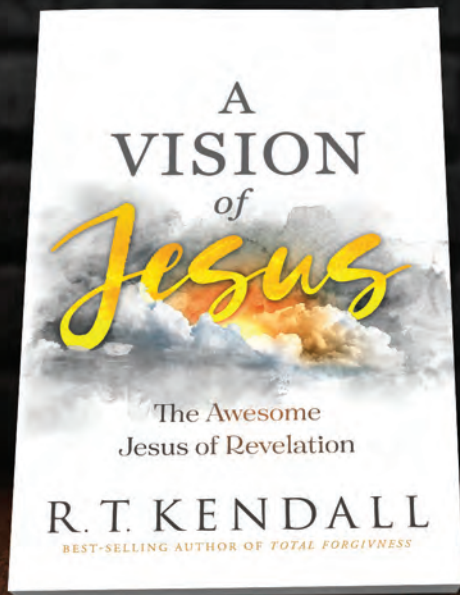
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especially at night. Satellite images show the entire country in darkness (and tourists say North Koreans love the dark because it gives them privacy). To make matters worse, only three percent of roads are paved—but the roads are rarely used since there are so few vehicles. A very small, elite number of North Koreans have access to the internet, but all online content is filtered by the government.

9) Children are taught a song in school titled, “We Have Nothing to Envy in the World.” Schools are used to brainwash North Koreans from the earliest grades. Yet the kids are expected to bring their own desks and chairs to school, and often students are required to do government work during school hours. Parents sometimes bribe teachers to keep their children from doing hard labor.

10) Citizens of North Korea must produce a certain quantity of human waste. The government requires this because farmers have little or no access to chemical fertilizer. Many citizens have had to place locks on their outdoor toilets to keep neighbors from stealing waste to meet quotas.

Free In Christ Is Free Indeed

Christians are often ridiculed because we believe demons are real and that those devilish powers are working behind the scenes to affect world events. Thankfully, the Bible also says Christ overcame Satan's power through His death and Resurrection—and that God's kingdom will expand wherever the gospel is preached. Because of Christ's victory, swords will be beaten into plowshares, and freedom will replace tyranny, including for North Korea.

The international community has been slow to address the persecution of Christians in North Korea. The secretive nature of the regime makes it challenging to gather accurate information about the extent of human rights abuses, including religious persecution. However, various human rights organizations and advocacy groups continue to shed light on the issue, calling for increased attention and action from the global community. Severe restrictions

on religious freedom coupled with harsh punishment for Christians has produced the deadly environment and abominable human rights record for which North Korea is infamous.

Psalm 46 says: “Come, see the works of the Lord, who makes desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts off the spear; He burns the chariot in the fire,” (vv. 8-9, Modern English Version). God can work a mir-

**“GOD HEARS
THE PRAYERS OF
THE *faithful*
AROUND THE
WORLD WHO FEEL
NORTH KOREA’S
PAIN.”**

acle. He has heard the prayers of His people on both sides of this conflict and the prayers of the faithful around the world who feel North Korea’s pain. He can engineer a lasting peace in this part of the world—and throw open the doors wide for the Gospel to flourish in a thirsty land.

Before long, the churches of South Korea will freely send teams into the North with food, medicine and the message of Christ. Like a patient who has been in a coma, North Korea will awaken. And the world will see a national transformation, hopefully witnessing the greatest display of God’s sovereign power over nations since the Berlin Wall fell, and a nation, finally, stepping boldly and thankfully into the brilliant glow of freedom. ◀

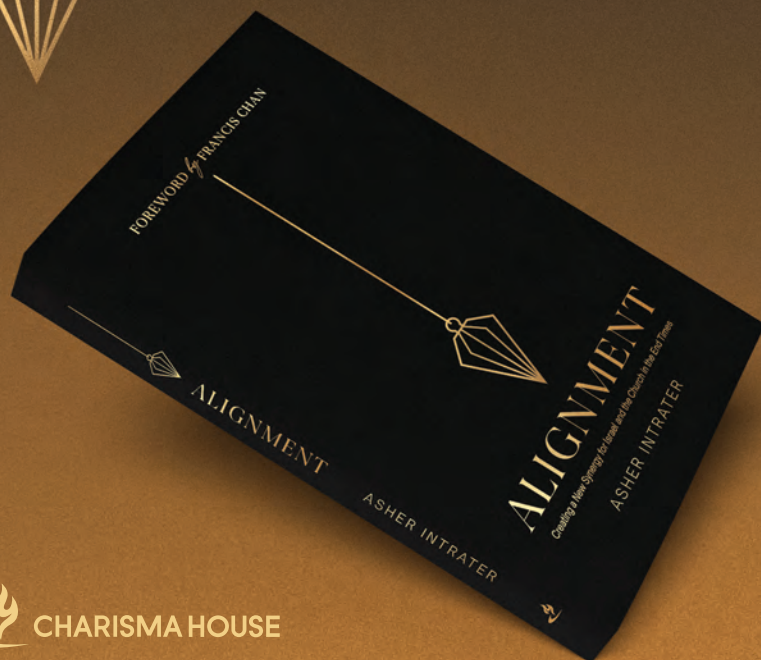
LAWRENCE TATE is a contributor for *Charisma magazine*.

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If we don’t align with God’s Word, we miss the kingdom He is establishing here
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Why Do I Need to Understand Red Heifers?

**DECODING ONE OF
THE BIBLE'S KEY END
TIMES HARBINGERS**

BY JAMES LASHER

The Bible story of the red heifer is found in the Old Testament in Numbers, chapter 19. The red heifer is a ritual element in the Jewish tradition's purification process. God instructed Moses and Aaron involving a red heifer unique in that it was required to be completely red and without blemish.

The purification ritual procedure involved sacrificing the red heifer outside the camp, then burning its carcass with cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet material. The ashes were mixed with water and used in the ceremonial purification ritual. Ashes would be sprinkled over individuals who had become ritually impure through contact with a dead body, allowing

Having a pure, of age, red heifer is an indicator for Christians that these days are fast approaching.

them to regain ritual purity and participate in communal worship.

Sacrifice or Revelation?

There is a lot of anticipation and confusion when it comes to the prophetic red heifers of Israel. They have drawn the attention of people around the world, especially those who understand their importance to end times eschatology.

Yet there are many who do not seem to grasp what these cows referenced in both the Old and New Testaments signify, and summarily dismiss them. For believers in Jesus Christ, the significance of the red heifer is not that it is used to ceremonially purify priests outside of the holy of holies. Too many appear to think this is the case, when it is not.

The red heifers are significant when it comes to the study of the end times as described in the Bible. This is why biblical knowledge and wisdom are so crucial, especially in this present era, to interpret the world around us using discernment granted by the Holy Spirit.

So why care about these cows that Christians do not believe are necessary for purification and salvation?

Many believe there is still a third temple to be built, most likely on the Temple Mount, where the holy of holies is believed to have existed. But this poses some very serious, world-altering issues. Currently, the Dome of the Rock sits atop the Temple Mount. And if the Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock were to be removed, the odds are you could expect violence, chaos and war to break out across the world.

Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24 that the end times would see wars and rumors of wars, so it is possible. But for those of the Jewish faith, the third temple is a very real event that many pray for. In fact, the Temple Institute in Jerusalem, as written

on their website, “is dedicated to every aspect of the Holy Temple of Jerusalem, and the central role it fulfilled, and will once again fulfill, in the spiritual well-being of both Israel and all the nations of the world.” The Temple Institute has faithfully restored and constructed the vessels which Jews hold sacred for the third temple.

One of the last pieces needed to restore the third temple is the ashes of a pure, red heifer. Revelation 11 and Daniel 9 are just two of the Bible passages that refer to this restored temple, so expect to see it happen during the end times—and be ready for what follows!

Having a pure, of age, red heifer is an indicator for Christians that these days are fast approaching. The increase of knowledge, another biblical prophecy that is being fulfilled each and every day, is itself only accelerating. Evil is permeating the world just like in the days of Noah, perhaps even moreso with how wickedness seems to manifest every week across every sphere from entertainment media to government to academia.

Even the evil terrorists of Hamas have come out recently and said part of the reason for their massacre of thousands of innocent Israelis on Saturday,

These things must come to pass before the return of Jesus Christ.

Oct. 7—and one of their primary targets—was the red heifers! As Charisma News reported, the spokesman for the military wing of Hamas, Abu Obeida, revealed that the red heifers were targets on Oct. 7: “We look back 100 days to remember the educated, the complicit and the incapacitated among the world powers governed by the law of the jungle, reminding them of an aggression that reached its peak against our path (Al-Quds) and Al-Aqsa, with the start of its actual temporal and spatial division, and the ‘bringing of red cows’ as an application of a detestable religious myth designed for aggression against the feelings of an entire nation in the

heart of its Arab identity, and the path of its prophet (the Night Journey) and ascension to heaven,” read Abu Obeida.

Hamas and jihadists worldwide fear these animals for what they represent, the rebuilding of the third temple, and a sure sign of the end times with the revelation of the Antichrist. This is why Christians need to pay attention

We do not believe in the purification through the blood of the red heifer. We believe in the blood of the Lamb.

and discern what is taking place in the world fully grounded in regular Bible study, literate in what God is telling His people throughout time.

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

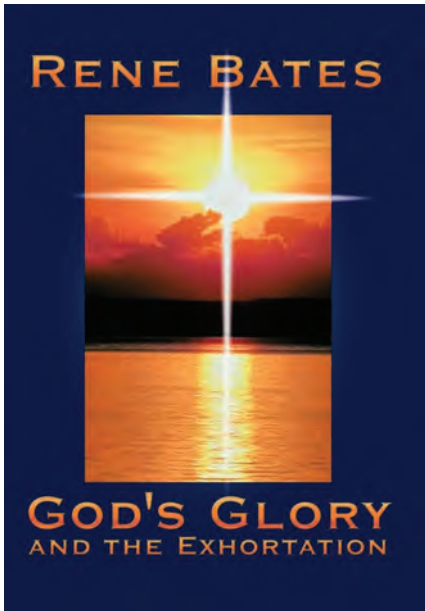
No, we do not believe as the Jews do in the purification through the blood of the red heifer. We believe in the purification through the blood of the Lamb. But these things must come to pass before the return of Jesus Christ.

Take time to study and meditate on the Word of God. Study the words of the prophets in the Old Testament, and learn what must take place during the end times in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation. Also, do not forget that the disciple John who was entrusted with the Revelation begins by telling us that we will be blessed by reading it and keeping the Word near to our hearts.

Look at events such as the red heifers taking place through a biblical lens. Use biblical knowledge and wisdom to discern the signs of the times and move forward in faith, while warring against the principalities, powers and rulers of darkness, as all Christians are commanded to do. ◀

JAMES LASHER is copy editor and staff writer for Charisma media. This is his fifth article for Charisma Magazine Online.

Refresh Your Spirit



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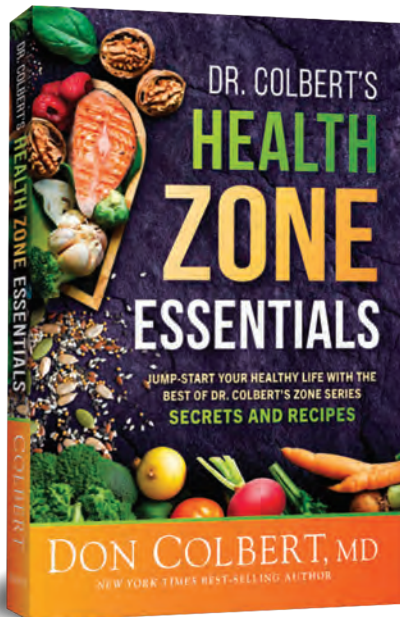
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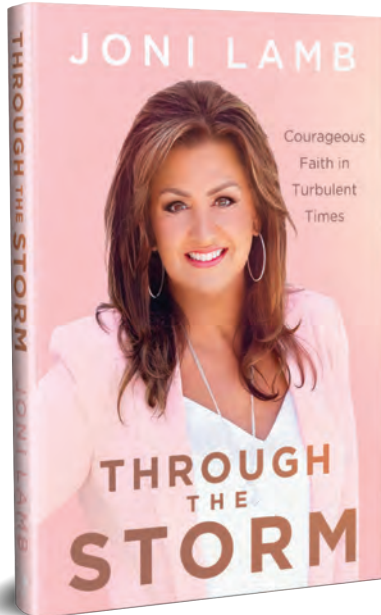


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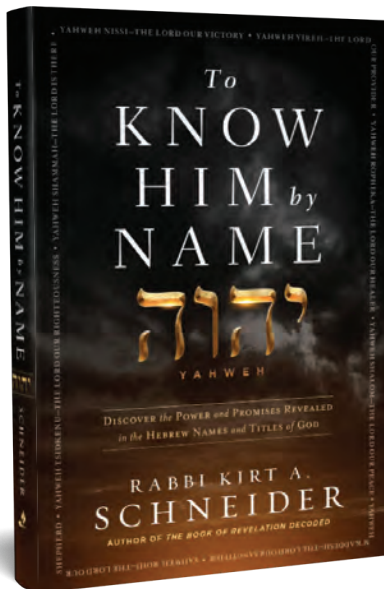
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Peter Aiello



Owe No Man (February 1988)

I bought my first pair of shoes, I mean the first pair I bought by myself without my parents being there to approve, when I was 13 years old.

I had walked into my dad's office in downtown Vero Beach, Florida. My dad was the silent partner in an insurance business, the Buckingham-Wheeler Insurance Agency. Mr. Wheeler had the front offices. My dad's offices were in the rear where he carried on his business as the executive secretary of a number of small corporations.

Daddy was always concerned about the way his boys looked. "You can tell a gentleman by looking at the heels of his shoes," he said. "Any bum can make the toes shine by wiping them on the back of the opposite leg of his trousers. But a gentleman's shoes are always shined on the heels as well as the toes." Even today I find myself, when introduced to someone for the first time, glancing down to see if the heels of his shoes are shined.

That afternoon I had ridden my bike from the schoolhouse to my dad's office. His adding machine was near his right hand; his big black ledger books with green pages, where he kept records of all the citrus fruit shipped from his packing house, were in front of him. He glanced down and said, "You need new shoes."

"Can't I wait until later? I'm supposed to meet some of the guys."

"Before Sunday," he said.

Friday afternoon after school I parked my bike in front of Wodtke's Department Store and went in to buy a pair of shoes. Mr. Wodtke himself waited on me. When you live in a town of 3,000, everybody knows everybody. The Wodtke's were Catholic, my dad never objected to doing business with good Catholics. It's just that we boys were always warned never to date Catholic girls. "You never can tell when you might fall in love. Then you'd have to sign a contract with the priest, be married in the Catholic church and raise your children as Catholics," they told us.

"I'm sure your dad will approve of these, Jamie," Mr. Wodtke said. "I'll send him a bill at the end of the month." They cost \$4.50.

I walked my bike across the street, parked it in front of my dad's office and headed back to show him my shoes.

"Did you pay Mr. Wodtke?"

"No, sir, he said he'd send you a bill."

My dad got up from his chair, reached inside his billfold and pulled out a five-dollar bill. "Buckingham's never go into debt," he said. "Go across the street and pay Mr. Wodtke now. And never go into debt again—for anything."

That lesson grows more and more important in my life as I look at what debt is doing to our nation, to young couples and others who didn't have a daddy like mine.

My dad felt debt had but one purpose—to be paid. Immediately.

Daddy was one of the few businessmen in our little town who went through the Great Depression unscathed. That was because he "owed no man." It took him 19 years to build his house after he was married. But when that magnificent 16-room, solid redwood house was finished, it was debt free.

Mortgage fell into the same category as adultery, playing cards

or whiskey. In my own mind I somehow tied it in with a dreadful place called the poorhouse. I'd never seen a poorhouse. I'd never met anyone who had seen one. But the subject came up every so often in our home, and it was associated with mortgage. If you had a mortgage, sooner or later you'd wind up in the poorhouse.

I've not stuck to the letter of his advice, but I do live by the spirit of his law. I use a credit card, but I always pay it off at the end of the month. Besides that, I live by a personal law: "Never buy anything on time that does not appreciate." Most houses appreciate. So does land. Automobiles don't. Neither do TV sets, waterbeds or facelifts. One year when our church went through a friendly split and our income dropped 30% for eight months, I can't tell you how grateful I was we didn't have a mortgage.

We live in a nation that does not take its debt seriously. Many Christians borrow money and never expect to pay it back. One banker told me he never loans money to preachers or people opening "Christian businesses." Personal bankruptcy is just as acceptable as abortion. Bankruptcy may be OK if the action is to allow time so you can repay your bills. But who does? We just continue buying things we can't pay for, then get angry when the debtor demands his money.

Daddy was right. The only sure way to keep from becoming an alcoholic is never to take a drink. The only sure way to stay out of the poorhouse is to stay out of debt.

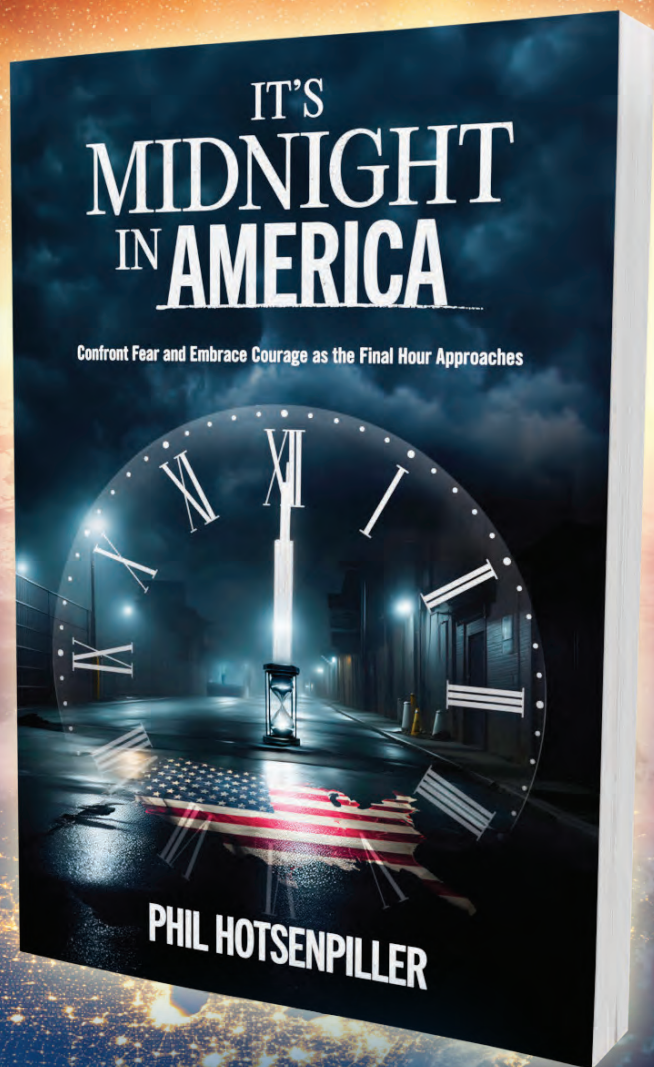
*We live in a nation
that does not take
its debt seriously.*

Jamie Buckingham wrote 153 columns for *Charisma* over 13 years, first known as "Dry Bones" but later as its most recognized "Last Word." His singular voice was animated by a heart for Jesus baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit in 1967 at a Full Gospel Businessmen's convention. Buckingham provided a steadying force during the scandals of the 1980s, penning the seminal article on the PTL scandal, "God Is Shaking His Church" in May 1986.

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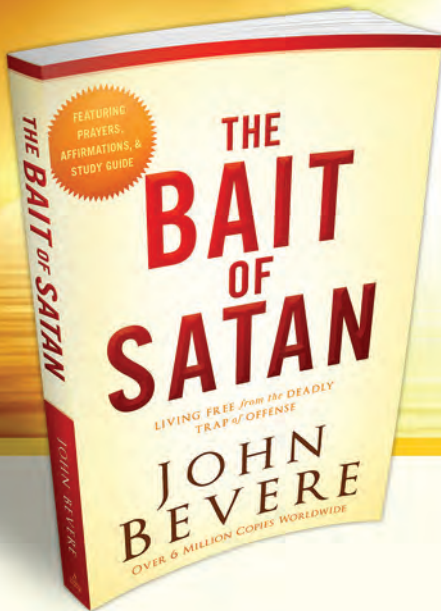
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BIBLE READING GUIDE

Follow our daily reading plan in each issue of *Charisma* to read through the Modern English Version Bible in one year. The plan is also available online at mycharisma.com/bible-reading-guide/.

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For now the winter has passed; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come.” —Song of Songs 2:10-12

MARCH

Mar. 1	Num. 28-29; Mark 8
Mar. 2	Num. 30-31; Mark 9
Mar. 3	Num. 32-33; Mark 10
Mar. 4	Num. 34-36; Mark 11
Mar. 5	Deut. 1-2; Mark 12
Mar. 6	Deut. 3-4; Ps. 36; Mark 13
Mar. 7	Deut. 5-6; Ps. 43; Mark 14
Mar. 8	Deut. 7-9; Mark 15
Mar. 9	Deut. 10-12; Mark 16
Mar. 10	Deut. 13-15; Gal. 1
Mar. 11	Deut. 16-18; Ps. 38; Gal. 2
Mar. 12	Deut. 19-21; Gal. 3
Mar. 13	Deut. 22-24; Gal. 4
Mar. 14	Deut. 25-27; Gal. 5
Mar. 15	Deut. 28-29; Gal. 6
Mar. 16	Deut. 30-31; Ps. 40; 1 Cor. 1
Mar. 17	Deut. 32-34; 1 Cor. 2
Mar. 18	Josh. 1-2; Ps. 37; 1 Cor. 3
Mar. 19	Josh. 3-6; 1 Cor. 4
Mar. 20	Josh. 7-8; Ps. 69; 1 Cor. 5
Mar. 21	Josh. 9-11; 1 Cor. 6
Mar. 22	Josh. 12-14; 1 Cor. 7
Mar. 23	Josh. 15-17; 1 Cor. 8
Mar. 24	Josh. 18-20; 1 Cor. 9
Mar. 25	Josh. 21-22; Ps. 47; 1 Cor. 10
Mar. 26	Josh. 23-24; Ps. 44; 1 Cor. 11
Mar. 27	Judg. 1-3; 1 Cor. 12
Mar. 28	Judg. 4-5; Ps. 39, 41; 1 Cor. 13
Mar. 29	Judg. 6-7; Ps. 52; 1 Cor. 14
Mar. 30	Judg. 8; Ps. 42; 1 Cor. 15
Mar. 31	Judg. 9-10; Ps. 49; 1 Cor. 16



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