

The Mountain Messenger

“Behold upon the mountains the feet of Him that
bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!”
(Nahum 1:15a KJV)

Special
Edition



31st Annual
Victory
Lectures

October 19-23,
2025

BIRTH OF THE
MESSIAH'S
NATION

**BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH'S
NATION**

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

GIVE ME JESUS, BUT...

Along with other great articles by...
Jon Hescht, Annette Kenney, Jonathan Jarvis,
and more...

A CHRISTIAN VOICE FROM THE MOUNTAIN STATE AND BEYOND

“...The churches of Christ greet you” (Romans 16:16).

Editor's Note

I would like to welcome you to a special issue of *The Mountain Messenger*! As the brothers and sisters of the Hillview Terrace church of Christ host the West Virginia School of Preaching Victory Lectures, we at Added to the Church are blessed to celebrate alongside them. This issue is dedicated to recognizing the school and the labor of love accomplished by its students, graduates, and faculty. Many of the writers you'll read here are connected to the West Virginia School of Preaching, and their voices reflect that same devotion to Christ and His Word. That phrase, "labor of love," came alive for me recently in an unexpected way. I met a young man, barely out of his teens, who had set up a small shoeshine stand along a walkway. While many of us grumble about the "younger generation," here was a boy quietly proving otherwise. His youthful hands were not worn with age, but they were stained with polish as he worked diligently, carefully buffing away scuffs until each shoe shone like a mirror. What impressed me most was not his skill but his spirit. He smiled, thanked every customer sincerely, and appreciated every dime he earned. His gratitude and humility put many of us to shame. The Scriptures remind us: "In all labor there is profit, but idle chatter leads only to poverty" (Prov 14:23 NKJV). And again, "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men" (Col 3:23).

Each time I look at the boots he polished, I remember his diligence and gratitude. And then I recall another scene: our Lord Jesus, the Master of the universe, kneeling to wash His disciples' feet (John 13). He humbled Himself as a servant and then commanded His followers: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet... For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15). Perhaps those disciples, in later years, often glanced at their own feet and remembered that moment with Jesus—the lesson of humility, service, and love. Shouldn't we do the same? Let us humble ourselves, labor in the Word, and prepare our own feet to carry the Good News along the country roads of West Virginia and beyond. "Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!" (Nahum 1:15a).

Thank you for reading *The Mountain Messenger*. Your prayers and encouragement mean so much. If you would like to help keep this magazine free and continuing, support can be sent by visiting Addedtothechurch.com or by mailing contributions to:

Added to the Church, LLC
4788 Stillwell Road
Davisville, WV 26142

May this issue encourage you to keep your feet moving for Christ.

Executive Editor — Daniel P. Curry, Jr. "DJ"

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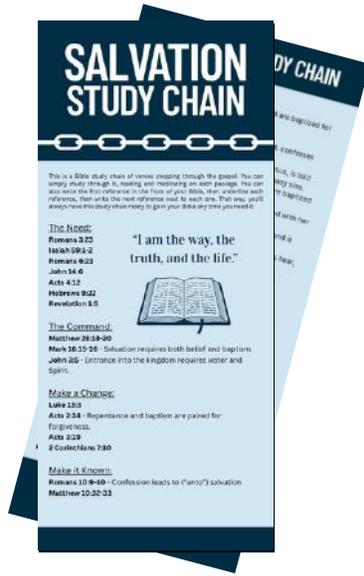


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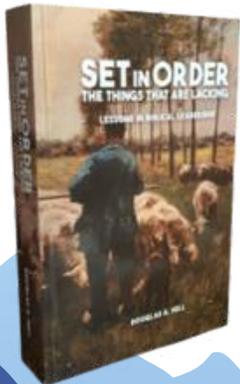
Volume 2, Issue 5 — October 2025
© Added to the Church 2025

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Birth of the Messiah's Nation

Andy Robison

Director of the West Virginia School of Preaching

How was the eternal God supposed to prove that when His Son came along in history at just the right time (Eph 1:10; Gal 4:4) it would be no accident, no happenstance, no last-minute adjustment? The three hundred plus prophecies, preceding Jesus' arrival by centuries, is one outstanding piece of evidence. Those prophecies came in the context of one special nation formulated by God's omniscience to bring about the Christ through a specified genealogy.

The "Book of Beginnings," Genesis, tells of the origin of that nation through the patriarch Abraham. He is called in Genesis 12:1-3, then the rest of the book relates the historic events that early on shaped the fortunes of God's special people. Abraham and Sarah had the son of promise, Isaac. Isaac and Rebekah had Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (Gen 32:28). Israel was the progenitor of the twelve sons who formed the twelve tribes. The nation was taken into Egypt to be saved from famine, where later they would be enslaved and need rescued, which is recorded in the next book of the Bible, Exodus.

Israel's history progresses through the Old Testament from there. The Messiah would come through the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10) and more specifically, the lineage of King David (2 Sam 7:12-16; Psalm 89:3-4; cf. Matt 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). No one can really understand the New

Testament of Jesus Christ without studying the ups and downs of the nation that brought Him, as well as the Law they were uniquely given (Gal 3:24-25; Rom 7-8). And no one can understand that nation and its Law without knowing its origin. The origin stories are recorded in Genesis 12-50.

In 2011, the West Virginia School of Preaching Victory Lectures covered Genesis 1-11, the inspired narrative of the beginnings of the world, sin, punishment, and redemption. The plans are in motion for the school to cover Genesis 12-50 at the 31st Annual Victory Lectures, October 19-23, 2025, at the Hillview Terrace Church of Christ facility.

The lectureship book, containing the written manuscripts from the speakers, is dedicated to Phil and Darleen Gear of Springfield, Ohio. We will have a dinner on Tuesday, October 21, at 4:30 p.m. to honor them. Please RSVP for that dinner by calling 304-845-8001. We hope to see you at the lectures! ▲



BEING PREPARED

Annette Kenney

With Fall coming on us quickly, it is the season for many of us who grow gardens and enjoy preserving food to get busy taking care of our harvest. Canning food is something that I have done for many years. I have a friend who is quite enthusiastic about this as well, and often we will work together to share the labor load. I love seeing the rows of filled jars on my shelves and knowing that my family will eat well during the winter. While I'm not a "prepper" as such, I do like knowing that we are prepared in case the weather is bad or we are unable to get out to the store.

Being prepared is a biblical concept. It involves planning ahead and being ready for whatever is coming. The Proverbs 31 woman was praised for caring for her household by ensuring they had enough food and clothing, and the means by which to obtain them. King David, in 1 Chronicles 29:16, praised God for the abundance of supplies the Israelites were able to set aside to build the temple.

We plan and prepare in our everyday lives as well. We spend a lot of time and effort getting our children ready for school and their various activities. We plan and save for vacations and trips. We even have to prepare for some medical procedures or tests to ensure our continued health.

These things are all important, but even more important is being prepared in our spiritual lives. 1 Peter 3:15 tells us to "...be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you..." (NKJV). We need to be prepared to tell others about our faith. We also need to be prepared to meet God. In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13, the wise kept oil in their lamps and were ready to go when they were called. We never know when our last day on this earth will be ... are we ready? ▲



Spiritual WARFARE



Andy Evans

West Virginia School of Preaching
2nd Year Student

Christians today deal with the very same issues in life that have existed in the world since Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan (Gen 3:1–10). In 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul deals with the topic of Spiritual Warfare (2 Cor 10:3–5). Just as wars are fought on the battlefields by soldiers, Christians are also involved in warfare daily. Just as soldiers in the army are constantly training and preparing for battle, Christians must prepare for the spiritual battle that takes place. Just as soldiers train with weaponry and protective gear, such as flak vests and guns, Christians have weaponry and protective gear which is provided by God to be used against the enemy, Satan.

Soldiers must post sentries at night to protect them from enemy infiltration into their camp. Christians must always be on guard to ensure that Satan does not enter the church. In the physical world, when warfare is waged, one can see the opponent that he is fighting against. Christians are in that same battle with an adversary, Satan, who is always on the prowl. Peter describes him as a roaring lion ready to devour his prey (1 Pet 5:8). God gives Christians weapons with which to equip themselves (Eph 6:14–18).

Spiritual warfare is the battle that goes on inside of man, that constant fight between walking after the ways of carnal man or the spiritual God. Christians should always focus on the spiritual things of heaven; Paul speaks to this (Col 3:2). That is where their focus should be if they hope to attain eternal life with God. The Bible



SPIRITUAL WARFARE • ANDY EVANS

declares that no man can serve two masters at the same time (Matt 6:24). Man must choose one or the other. Christians must constantly seek to do the will of God to obtain that crown of eternal life. There is no sin allowed in heaven, although men—carnal creatures—may reside there by the grace extended by the living God (Rom 12:1).

The mind of man is where the spiritual battle is waged. By becoming a Christian, man has put off that sin and become a new creature in Christ. When one is baptized, they are protected by Jesus Christ, who by His death on the cross overcame sin (1 John 4:4). Jesus is always the example that a Christian should follow. He was tempted by Satan with the same three sins that still plague mankind today (Matt 4:1–11). In that text, Jesus used the same weapon to refute Satan as we have today. Jesus' answer to each temptation was "It is written," citing a passage from Deuteronomy.

Man is flesh and bone, and it is so much easier to seek after the things that are around him every day, the pleasures and temptations that Satan lays out before him

continue every day. One must constantly keep a focus on the things of heaven and not the things of this earth. The pleasure of life, just as life itself, is a fleeting thing. Even though one may live 80 to 90 years, that is a vapor compared to eternity. Consider the example of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. The rich man is in torment and asks for Lazarus to be able to place just a drop of water on his tongue to give him a second of relief. Even though one does not know everything there is to know about Hell, this is a brief look into what one will suffer if that is their final destination. Does not the description of heaven look so much better compared to Hell, a place where there is no more pain or sickness or death? God has given man the ability to choose which course one is to follow. God loved man enough to send Jesus to die on the cross for all mankind. No one knows when the Lord will return in judgment. Everyone needs to take the proper steps to be prepared for His return. God never promised anyone another day to live. All men armed with the godly weapons of the Bible must stand against Satan and be constantly ready for the Lord to return. ▲



Lessons from *The Rose of Sharon*

David R. Kenney

West Virginia School of Preaching Instructor

There is a hymn called “Jesus, Rose of Sharon” based on Song of Solomon 2:1. There have been two major methods of interpreting the Song of Songs (cf. SOS 1:1): literal and allegorical. This has resulted in at least three interpretations: a literal conversation between two lovers, an allegory of the relationship between God and Israel, and an allegory of the relationship between Christ and the church. The hymn, “Jesus, Rose of Sharon” by Ida A. Guirey, accepts the allegorical interpretation of being the relationship between Christ and His church.

Scholars correctly observe that one must be careful about “reading back” our interpretations in the text. For example, it would be somewhat difficult to accept the allegory of Christ and the Church as the subject matter when Solomon wrote this song. Allegorizing can be an interesting study, but one must be careful about such a hermeneutic. But my article is not so much about the song, the hymn, but the flower, the Rose of Sharon.

I have a Rose of Sharon, *Hibiscus syriacus*, that I am growing in my yard from seeds I harvested from my parents’ two Rose of Sharons in Martinsburg, WV. Now,



this is not the same plant that was found in Israel. In fact, some suggest that the phrase “Rose of Sharon” refers more to the place the flower is found (the Plain of Sharon) than the species of flower. Some suggest a Crocus is more in view than a Rose in this part of the world.

Experts suggest that if

you want the exact coloring of the Rose of Sharon, then you should take a cutting from the plant rather than relying on the seed, since the seed may lead to different coloring based on the environment. My Rose of Sharon, which I thought was not going to germinate, sprouted in August 2024 and produced a few small blooms. This year, it has produced many more blooms.

While I was uncertain about the viability of the seeds I harvested, I have no doubts about the viability of the seed of God’s Word. God’s Word, God’s seed, endures forever (1 Pet 1:24–25). There was no doubt what my seed was going to produce: a Rose of Sharon. There should be no doubt what the seed of the Word of God produces: Christians (Gen 1:11–12). There will be future work, including pruning, necessary to produce flowers in the future for our enjoyment. Pruning is what God does to us to help us produce more fruit for His glory (John 15:1–2). Pruning may not be an enjoyable process, but it produces what is enjoyable to the caretaker (Heb 12:5–11).

God’s Word is amazing in many ways. One of those ways is how Jesus used parables relating to seed, soil, and plants to illustrate the spiritual truths. As we work in this world, these illustrations provide powerful reminders of these spiritual truths! These illustrations remain just as potent as when the Savior first uttered these along the way. One cannot help but think of the parable relating to the casting of seeds in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8. Whether or not a plant came from the seed was not dependent upon the seed but the soil the seed landed upon. We are the soil, not the seed. What type of soil are we when the seed of the word of God lands on our hearts and minds? ▲

Lot's Wife

Cole Curry



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Apologetics Press recently released something that has become very popular in the church, especially for the youth, and that is the Discovery Bible Cards. The Discovery Bible Cards are a wonderful way to help study, teach, and much more. One of my favorite Discovery Bible Cards is the card called “Lot’s Wife.” In Genesis 19, we find the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; these two cities were evil and wicked (Gen 19:13). When we look at our world today, we also see that it is a very evil and wicked world. In addition, Lot and his family are commanded not to look back at the city when they were

Showdown on Mt. Carmel

Connor Curry

Apologetics Press recently put out a set of Bible cards called Discovery Bible Cards, and on these Bible cards are different Bible characters. Since my brothers and I have been so fascinated by these Discovery Bible Cards, I would like to write a short article on one of my personal favorites. In 1Kings 18:20–40, we read of Elijah and how he challenges the prophets of Baal, and whichever God would answer with fire would be God (1 Kings 18:24). So, the challenge begun, 450 prophets of Baal prayed, and they prayed, then they began to dance, furthermore they began to cut themselves trying to seek attention



from their god. Finally, time had passed from morning to evening, which was the traditional time to sacrifice, and so then Elijah told them to come near. He builds and altar in the very way that the LORD commands, and he requests the people to

fleeing from it (Gen 19:17). As Lot and his family were fleeing from Sodom, Lot’s wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26). What we can learn much from this, such as, when we are faced with hard times in life, we need to look



towards God, and not the world. This world is an evil and a wicked place, but if we look towards God and we do what He commands us, we have a hope to spend eternity with Him. So, let’s all focus on God and not get distracted by the world. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7 NKJV). ▲

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bring him buckets of water. He tells them to pour the water on the altar, and he tells them to do it again. Then again, in fact, he tells these people to dump water on the altar three times, so that it reads that the trench that Elijah told them to dig around the altar was filled. The entire altar was dripping wet, yet Elijah simply prayed to God. I would like to highlight a key point. The point I would like to make is this: God alone is the true and all-powerful God, and that He is a God who also hears His people. This is proven by the fact that after Elijah prayed, He sent fire from heaven and consumed the water and the entire altar. Here we clearly see that God is a God who hears us. He also hears us during times of weakness, as He did for Elijah when Elijah was in the cave (1 Kings 19:11–18). He also hears us in great triumph, as was shown in 1 Kings 18. Take comfort, knowing that we have an all-powerful God who sees us, who loves us, who cares for us, and who also hears us. So next time you are in a time of great triumph or in a time of great sorrow, remember God, for He is a God who hears and loves His people. “This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life” (Psalm 119:50 NKJV).

Judgment

Matthew 7:1-6; Luke 6:37-42

Hunter Melott

West Virginia School of Preaching Graduate

These passages condemn having a judgmental spirit, but it is not condemning the notion of judging in general. Jesus himself said, “judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24 NASB). Many in the world quote these verses to condemn Christians for speaking the truth. Of course, they fail to realize that they are themselves making judgments. It is difficult to say one should not make

judgments, because that itself is a judgment of how one should live their life. To simply say, “judgments are wrong” is to make a judgment. Therefore, one finds that he contradicts himself very quickly in that regard.

Jesus wants us to make righteous judgments if there should be judgments that need to be made. In Jesus’ example, the man with the log in his eye was not wrong for trying to remove a speck from his brother’s eye; he was wrong because

he tried to do it while having a log in his own eye! Jesus is not condemning judgment here, but hypocritical judgment. In fact, Jesus goes on to say, “first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matt 7:5). Therefore, when we judge, it must be righteous judgment.

The Greek word for judge is *krino*. The word means to criticize. We see that word as very negative today; however, it really means to evaluate. To look critically is to evaluate a situation. We see this teaching in verse 6: “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs...” In other words, what good would it do to hurl judgments at people who are debased and outside of God? It won’t make a difference.

It is not our job to stand as judge and arbiter over every individual’s life. That is God’s job, and God can solely make righteous and final judgments concerning those people. My job is not to judge, for I am a Christian in need of grace and mercy. My job is to be like Christ, be influential, and help others see Christ by the way I walk and talk.



We must be careful of the measure of judgment we give to others. Ask yourself if you ever give others the benefit of the doubt. Ask yourself if you give others a fair shake. If we never pardon anyone, then we will never receive pardon.

There are times in life where we are called to make judgments between right and wrong, and when we come to those times, we must receive that opportunity with grace, humility, awareness, truth, and love. However, let us not think that because we are Christians, that gives us the right to talk badly about others because of their sins, or to slander, or to rashly judge at every given moment. We should strive to see the soul in people and bring as many people to Christ as we can. Let the word of God judge people; you bring them the gospel. If they call you a hypocrite, so be it. GOD will be the judge of them. ▲



GIVE ME JESUS, BUT...

Robert Leedy

West Virginia School of Preaching Graduate

Everybody desires to go to heaven. Nobody, in their right mind, desires to go to a place like the Bible describes as Hell. As one reads the word of God, they learn that there will be more people lost than saved on that great judgment day (Matt 7:13–14). Why is this the case? Because, although people desire to go to heaven, they do not desire to meet the conditions that we read about in Scripture to make it to heaven.

Many say, “Give me Jesus, but not His word.” People want Jesus to save them, but they do not want to do what He says. The problem with that is Jesus cannot be separated from His words. Jesus said in John 12:48, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (NKJV). We will be judged by Jesus’ words.

Jesus’ words are more than just the red words. Notice what the Holy Spirit was going to do for the inspired men who wrote the Bible. Teach all things and bring to their remembrance all that Christ said to them (John 14:26); Testify of Christ (John 15:26); Guide them into all truth, and tell them things to come (John 16:13). One can be assured when reading the entirety of the New Testament that it is the words and teachings of Christ.

One cannot go to heaven without doing the will of the Father. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” The only way to know the will of God is to study it in His word.

Some will also say, “Give me Jesus, but not His church.” Many want Jesus to save them, but they do not

want to be a part of the church that He built (Matt 16:18–19). Excuses are often given, such as “There are hypocrites in that church,” or “you don’t have to go to church to be saved.”

First, notice that the church is not something one goes to; it is who one is. The church is the people who are saved. Acts 2:47 says, “praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” The point at which one puts Christ on in baptism (Acts 2:38; Gal 3:27) is the point at which they are added to the church by our Lord. One cannot separate salvation from the church, because the church is made up of the saved.

One cannot separate the head from the body. Ephesians 1:22–23 says, “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” If one removes the head from the body, death is the result.

The church is commanded to assemble together on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Heb 10:25). If one is saved and therefore a member of the church, assembly is required.

One cannot separate Jesus from His word, and Jesus cannot be separated from His church. One cannot enjoy salvation without His words and His body. ▲



HOLY IN PERSECUTION

Jonathan Jarvis

West Virginia School of Preaching

2nd Year Student

The book of 1 Peter is a message of hope and encouragement for Christians who are persecuted. When one reads 1 Peter 3:15, Peter is imploring Christians to keep God at the center of their lives, especially in times of trial or persecution. Persecution has existed for a long time and is seen in various ways. Jesus mentions three groups of people who were, or would be, persecuted: The prophets (Matt 5:12), those listening to His sermon (Matt 5:11), and everyone who would face persecution (Matt 5:10). When we face persecution, there are two ways we can respond: stand our ground or give in to pressure. The Bible gives us examples of how we are to deal with persecution or opposition.

One example of persecution in the Old Testament that comes to mind is Daniel's compatriots in Daniel chapter three. When Nebuchadnezzar made a large idol statue, he wanted all the officials of the provinces to gather around this statue to worship it, and those who did not worship the idol would be thrown into a fiery furnace to be burned alive (Dan 3:1–6). Three of the Jews who had been previously promoted, (Dan 2:46–49) whom the chief of the eunuchs named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Dan 1:7), did not worship the idol statue (Dan 3:12). Nebuchadnezzar was angry, asked to speak with them, and they defended their position on serving God who could deliver them from the fiery furnace rather than the statue who could not do anything (Dan 3:13–18).

Nebuchadnezzar threw them into the furnace, yet God was with them and they were spared (Dan 3:19–27).

When we begin reading the New Testament, we see that Jesus Himself was not immune to being persecuted. A few occasions are recorded

that show the Jews' intent to get rid of Him. There are at least two occasions that John records Jews attempting to stone Jesus (John 8:59; 10:31). Both of these occur because Jesus was making Himself the same as God, and the Jews thought that He was just a man. Luke records a time when the people in a synagogue were angry at what Jesus was saying, so they took Jesus to cast Him off a cliff (Luke 4:16–30). During His ministry, Jesus showed us how we are to conduct ourselves, even when faced with persecution.

Peter captures the essence of the example of Jesus clearly when he writes, "but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pet 1:15–16 NKJV). These two verses reveal two things: that God is holy, and that we are



Holy in Persecution Jonathan Jarvis

to practice holiness. God is the source of holiness, and Christians are to reflect His holiness. It is often expressed as the moon reflecting the light of the sun. Hebrews 12:14 tells us that by being holy, we help people see the Lord. Since we are to strive to be holy as God is holy, there is no reason for us to worry about the things that man may do to us (Matt 10:28). We are to be holy as God calls us to be holy.

By being holy, we will naturally have a care for spiritual matters. There was an occasion in Peter's life when he lacked care for spiritual matters. When Jesus was on trial and Peter was in the courtyard, he was asked three different times if he was associated with Jesus. Each time, he denied any association with Him, possibly for fear of being persecuted himself (Matt 26:69-74). Peter grows from this incident when he reaffirms his love for Christ (John 21:15-17) and then boldly proclaims the gospel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36).

As we have seen, we are to give a defense in the way that we live our lives. God and His holiness should be at the very center of our lives. Persecution has always been a reality for God's people because of the dichotomy between God's nature and man's nature. We are to practice holiness because God is holy. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were able to practice holiness because they trusted more in God than in a golden statue. Our lives are to be a representation of God's holiness on earth, not the unholiness of men. If God be for us, who can be against us? ▲

Give Them the Ol’ “Stink Eye”

Jon Hescht

West Virginia School of Preaching Graduate

For anyone with a child near the teenage years, it should be very easy to picture the classic deadpan, squinty-eyed, disparaged look that they can instinctually give whenever someone upsets them, teases them, makes a “dad-joke,” or sometimes just exists in their presence. That endearing expression encompasses the concept of the “stink eye.” It is the same expression that one might expect to receive from an elementary school bully, an impatient metropolitan taxi driver, or a professional athlete from an opposing rival team. This same countenance can sometimes even be found on a fellow brother or sister in Christ while in worship services.

Some of these examples might seem humorous, trivial, or even familiar. In each case, the thoughts and intentions of the person giving this expression are key factors. A serious problem arises when a look like this comes from a place of anger, malice, spite, or real hatred; a serious problem that goes directly against the commandment given to the disciples (and by extension, to all believers) by Jesus when He said, “This is My commandment, that

you love one another, just as I have loved you” (John 15:12 NASB95).

The substantial difference between the original commandment known to the Jews, given to them in the Levitical Law (Lev 19:18), was the comparative clause added at the end, “as I have loved you.” This made it

a command to show to all people the same type of love, expressed to the same degree, that Jesus demonstrated towards them – a love that involved humility to the point of self-sacrifice (John 15:13; Rev 2:10) shown through obedience of faith (Rom 1:5; 16:25, 26). It involves a love so complete that Jesus, knowing from the beginning that denial and ultimately betrayal would come specifically from the circle of His twelve closest friends, would treat His disciples so uniformly that when He announced a betrayer at the Last Supper, no one would have the slightest inclination of who it would be (Matt 26:22; Luke 22:22; John 13:21). There were no spiteful looks given while praying together, no avoiding or ignoring after a lesson; there was only love for a brother and friend.

It is easy to get fixated on previous or perceived actions from a fellow Christian. It is no secret that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). As such, every single congregation of the Lord’s church is comprised of imperfect people who will make mistakes. Even those mentioned in Hebrews 11, which is often referred to as the faith chapter of the Bible, are not praised for their own perfection, but their faith in the perfect Creator – a Creator who deserves and expects proper worship from all His children (Rom 14:11).

There are numerous accounts of action in Scripture where worship is done through improper methods and motivations, and every single time, that worship is deemed unacceptable to God (Gen 4:3–5; Mal 1:13–14; Matt 15:8–9; et al.). God explains throughout Scripture that obedience is better than offerings and sacrifices (1 Sam 15:22–23; Mic 6:6–8; Heb 10:6–9). When Christians



Give Them the Ol' "Stink Eye" • Jon Hescht

come to the house of the Lord to worship, it should be out of joy and love (Psalm 100:4; 122:1) and desire for fellowship (Heb 10:19–25). If brothers and sisters come to worship while harboring ill will toward each other, it dishonors not only that person, but also God (1 John 2:9–11; 4:20), for they are breaking both great commandments (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Matt 22:37–40; Luke 10:27; John 15:12, 17).

When it comes to worship, Christians are called to self-reflection and examination to make sure their thoughts and actions align with the standard given in Scripture (2 Cor 13:5). Since all believers are told to love as Jesus loved, it is imperative that each person is treated with the same amount of love and compassion, to the same degree, that the Savior showed for all people. If there is any possibility that feelings toward a brother or sister might impede that love, seek them out for reconciliation and resolution as the Lord instructed (Matt 5:23–24). Instead of mimicking the “stink eye” out of derision, demonstrate the countenance of an imitator of Christ (1 Cor 11:1; Eph 5:1–2). ▲

Hearing and Doing

Aidan Klingler

West Virginia School of Preaching

2nd Year Student

Imagine sitting through a CPR class. Notes are taken, instruction is carefully heeded, and even the midterm and final exam ARE passed. But when someone collapses in front of a student, there is a pause and hesitation. The class never practiced what was taught. James is writing and warning about this in James 1:22. Most Christians hear the Word of God every Sunday, but come Monday morning, they fail to live it. James calls three things to the attention of his readers: the Command, the Caution, and the Consequence.

The Command – "Be doers of the Word." James does not offer a suggestion; he gives a command. A Christian cannot be an observer. James warns not only in this passage but in others about knowing what to do and not doing it (Jas 4:17). Christians must be doers, for complacency is a dangerous reality (John 14:15). Just as a gym membership is useless if unused, so is a knowledge of the Scriptures without being obedient.

The Caution – "Not hears only." James warns against casual listeners, those who hear God's word but never heed His teachings. The building where the Lord's church meets is not a lecture hall; rather, a launch pad. The church, in a sense, is a training ground for heaven. Many enjoy the information they receive on Sundays from the pulpit, but they avoid obedience to the Gospel and transformation (2 Tim 3:7). Hearing without doing will

never build a solid foundation, but rather a foundation on sand (Matt 7:26).

The Consequence – "Deceiving yourselves." Christians who hear only deceive themselves (Prov 14:12). Repeated listening without obeying numbs the conscience and hardens one's heart (Heb 4:2). Obedience is how believers grow in Christ (1 Pet 2:2; Eph 4:15).

James closes chapter one with a personal challenge to examine what true religion is. Real faith is not just heard; it is heeded. Faith controls the tongue, moves the hands, and the heart to serve the Father. True religion keeps one's heart pure. The believer is called to be distinct, not distant. Distant prevents fulfilling the great commission (Matt 28:18–20). Christians are to be lights in the dark world (John 3:16–21).

So, here is the challenge: Do not be satisfied with being a hoarder of sermons. Be a doer of things you learn in the "launch pad." Do not just quote the Bible, live the Bible. Do not just underline verses in your Bible; let them underline your life. ▲



The Love of God

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Some people do not believe that God loves them. They have not really investigated this love. Our country is so into itself that if they cannot see it, they just do not believe it. “How can this God of yours love someone like me?” “Can you who believe in God prove to me that there is a God?”

So, we can see that God is all around us by nature itself. It shows that there must be something more than what we know is possible. Most people think that love is something immediate, that it should be right now, that it should be a feeling that they can feel (Acts 14:15).

Some think that God is not love. If we are to look to God, we see that He is love (Rom 8:39). From the beginning, God said that we would make man in our image. If we truly look at this, we can all see the image of God in us all and in the image of the things around us, like nature. To look at the beauty of nature, we can tell that something greater than us had to make this; it just could not be made by itself. It must have a starter, and this starter had to be someone who was special.

God is love. He said that He will never leave us or forsake us. He is always going to be there for us. He is not like most of our friends, who, when we do something wrong or say something wrong, turn their backs on us, not willing to forget or forgive us (Heb 13:5).

If we look to God, He is willing to forgive us all, but we need to ask for forgiveness. Because He loves us so much, He gave us His Son as a sacrifice for us, but we still need to do something. Now that is love: someone like me could just ask and have a change of heart, and He will forgive even me. You know that is love. We all need love in our lives; if we look to God, we can find that love that is unchanging love. He is always around waiting for us to ask, so try this, love. You, too, can find this love.

Romans 1:20 – divine nature seen in creation.

Psalms 19:1 – heavens declare the glory of God.

John 1:3 - all things were made through Him.

Genesis 1:26 – God made humanity in His image.

Romans 8:39 – nothing can separate us from the love of God. ▲



Christian Friendship

Cheyenne Blizzard

What makes a true friend? It's not how much money they have or what they look like or even where they live. For some, this is how a friend is defined. They only care about what their friend could give them, or what they could do for them. A true friendship should not be defined by these things. As Christians, we need to look for friends who build us up in Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 says, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up just as in fact you are doing” (ESV). We should look for friends who build us up and encourage us in Christ. The greatest commandment tells us to love one another as He has loved us. Then Jesus goes on to tell us that no one has greater love than to lay down one's life for their friends (John 15:12–13). No, we don't literally have to die for them, but in a friendship, we will have to give up

some things that we value. We have to have commitment to them. We have to stand up for them and be the ones who speak positively about them. We have to put their needs before our own and help them grow in Christ and lead them to the goal of heaven. When we have good friendships they consist of these great commands. Jesus tells us that we are His friends if we do what He commands (John 15:14). Wouldn't it be great to be friends with Jesus and have a great Christian friendship? How much will you give up for your friends and for Christ? ▲





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39th ANNUAL BIBLE BOWL — October 10-11
Camden Avenue COC Parkersburg, WV
Register at CACOC.net

SOUP AND SING — October 17 Rosemar Rd. COC Parkersburg, WV

FALL CAMP — October 18 • WVCYC* • 10am - 7pm
Register with QR Code on the graphic below.

VICTORY LECTURES — October 19-23
Moundsville, WV • “Birth of the Messiah’s Nation: Genesis 12-50” wvsop.com/victory-lectures/

FRIDAY NIGHT SING — October 24 Lower Paw Paw COC Lower Salem, OH

NOVEMBER

MEN’S DAY — November 8 Lubeck COC Parkersburg, WV “Set in Order the Things that are Lacking”
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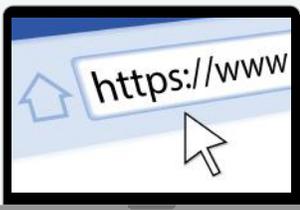
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Resources

General Resources

 **Added to the Church** - Publisher of *The Mountain Messenger* & New Testament Expositor - [addedtothechurch.com](https://www.addedtothechurch.com)

 **Our Authors** - Meet the authors of *The Mountain Messenger!*
[addedtothechurch.com/christian-authors/](https://www.addedtothechurch.com/christian-authors/)

 **West Virginia School of Preaching** - 2-year program of classes taught by sound Christians - [wvsop.com](https://www.wvsop.com)

 **Sharp Five Media** - Affordable church websites and media by a member of the church - [sharp-five.com](https://www.sharp-five.com)

 **Bible Call** - Access Bible information recordings online or by phone. - [biblecallonline.com](https://www.biblecallonline.com)

Songs & Hymns

 **Teaching and Admonishing** - Free to listen and use original hymns by members of the church - [churchofchristsongs.com](https://www.churchofchristsongs.com)

 **WVCYC "Pressing On" CD** - Contact Andy Robison to order your CD or Thumb Drive!
andycd2020@gmail.com

Podcasts

 **The Religious Coffee Hour** - Podcast hosted by Hunter Melott found wherever you listen to podcasts.

 **Authentic Christian** - Podcast produced by GBN, hosted by Aaron Gallagher and Scott Ingram
[gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/](https://www.gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/)

Deepen Your Knowledge

 **Apologetics Press** - Articles, videos, books, etc. focused on the defense of New Testament Christianity - [apologeticspress.org](https://www.apologeticspress.org)

 **Gospel Broadcasting Network** - Provides Bible-based and unbiased resources from the Word of God - [gbntv.org](https://www.gbntv.org)

 **Focus Press** - Provides podcasts, articles, videos, books, and daily devotionals. - [focuspress.org](https://www.focuspress.org)

 **World Video Bible School** - Videos and free study courses on Biblical topics - [wvbs.org](https://www.wvbs.org)

 **Through the Scriptures** - Study through the entirety of the Scriptures - [throughthescriptures.com](https://www.throughthescriptures.com)

 **Families of Faith** - Bible materials for families & churches. - [familiesoffaith.store](https://www.familiesoffaith.store)

 **Salvation Study Chain Cards** - Order these tract-like evangelism tools for your congregation. - bit.ly/study-card

Fun and Games

 **Birble** - Bible version of Wordle. Guess the five-letter word from the KJV Bible! - [ajrv.us/birble](https://www.ajrv.us/birble)

 **Memoria** - Bible verse memorization tool. Removes 1 word at a time as you practice. - [ajrv.us/bible/memoria](https://www.ajrv.us/bible/memoria)



**4788 Stillwell Road
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Birth of the Messiah's Nation Genesis 12-50

Sunday Morning Bible Study: @ 9:45 a.m.
 Sunday Morning Worship Services: @ 10:40 a.m.
 Sunday Evening Worship Services: @ 6:30 p.m.

Overview of Genesis 12-50
 God's Call to Abraham. Genesis 12:1-9
 Abraham and Sarah: The Sojourns, the Names, the Burial
 Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 17:1-27; 23:1-20

John Board
 John Board
 Phil Sanders

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00 AM	"We Are Brethren" Genesis 13:1-14:24 Phil Sanders	Abraham's Death & Family Genesis 22:20-24; 25:1-18; 26:34-35; 27:46; 28:6-9; 36:1-43 Joshua Ball	"I Have Enough" Genesis 32:1-21; 33:1-17 Emanuel Daugherty	Dream Interpretation Genesis 40:1-41:36 Dave Deagel
10:00 AM	Eliezer and Ancient Covenant Practices Genesis 15:1-21; 24:2 Mark Aites	Isaac and Rebekah Genesis 24:1-67 Jeremy Main	The Incident at Shechem Genesis 33:18-34:31 Bruce Daugherty	The Egyptian Prince Genesis 41:37-57 Terry Townsend
11:00 AM	Ishmael Genesis 16; 21:8-21; 25:12-18 Rick Kelley	Birthright and Blessing Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-45 Ed Melott	Jacob's Name and Family Genesis 35:1-29 Vince Daugherty	Joseph's Brothers Genesis 42:1-45:28 John Keith
1:15 PM	The Sign and Son of the Covenant Genesis 17:1-18:15; 21:1-7 Phil Sanders	The Rejected One Genesis 27:41-46; 28:6-9; 32:1-21 Tim Canup	Sold Genesis 37:1-36 Eddie Cooper	"Go Down to Egypt" Genesis 46:1-47:31 David Kenney
2:15 PM	God's Judgment on Wickedness Genesis 18:16-19:38 Paolo DiLuca	Jacob's Wives Genesis 28:1-5; 29:1-30:24 Nathan Mayes	Judah, Tamar, and the Lineage of Christ Genesis 38:1-30 J.D. Conley	Ephraim and Manasseh Genesis 48:1-22 Aaron Burch
3:15 PM	Fear of God Among the Philistines Genesis 20:1-18; 21:22-34; 26:1-33 Dan Kessinger	Jacob and Laban Genesis 30:25-31:55 Zach Barnhart	"This Great Wickedness" Joseph in Potiphar's House Genesis 39:1-23 Andy Robison	Jacob's Prophecies Genesis 49 Terry Jones
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SING	CONGREGATIONAL SING	CONGREGATIONAL SING	CONGREGATIONAL SING
7:05 PM	"Where is the Lamb?" Genesis 22:1-19 Charles Pugh	"Surely the Lord is in This Place" Genesis 28:10-22 Mike Vestal	Wrestling with God Genesis 32:22-32 Mike Vestal	"God Meant It for Good" Genesis 49:29-50:26 Mike Vestal

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