



Kingdom Come



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2026: The Story of Jesus



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A publication of the

Church of God (Seventh Day)

This magazine is published to advocate the Bible, represent the Church, and glorify the God of grace and truth.

Volume 160 • Number 3

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The BIBLE ADVOCATE (ISSN 0746-0104) is published bimonthly by Bible Advocate Press, 330 W. 152nd Ave., Broomfield, CO 80023. Periodicals postage is paid at Broomfield, CO, and at additional offices. Subscription is free to any who ask. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Bible Advocate Press, Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233-0677.

Bible Advocate Press

Jason Overman: Editor, Co-Director

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Martha Muffley: Translation

Hope Dais-Clark: Proofing

Subscriptions and Orders

Bible Advocate Press
P.O. Box 33677
Denver, CO 80233-0677
phone: 303/452-7973
fax: 303/452-0657
email: bap.orders@cog7.org

Notice: Send all address changes and other correspondence to the address above.

Publications Agreement No. 40042428

The Bible Advocate Online appears at baonline.org.

“Peace to You”

I just finished writing the upcoming adult Sabbath school lessons on the Gospel of Luke. Something there has stuck with me. Something wonderful about our King. Though not unique to Luke, it’s a theme he highlights. In fact, Luke talks about this more than any other New Testament book — more than the other Gospels combined: It is *peace*.

What is kingdom peace? Well, it’s something Jesus keeps extending to those who receive Him. Significantly, it is missing from those who do not. Jesus says that His ministry is as likely to cause division as it is to cause peace (12:51; cf. 19:42). But from the beginning of Luke to the end, the core characteristic of the kingdom is *peace*.

Zacharias prophesies it at the birth of John:

“To give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (1:77-79).

After His resurrection, *peace* is the first word from Jesus when He appears to His disciples: “Peace to you” (24:36). Celebrating this gospel peace accompanies His birth and passion: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (2:14; 19:38). In between these, when the Master’s touch is experienced in healing and salvation, it is peace He leaves with those set free: “Go in peace” (7:50; 8:48; cf. 10:5, 6).

If the first word of the gospel is repent, then that is the first step in “the way of peace” — peace with God and with others, whether they are at peace or not. This kingdom peace transcends circumstances, but it influences every situation. As His peacemakers, as sojourners in lands where there’s little of it, we must have and hold the peace that only the Prince of Peace can give. *We must extend it as He did. It is but one virtue of the kingdom, but it is essential for such a time as this. Peace to you!*

— Jason Overman





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Investing in people
as Jesus did.

by Jennifer Stucker

Jesus didn't preach just to crowds. He reached out to the marginalized. He touched the untouchable. Sat with the overlooked. Walked toward the hurting. He didn't wait for someone to ask for help. He saw the need and responded with compassion and action.

Jesus invested in people by spending time with them. Not just when it was convenient. Not just when it was easy. And not only when it was public. But always with intention.

As believers, we're called to live like Jesus, yet it's easy for us to become distracted and forget our mission. Ephesians 5:1, 2 instructs us to "be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved

us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

It's a calling for us to make time to truly know people beyond their roles or tasks — to listen to their stories, celebrate their wins, and walk with them in their struggles.

Falling short

Too often, the modern church becomes a place of polite distance rather than compassionate connection. We organize events, donate to good causes, and speak about love and community. But when someone close to us is truly struggling, we freeze. We hesitate. We hope someone else will step in. Instead of

offering our presence or empathy, we frequently resort to familiar clichés when what's truly needed is companionship, care, and genuine support.

James 2:15-17 reminds us:

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

The challenge is not to say the right words but to live them out.

But we fall short of that. We fill our schedules with tasks, meetings, ministry goals, family obligations, and deadlines. It becomes easy to place projects over people, but we can't allow these things to consistently overshadow the importance of investing in others.

Jesus modeled living a life so different from this. He showed us that people are a priority, even when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable. His investment in others wasn't through powerful words alone but through presence, sacrifice, and action. He did more than talk about love, grace, and truth; He embodied them.

Jesus didn't rush past people in need. He stopped. He noticed. He stayed. Jesus paused for the bleeding woman, knelt with children, and looked Zacchaeus in the eye. He met people where they were: on boats, at wells, in trees, on the margins. He touched the untouchable. He forgave the unforgivable. He ate with them, walked with them, and knew them deeply. He made time for interruptions because people were the mission.

Matthew writes that when two blind men called out to Jesus, He stopped and healed them (20:29-34).

It's not that we're heartless. It's that real investment can be messy. It takes time and requires us to reorder our priorities. It pulls us out of our comfort zones. And yet, if the church can't be a sanctuary for her own people in pain, then we're merely noise (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Real love

Real love is inconvenient. It might look like bringing someone a meal who never asked. It might be sitting with a grieving friend in silence because there's nothing to fix, only someone to be with.

supported someone. We can send a praying hands emoji and think we've done our part. But presence matters. A screen can't hug someone. A text can't hold a hand. Encouragement is valuable, but real presence and connection are transformational.

First John 3:17, 18 urges us to love beyond words, to demonstrate it through action and truth. Being present in someone's life over time, sitting with them in their pain without offering easy fixes, is what truly reflects the love of Jesus.

Immediate needs

We pray for opportunities to serve. We ask God to use us. We look outward, eager to

“Encouragement is valuable, but real presence and connection are transformational.”

It might be covering a bill, watching their kids, praying with them, or just showing up when no one else does.

It has become easier to text encouraging words than to stop by for a personal visit. Technology has made communication faster, but it's also made compassion easier to fake. We can "like" a post and feel that we've

make a difference in the world. But sometimes, God answers those prayers with opportunities right in front of us, giving us the chance to show compassion and love to people in our immediate circles.

To the sister in Christ battling a serious health crisis.

To the brother who is quietly grieving.

To the elderly member who can no longer come to church on their own.

To the teen who feels disconnected, sitting on the sidelines.

To the family at church that hasn't been around lately.

God sees them. Do we?

The mission field doesn't always involve traveling far away. It's often as close as the person sitting beside you in church or the colleague working next to you in the office. We often overlook the needs around us be-

Call to action

Think of someone in your church, your workplace, or your neighborhood who is going through something difficult. It's not always the one who broadcasts their struggles but perhaps someone who is silent and withdrawn. Reach out to them. Don't wait for the perfect moment. Text them and stop by. Write a card and sit beside them. Pray for them and with them. Don't wait for a perfect moment; just show up.

“Jesus has invited you to do good works, so don't wait for an invitation. Jesus didn't wait.”

cause we are looking for bigger, more dramatic opportunities. But the quiet acts of kindness and the willingness to step into someone's pain are some of the most impactful ways we can embody the love of Jesus.

We should follow Paul's approach: “We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8).

Jesus has invited you to do good works, so don't wait for an invitation. Jesus didn't wait. He came close to us when we were still far away, and He calls us to do the same. Take the initiative to reach out. Be the one who shows up when everyone else is too busy. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

Sometimes the hardest part of showing up is overcoming the fear of making someone uncomfortable or not knowing

exactly what to say. But our presence matters more than our words. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 25:36, “I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”

When we show up for each other, we are fulfilling the law of Christ, which is to love one another as He has loved us. Because Jesus didn't stay at a distance. He came close. And He calls us to do the same.

The church is called to care for the world and for *her own*. When one part of the body suffers, we all feel it. When one of us is struggling, we should lean in instead of stepping back. “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

Let's be a church that doesn't just speak love. We live it.

Let's be a people who don't just mean well. We do well.

Let's show up when others don't, offering love that goes beyond words to actions — from intention to presence.

Let's be the hands and feet of Jesus to those who need to know they're not alone. **BA**

Jennifer Stucker serves as Women's Ministry director for the West Coast District. She attends the Marion, OR congregation with her husband,



Loren, and their two children, Nicole and Jeremiah. Scripture quotations are taken from the *English Standard Version*.



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Divine Interruptions

When the kingdom intersects with life.
by Moises Capetillo

There is a pattern in the Gospels that becomes impossible to ignore once you see it: Jesus rarely meets people when life is convenient. He meets them when they are busy, broken, distracted, or desperate — and then He interrupts everything.

The kingdom of God does not arrive quietly in the background of people's lives. It steps into the middle of ordinary moments and rearranges everything.

Simon and Andrew were not looking for a Messiah when Jesus called them. They were working — casting nets, tending their

livelihood — when Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). Scripture says, “They immediately left their nets and followed Him” (v. 18).

The kingdom did not wait for these men to finish their shift. It did not ask for a better time. It interrupted — and invited. This pattern repeats again and again.

Levi was sitting at his tax booth when Jesus passed by and said, “Follow Me” (2:14). A woman who had been through marital turmoil was at a well trying to check off one of her many daily chores when a normal water run became a life-changing encounter (John 4:4-30). Blind Bartimaeus was shouting by the roadside when Jesus stopped everything to listen (Mark 10:46-52).

None of these encounters were scheduled. None were

convenient. But all were transformative. The kingdom of God interrupted their lives — and nothing was ever the same.

No permission

One of the most challenging things about Jesus' ministry was that He didn't wait for ideal circumstances. He met people in the middle of chaos, grief, sin, confusion, and busyness.

He interrupted funerals (the widow of Nain, Luke 7:11-15).

He interrupted dinner parties (Zacchaeus hosting Jesus, 19:5-10).

He interrupted fishing trips (Peter's boat, nets, and calling, 5:1-11).

He interrupted religious routines (a synagogue healing on Sabbath, Mark 3:1-5).

He interrupted daily tasks (Levi at work, 2:14).

And every interruption carried an invitation: Follow Me.

We often pray for God to move, but we rarely consider that when He does, it may disrupt our carefully arranged lives. We like the idea of transformation — just not the process. But the kingdom of God does not arrive as a suggestion; it arrives as a declaration. Jesus does not say, “Consider Me.” He says, “Follow Me.” And that changes everything.

Interruption and grace

We sometimes interpret divine interruptions as inconveniences. But in the Gospels, interruption is grace.

The paralyzed man was interrupted by friends who tore open a roof (Mark 2:1-12).

The funeral at Nain was interrupted mid-grief (Luke 7:11-15). The woman caught in adultery was interrupted mid-pursuit (John

8:1-11). Zacchaeus was interrupted mid-curiosity (Luke 19:1-10). The disciples were interrupted mid-career. Every one of these interruptions became a doorway into transformation.

Jesus never apologized for interrupting people’s lives. He interrupted them because He loved them. And He still does.

Sometimes He interrupts us with conviction (accusers convicted, John 8:7-11). Sometimes with calling (“Follow Me,” Mark 1:17, 18). Sometimes with discomfort (cost of following; disrupted priorities, Luke 9:57-62). Sometimes with compassion we can’t ignore (mercy for the crowds, Matthew 14:13, 14).

When the kingdom interrupts us

If we’re honest, many of us want the blessings of the kingdom without the disruption of the King. We want peace

without surrender, healing without vulnerability, purpose without obedience, success without suffering, and forgiveness without repentance.

But Jesus doesn’t offer a lifestyle upgrade. He offers a new life.

Following Him means releasing control. It means leaving nets. It means walking away from booths. It means crying out when others tell us to be quiet. It means losing every weight that entangles us (Hebrews 12:1).

The kingdom interrupts us because it loves us too much to leave us unchanged.

Immediate response

Life with Jesus may not be predictable, but it is always purposeful.

So if He’s interrupting you, don’t mute His voice. Don’t hit “snooze” on your calling. Don’t run from the very moment that could save you.

The kingdom isn’t asking for your convenience; it’s inviting your surrender. And on the other side of that surrender . . . is freedom.

The invitation demands a prompt response, as it did with the disciples. The interruption is now. When the kingdom interrupts life, respond as those first disciples did: immediately. **BA**

Kingdom Flame

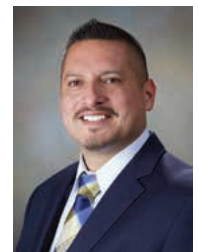
**In the dust of Galilee’s roads,
a voice lifts hope like morning light:
healing hands, gentle words,
the kingdom breaking through the night.
Blind eyes awoken, wounded hearts are
made whole,
and every step declares
God’s reign is near.
Through parables of seed and soil,
through mercy that restores the lost,
His love becomes the fire within us,
a kingdom flame that will not fade.**

Martha Hagemann



Moises Capetillo

serves as the assistant director of GC Missions and senior pastor of the congregation in Albuquerque, NM, alongside his wife, Victoria, and six children.



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by **Jamin Teran**

It is easy to recognize a place where sick people are. As you walk into any medical facility, the plain walls, sterile scent, long hallways, and waiting rooms are only a prelude to the faces you see. Uncertainty, pain, and despair are often reflected in the expressions of patients or in the eyes of those anxiously awaiting news about a loved one in surgery.

This daily reality awakens in us a deep longing for God's kingdom to come.

In Luke 4:18, Jesus declares, "He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted." A defining mark of the kingdom is that Christ comforts hearts shattered by personal calamities, painful circumstances, and the consequences of sin. This verse makes it clear that the gospel brings healing and restoration to those in need.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus demonstrated the reality of Luke 4:18. Leprosy rendered a person unclean ceremonially, physically, and spiritually. Those afflicted with it were forced to live outside the city, village, or camp, and they were often viewed as objects of divine punishment. This treatment left individuals feeling hollow, unworthy, and stripped of dignity.

Luke 17:11-19 is the well-known account of Jesus traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a village, ten men with leprosy cried out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" In this powerful scene, those who had been pushed aside in society encountered the One who brought the kingdom near. The Healer of the brokenhearted was passing through their lives.

Jesus' instruction was simple: "Go, show yourselves to the priests." Without hesitation, they obeyed in trust. And as the lepers went, they were cleansed. They experienced freedom, restoration,

and transformation — something only the Master could accomplish.

Transformation after such an act must be acknowledged. But in this story, only one man returned to give thanks to the Healer, recognizing the Source of his restoration and honoring the sovereign Lord.

We can learn much from this story. To experience the kingdom today, we must approach with grateful hearts. To understand the fullness of God's kingdom, we must be willing to receive healing even as we walk in faith and obedience. Jesus not only saw the leper in his desperation when he cried out for mercy but also granted him something greater. Notice Jesus' words: "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

Christ did more than heal the man's body; He restored his communion with God and reaffirmed his dignity.

Today we may find ourselves in different situations: some in waiting rooms of uncertainty, others carrying silent burdens, and some longing for restoration. Yet the kingdom of God is not distant; it draws near wherever Jesus is welcomed. True restoration is about physical and spiritual change — a transformed heart that recognizes the Giver.

The one leper who returned understood that the greatest miracle was not merely cleansed skin but a renewed relationship with God. Gratitude opened the door to something deeper than healing: wholeness. **BA**

Jamin Teran is director of Communications for the General Conference. She writes from Laredo, TX.





Bread of Life

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Hungering for spiritual
nourishment in Jesus.

by Mike Wallace

Walking in the front door of my home to the culinary smell of freshly baked bread is simply awesome! Fresh-baked whole wheat or honey and olive oil bread will melt into your pallet and win the blue ribbon at the county fair.

I quickly grab the bread knife and slice a huge, thick chunk right out of the middle of the warm bread. Then I squeeze the loaf back together and pretend

nothing is missing from the middle. I smear butter on the slice and watch it soak into the bread. Then comes the honey, dripping and gooey, running over the sides as I take my first bite of the bread. Butter and honey run down my chin as I greedily devour the homemade bread and savor the aroma of fresh baking. What a wonderful treat to come home to every day!

Daily bread

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Have we ever thought of Jesus as that first warm slice of freshly baked bread, smothered in butter and honey? He identifies Himself as

the Bread of Life (John 6:35). So when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we are asking for more than food and income. We are really praying for Jesus to be in us, as He is our daily spiritual Bread of Life. With Jesus in us, we can think and act in accordance with God's wishes throughout the day.

When Jesus says He is the Bread of Life, He reveals Himself as the great "I Am." God told Moses His name — "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14) — and then promised to bring Israel to "a land flowing with milk and honey" (v. 17). What a wonderful physical meal God was preparing for Israel. Fresh bread with milk and honey!

But in John 6, Jesus demonstrates His spiritual meal of milk and honey. The chapter starts with the miracle feeding of bread to five thousand followers using five loaves of barley bread and two small fish. After lunch they gathered twelve baskets of leftover fragments. Jesus then spent the night walking across the Sea of Galilee to the town of Capernaum. In Capernaum, Jesus began to transition the people's thinking from physical bread for nourishment to spiritual bread for everlasting life.

Spiritual hunger

Let's listen in as Jesus teaches the multitudes His new way of thinking:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him" (John 6:26, 27).

The people are physically filled. However, Jesus tells them there is something much more important than physical food. They then ask Him for a sign of who He truly is so they will believe in Him: "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'" (v. 31). The people are still thinking physically instead of spiritually.

Though Jesus showed them He is the Bread of Life, they still do not believe or understand who He is.

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (vv. 32-35).

Jesus, the Bread of Life. Spiritual hunger fulfilled with the sweet aroma of fresh heavenly bread flowing with the milk and honey of the Lord.

Jesus concludes by giving people the hope of the gospel and true everlasting life: "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (v. 40).

Only in Jesus do we have life:

"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven — not as your fathers ate the manna,

and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever" (vv. 57, 58).

Moses and manna

The crowd that had been fed by the five loaves and two fish the day before gathered at the synagogue in Capernaum, but they did not understand what Jesus was offering. More than Moses and physical manna, Jesus was offering the true spiritual Bread of Life: Himself. Those who continue to think and eat physically will die. Those who change and eat His spiritual bread will live forever.

How wonderful it is to come home to a house filled with the aroma of freshly baked bread. Even better is Jesus, our true Bread of Life, who satisfies our spiritual hunger with life forevermore. **BA**

Mike Wallace, an elder in CoG7, writes from Montana where he lives with his wife Bonnie. He has been known to raise a sheep or two.



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Greater Than Moses

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The supremacy of Jesus in
the fourth Gospel.

by R. Herbert

While all four Gospels weave rich verbal tapestries depicting the life and ministry of Jesus, each with its own details, John has the most material not found in other Gospels and gives us many unique insights.

A particularly interesting example is found in John's portrayal of Jesus as the prophet who would arise like Moses, of whom God said, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and

I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18).

John specifically refers to Jesus as a prophet more often than any other Gospel writer. And just as John includes a number of groups of sevens in his account (the seven signs of Jesus' messiahship, His seven "I AM" sayings, etc.), he directly mentions Moses (who plays an important role in the fourth Gospel) in seven passages (1:17, 45; 3:14; 5:45, 46; 6:32; 7:19-23; 9:28-33). These seven "Moses" statements relate, compare, and contrast Jesus and Moses in some way. While they all elevate Moses, they also show that Jesus was superior to Israel's greatest prophet.

Subtle connections

Many other less direct connections between Jesus and Moses are in John that we might not notice, but Jewish readers of the first century would.

For example, the prologue (first two chapters) of John is carefully structured to show events occurring over seven days — just like Genesis 1. We may not notice this because Genesis spells out the seven days numerically ("the first day," etc.), while John, who begins his account with a clear "In the beginning" reference, is more subtle ("the next day," etc.). Still, his pattern of seven days is just as clear.

In addition to seven days of formative events in the opening section of each account, there

are also specific parallels. For instance, in Genesis 1, we find light appearing on the first day of creation (vv. 3-5), while in John 1, Jesus is said to be the light of the world (vv. 4-9). On the second day of creation in Genesis, we find God's relationship with the heavens (1:6-8), while in John's first chapter, Jesus is confirmed by the heavens (vv. 32-34), and so on.

Miracles

After this introduction, John builds most of his Gospel around the figure of Moses, the Exodus, and the Passover. Even in the prologue, John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God, emphasizing the central role of Jesus in a new and greater exodus.

Most importantly, the seven miracles John selects as signs of Jesus' messiahship mirror, in effect, the plagues of Exodus. But Jesus is shown as having a superior ministry to that of Moses. While the seven Exodus plagues represented miraculous but negative displays of God's power, the miracles of Jesus in John are not destructive but positive.

When we compare the Exodus plagues to the seven miracles John chooses to describe, the parallels are inescapable. For example, in Exodus, the water of the Nile is turned to blood. In John, water is turned to wine (2:1-11). The killing of Pharaoh's firstborn son in Exodus parallels the healing of the Jewish nobleman's son (4:46-54). The plague of blinding darkness that struck the Egyptians in Exodus likens the healing of the blind man in John (9:1-7), and so on. This understanding helps us see why,

of all Jesus' many miracles, John selects certain ones as proof of Jesus' role as the prophet like Moses.

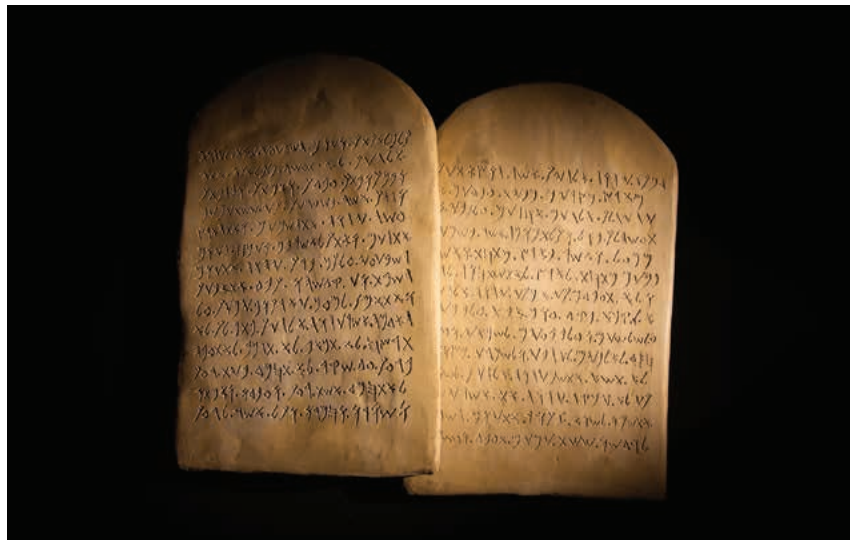
Echoes and affirmations

There are many other echoes of the Exodus in John, as well as parallels with Moses' ministry. When John tells us that "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son" (1:18), the allusion to Moses not being able to behold God directly (Exodus 33:20) would have been clear to his original readers.

Most first century readers of John's Gospel would have known that Moses famously bemoaned the fact that Israel would need a shepherd: "May the LORD . . . appoint someone over this community to go out

In the same way, consider John's account of the paralyzed man who had waited by the pool of Bethesda thirty-eight years (5:5), apparently because of some ongoing sin (v. 14). Why does John include these details? Although Scripture often rounds up Israel's time in the wilderness to forty years, the actual time involved was thirty-eight years (Deuteronomy 2:14). John's Bethesda story reminds us that while Moses' leadership could not save the Israelites from the results of their ongoing sin, Jesus could.

The failure of Moses to provide salvation for Israel is, in fact, a continuing theme in John. Moses himself told the Israelites, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD;



and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd" (Numbers 27:16, 17). John shows Jesus was the answer to that prayer — the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) whose sheep would "come in and go out" before Him (v. 9).

perhaps I can make atonement for your sin" (Exodus 32:30, et al.). But on every occasion, Moses could only delay the punishment for the people's sin. The whole generation of the Exodus under his care sinned and was driven back into the wilderness where the people died. John is contrasting this situation in

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recording Jesus' words "All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37).

Exact equivalents

The connections between the story of Moses and that of Jesus in John are not just coincidental; often they are direct verbal correspondences.

John is the only Gospel that tells us the Jews murmured, or grumbled, against Jesus (v. 41) just as the Israelites had murmured against Moses. And John alone records Jesus' words that

continuous in John's account, to the extent that when his Gospel contains a story found in the other Gospels, it is usually because John uses it in reference to Moses. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all report the miracle feeding of the five thousand. But when we read John's account carefully, we find that John reports this miracle in the specific setting of the wilderness and Passover (6:10-13). And, of course, John shows that Jesus emphasizes the similarity of His feeding of the five thousand with the God-given manna associated with Moses' care for the Israelites (vv. 31-35).

Even Jesus' miracle of walk-

the Exodus narratives featuring Moses but also shows that Jesus is far greater than Moses. The examples are numerous, but if we are to learn from them, we must see these correspondences as we read John and must be aware of his motivation in making them. When we do this, we see a clearer picture not only of Moses but also of the One Moses foreshadowed.

We should realize that long before the Christian church was troubled by pagan doctrines from without and heresies from within, the greatest theological problem of the first century was that many Jews could not, or would not, see the supremacy of Jesus Christ compared to Moses. This underpinned much of Judaism's rejection of Christianity.

It was this situation that John addressed in writing his Gospel. Through careful use of both direct statement and indirect allusion, John powerfully shows that Jesus was indeed the prophet promised by Moses. John also shows that He was greater than Moses in coming not to deliver His people from Egyptian (or Roman) slavery, but from the greater slavery to sin and death. John shows us that Jesus was infinitely greater than Moses and that the ministry of salvation He brought was infinitely greater too. **BA**

R. Herbert (a pen name) holds a doctorate in biblical studies and ancient Near Eastern languages and archaeology. Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version*.



the Son does (Greek: *poieo*) what He sees the Father doing and that the Father shows (*deiknumi*) Him all (*panta*) that He does (5:19, 20). This is a direct reference to Exodus 25:9 in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament used by many first century Jews and by John. It states that Moses makes (*poieo*) the tabernacle according to all (*panta*) that God showed (*deiknuo*) him.

Such allusions to Moses are

ing on the water (vv. 16-21) may have been selected by John as an allusion to Moses and the parting of the Red Sea. While Moses and later men of God may have parted bodies of water with God's miraculous help, John reminds us that only Jesus walked on water.

Finding Christ

So there is no question that John builds his Gospel around

Questions & Answers



Is the kingdom present or future? Why does Jesus talk about it both ways?

An important fact must be acknowledged. Not only *present* and *future*, as the question states, but *always*: There was, is, and always will be a kingdom because God is eternal. God eternally reigns sovereign over the realm that is His kingdom. However, these questions center on why Jesus Christ spoke of the kingdom in terms of its current existence and its future reality, often referred to as the *already but not yet* concept.

This theological concept holds that believers are actively taking part in the kingdom of God, although the kingdom will not reach fullness until its future glory. The “already” side of the kingdom is sometimes called *inaugurated eschatology*. This expresses that Jesus brought the kingdom to earth with His first coming. Its authority is currently active (already inaugurated), but the full visible reign of God has not yet been established in its entirety on the earth (not yet).

The *already but not yet* paradigm was developed by Princeton theologian Geerhardus Vos early in the twentieth century. In the 1950s, George Eldon Ladd, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, argued that there are two meanings of the kingdom of God: 1) God’s authority and right to rule and 2) the realm in which God exercises His authority. The kingdom, then, is described in Scripture both as a realm entered now and as a realm entered in the future. Thus, the kingdom of God is both a present reality and a future hope. It is present through Jesus’ ministry and the Holy Spirit in believers, yet it will reach its full consummation only when Christ returns.

Now to the main question. As examples of

Jesus’ dual usage, He said, “For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21), and He prayed, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Grasping Jesus’ intent: When He said the kingdom was “at hand” (Mark 1:15), He meant that He, the King, was present. Further, when Christ is in us, the kingdom is “at hand” for those who presently hear the message through the Great Commission. The kingdom was breaking into the world through Jesus’ actions, miracles, and message. It continues into this world through His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

When Jesus spoke of a future kingdom, with His apocalyptic return in glory to judge and finalize His reign (Matthew 25:31-34), He was speaking of when the spiritual age (already) will be united with the glorified reality of the kingdom’s physical existence (not yet). Hebrews 2:8, 9; John 18:36; and 1 John 3:2 further discuss this distinction.

So while the biblical basis for the *already but not yet* method of interpretation is true, we must avoid an error: We do not grow the kingdom. We receive it or it comes (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2). People who receive Jesus and His terms for citizenship are included in His kingdom when it comes to them (Mark 10:15). Jesus’ parables of the kingdom picture it as yeast in dough and a tree growing. In other words, the kingdom is slowly working toward ultimate fulfillment. It is not sporadically “breaking through” to bring us comfort in this world, as some erroneously teach.

While we may not yet feel the reality, Romans 8:30 and Ephesians 2:4-7 speak of it as certainty. The kingdom is an eternal certainty now and forever.

— Elder Chip Hinds

Finding My Home of Healing



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Christ's deliverance from death and decay — then and now.
by Sarah Schwerin

I clawed and bit myself as tears streamed down my face. Then I crossed to the other side of the room, looked at myself in the mirror, and screamed insults. “Worthless! Ugly! Unlovable!”

This scene would replay throughout my childhood, adolescence, and young adult years. For too long, I believed the lies of the Enemy — lies, like no one wanted to hear what I had to say. No one wanted to be with me. No one could ever love me. I felt I needed to punish myself for the trauma I had undergone.

Fearing hurt and rejection, I held others at arm’s length. After all, who would ever accept me once they knew my past? My depression and anxiety cloaked me in self-loathing, a wound deeper than the scratches I inflicted on myself.

In a bad place

In Mark 5:1-20, Jesus encountered a demon-possessed man who also had been driven to self-harm. Like me, he lived in isolation. Others had tried to help, but nothing seemed to improve his condition. The demons within him seemed stronger than everything else. Stronger than the chains used to bind him. Stronger than the love of friends and family. Stronger even than his own self-will. Nothing could help him.

This man faced not the fear

of rejection but rejection itself. Driven away from friends and family, he was no longer known by his name but by his condition: demoniac. He lived in the tombs, a place of death and decay. A place that would make Jews ritually unclean.

Encountering Jesus

But then Jesus arrived and changed everything. He crossed the sea to meet the man where he was. Jesus didn’t wait for him to get control over his problems. He didn’t wait for the man to approach Him. Instead, He went to the tombs and met the man in the lonely place he had made his home.

Jesus knew the man needed freedom only He could provide. So with His words, Jesus commanded the unclean spirits to leave the man, freeing him

from the terror that had stalked him, as well as his isolation and self-harm.

Unlike the religious leaders of the day, Jesus sought out those on the fringes of society — those on the other side of the tracks. Every move He made was intentional. Reaching out to those considered unworthy (Matthew 9:10-13), He didn't fear that their sin and filth would pollute Him. He let a bleeding woman and lepers touch Him (Mark 5:24-34; Matthew 8:1-4). He showed us that the most important thing is not our outward appearance but the state of our heart — the genuineness of our faith.

Jesus provides healing

Jesus didn't use the elaborate and ineffective ways of Jewish exorcists of the day. He drove out demons with His words and sometimes by laying His hands on people. Likewise, Jesus' healing miracles frequently combined speech and physical touch.

I experienced this in my own life. When I was in college, God's words reached me in my place of death and decay. Like the friends of the demoniac and the demoniac himself, I had tried everything. The problem within me seemed bigger than anything else.

Then I felt a tug in my spirit to go to a Christian counselor on my college campus. As we tackled my traumatic past, my depression and anxiety seemed to shrink. But that was only the beginning.

I began to read God's Word anew. In the pages of Scripture, David's laments spoke to my heart. Job's questioning sounded like my own questions. Jesus'

message of love spoke to my lonely and broken heart. God spoke into my depression and anxiety. He met me in my place of death and decay and brought me to a new home filled with wholeness and healing.

I still struggle with depression and anxiety. But when I pray and read God's Word, I remember how God worked in my past and how He continues to work in my life. God's words are still healing and remind me that His power is bigger than any problem I may face in this world.

New kingdom

Jesus' exorcism in Mark 5, and the others mentioned in the Gospels, helped to usher in the kingdom of God in our present age. They show us that His kingdom is unlike the worldly kingdom in Jesus' day and in ours.

The methods that the demoniac and his community used to solve their problems did not work. They used their own strength and power. Yet no self-help book, no human invention can fix the problems of this world. Only with God's power

can evil spirits be driven out. Only with God's power can we all find the freedom and healing we desperately need.

Thanks to that power, the demon-possessed man was freed to leave his home among the tombs. He returned to his community to make a new home, where he would tell others of the mercy and freedom only Jesus gives.

God's kingdom is not based on maintaining outward appearances, putting ourselves first, or fixing our own problems. It involves experiencing God's healing power, then seeking others — especially those on the fringe of society — and telling them of the One who meets us in our places of death and decay. He is the one who gives us a new home filled with healing and wholeness. **BA**

Sarah Schwerin
writes from
Sorrento, FL.



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■ [Leadership]

Becoming

by Whaid Rose

I love good bread. So when the *CT Daily Briefing* arrived at my inbox with an article titled “Ministry of Bread,” by Rachel Pfeiffer, I was naturally curious.

It turned out to be a meaningful read. It is about how bread is ingrained in Ukrainian life and culture and how “As the war continues, pastors and churches across Ukraine are working to bring people both the bread they need to feed their bodies and the bread they need for their souls.”

This calls to mind the rich symbolism of bread in Scripture: God’s miraculous supply of manna in the wilderness; Jesus being born in Bethlehem (the “house of bread”); Satan tempting Jesus to turn stones into bread; Jesus declaring, “I am the bread of life”; the breaking of bread as a seminal practice of the early church. The Bible has a lot to say about bread.

It makes sense, then, that of the miracles of Jesus, the feeding of the multitudes is recorded in detail in all four Gospels. No other was so public, performed before so many witnesses. We

can glean several lessons from this event.

Ministry insights

Solitude and rest. In Mark’s account (6:30-44), the disciples had just recounted their busy day when Jesus responded, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” (v. 31).

This highlights the first of several principles gleaned from the story: Solitude and rest are essential to effective ministry. Mark notes that many people were coming and going, so much so that the disciples “did not even have time to eat” (v. 31). Ministry involves overwhelming demands and responsibilities, requiring regular withdrawals for rest and renewal.

Compassion. But things did not go as planned. Seeing Jesus and the disciples withdraw by boat, the crowds scouted out their intended destination and arrived ahead of them (v. 33).

Most would have found this frustrating, and Jesus would have been perfectly justified in turning the crowds away. But instead, “Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not

having a shepherd” (v. 34). This underscores another lesson: Ministry must be driven by a genuine compassion for the deep needs of people.

Meeting needs. This point is expanded on in the next three verses. To summarize, at the end of a long day, the people were tired and hungry, and there was nothing for them to eat, for it was “a deserted place” (vv. 35-37). The disciples’ natural impulse was to dismiss the crowd. But Jesus suggested, “You give them something to eat,” highlighting another important lesson: Ministry is about meeting people’s needs, and we are to be an active part in doing that.

Jesus’ statement startled the disciples initially, but the resources needed were wonderfully supplied. From a lunchbox containing two fish and five loaves of bread, thousands ate and were filled, and there were baskets full of leftovers! Two lessons emerge here: Jesus always supplies the resources to match whatever task He assigns us, and God uses ordinary people to meet God-sized needs in ways we would never imagine. God can do much with whatever we place in His hands.

Bread to the World

Broken world, divine supply

It's too bad the disciples looked to themselves instead of trusting Jesus when they saw a big need. What's worse is that we often do the same thing. Overwhelmed by the enormity and complexity of human needs around us, we conclude there's no way our small loaves can make any lasting difference.

Yet in the description of the crowd and the surroundings — vulnerable, hungry people in a desolate place — we see a picture of our world. And in the unfolding miracle, we're given clues as to how we can become bread to the masses.

Ultimately, the outcome of this story results from Jesus' compassion for the people. But in John's Gospel, Jesus is not just a multiplier of bread; He is Himself the Bread of Life (6:35). The temporal bread He gives is symbolic of the living bread He is (vv. 48-59). Just as He is light and calls us to be light in a dark world, so He is bread and calls us to become bread to a hungry world.

Four takeaways

This happens by becoming what the late Henri Nouwen

calls "The Beloved." He asserts that every human being is, fundamentally, the beloved of God. Fleshing out the truth of our beloved-ness is the greatest pursuit, a journey marked out before us by the four things Jesus did in multiplying the fish and loaves.

First, just as Jesus took these elements, so we must see ourselves as having been taken, or chosen, by Jesus. In doing this, we find identity and purpose.

Second, just as Jesus blessed the fish and loaves, so we must believe we are the blessed. To bless someone is to speak words of affirmation into their lives, which is what the Father did for the Son when He declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Third, just as Jesus broke the fish and loaves, so we must face the reality of our brokenness, ever mindful that the gospel offers good news to broken people. As this story shows, in the hands of Jesus, whatever is broken is transformed into something beautiful.

Fourth, just as Jesus gave the fish and loaves to the disciples to be distributed, so we must give ourselves away in the service of

others, in which we'll find the greatest fulfillment in life. As Frederick Buechner wisely said, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

This is how we embrace the reality of our beloved-ness. Like the fish and the loaves, we must be taken, blessed, broken, and given away.

As Gandhi well observed, "There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread." So let's turn afresh to the story of the fish and loaves. And, moved by Jesus' compassion, let us take up this ministry of bread, giving people both the bread they need to feed their bodies and the bread they need for their souls. **BA**

Whaid Rose is dean of the Artios Center for Vibrant Leadership and pastors the Newton, NC congregation.





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Living today under
God's reign.
by **Ruhama Assefa**

I was listening to the song “So Will I (100 Billion X)” on a car ride out of the city. I love those trips — the trees, mountains, birds flying by the window, and the breathtaking geography of our country. It was late afternoon, and the sunset made everything feel even more special. As the music played softly, my heart was captivated by the beauty all around me.

In that moment, I felt deeply grateful for all I have. I let go of every worry and simply enjoyed

the view. I am a lover of nature more than most things, especially when I’m far from the city’s noise. How amazing is our God, who created all this vast beauty and yet remains intentional about every detail.

As the song continued, my thoughts drifted far beyond the car. I had an exam that morning, and this trip felt like a quiet reward from God — a reminder of His faithfulness.

Suddenly, the Holy Spirit brought to my mind a conversation I had five years ago with a woman after a church service. She was much older than I and deeply spiritual. She gave me a ride home that evening, close to sunset, with the wind gently moving the trees. She told me something that caught my heart: “Do you know that even the trees

and creatures worship God? How much more should we worship Him in our daily lives?”

Her words stayed with me — the idea that worship isn’t just for church but a way of living, a path we walk every day. I looked again at the world outside my window and imagined how beautiful heaven must be if this earth already reflects even a fraction of God’s glory.

In that moment, the Holy Spirit quietly stirred my heart toward the coming kingdom — God’s reign not just in heaven but here and now, in our lives.

If creation itself worships God without fail, then surely we who bear His image are called to live out His kingdom here, following Jesus’ footsteps in every part of our lives.

Kingdom in action

Jesus' entire ministry was centered on the good news of God's kingdom. He used every opportunity — walking along dusty roads, teaching crowds on hillsides, or sharing meals with friends — to announce that the kingdom of God was near (Mark 1:15). He didn't wait for the perfect place or the perfect audience; His message was urgent and for everyone.

First, Jesus preached and proclaimed the kingdom, calling people to repentance and faith. Then He taught what the kingdom looks like in practice, inviting people into a new way of living marked by love, justice, and mercy. Last, He demonstrated the kingdom's power through healing the sick, restoring the broken, and casting out darkness (Luke 4:18, 19). His miracles were signs that God's reign was breaking into the world.

Yet today, many believe that sharing this good news is the responsibility only of pastors, missionaries, or church leaders. The truth is, the mission Jesus gave — to make disciples of all nations — is for every follower of Christ (Matthew 28:19, 20). Each of us is called to continue the work He began, reflecting His love and truth in our everyday lives.

I've seen this firsthand through a team my friend is part of called Unity for Revival. Their vision and mission are inspiring: They reach students, youth, and young adults not only in the city but also in remote areas, driven by a desire to share God's kingdom. What excites me most is their youth and zeal. These young believers are continuing Jesus' work

with passion and faithfulness, leaving a powerful legacy.

This ministry's approach has deepened my understanding of what mission truly means. It is a decision fueled by spiritual hunger, a commitment to live and share the gospel message wherever God places us. Jesus didn't command from a distance; He came down, lived among us, and embodied the mission of God's kingdom. We are called to follow His footsteps in our own spheres of influence.

Reflecting the kingdom

If Jesus modeled kingdom living by preaching, teaching, and healing, what does that call us to in our daily lives? How do we reflect God's reign not just in words but in actions?

justice, reflecting God's heart in how we treat others. It means demonstrating love and mercy as Jesus did, showing grace even when it is difficult. Living under God's kingdom also invites us to exercise faith and prayer, trusting God's power to overcome life's challenges. Ultimately, it calls us to be a light in the world, influencing others through humility and truth.

God's kingdom is both spiritual and practical. When we surrender fully, we become His ambassadors, reflecting kingdom values in a world desperate for hope. Through living under God's kingdom, we experience peace amid chaos, strength amid weakness, and victory amid battles because the King of Kings is our constant guide and refuge.

“Jesus didn't command from a distance; He came down, lived among us, and embodied the mission of God's kingdom.”

For one thing, we must embrace His rule and reign in every part of our lives. The kingdom is not just a future hope but a present reality, where God's authority guides our thoughts, actions, and decisions. Living in His kingdom calls us to seek His will first, putting His purposes above our own plans. It means walking in righteousness and

Lukewarm faith

The problem is, many of us fall into a lukewarm faith, going through rituals without true passion or commitment. The Bible warns us of this condition: “So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:16).

This truth reminds me of a powerful scene from the movie *War Room*. Elizabeth Jordan, a realtor, is overwhelmed by frustration and personal struggles. She visits Miss Clara's home to discuss selling her house. Miss Clara offers her coffee, but when Elizabeth finally tastes it, she realizes it is lukewarm.

Miss Clara gently explains that just like the coffee, many believers are neither hot nor cold — they are lukewarm in their faith.

This moment becomes a spiritual awakening for Elizabeth. She begins to see that her struggles are part of a deeper spiritual battle that requires intentional prayer, surrender, and commitment to God's kingdom.

Elizabeth's transformation begins as she embraces prayer as her true "war room," understanding that serving God's kingdom without this foundation is difficult, if not impossible. Lukewarm faith must be challenged by the

power of prayer and devotion.

Let us be like the wise virgins in Jesus' parable, waiting expectantly and prepared for the Bridegroom's arrival. Their readiness reflects the attitude God calls us to have as we live under His kingdom, continually vigilant and faithful (Matthew 25:1-13).

Expecting the kingdom


As we walk through life, embracing God's kingdom and mission means living under His rule here and now, not just waiting for the future. It is following Jesus' example by loving deeply, serving faithfully, and standing firm in truth, even when it's difficult.

God's kingdom is not far off; it is breaking in among us in our hearts, families, and communities. Each of us is invited to participate in this divine unfolding, living as ambassadors of hope and transformation in a world desperate for light.

So let us choose today to lead kingdom lives, rejecting lukewarm complacency and being like the wise virgins, ready and expectant with lamps burning bright.

The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). May this be our daily cry and our firm resolve — until the day He returns.

Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus, come. **BA**



Our site, baonline.org, has more to discover than what you can see. Each section develops and encourages your spiritual life. Here are some of the sections you can enjoy:

- *Now What?* highlights one article every month that explores challenges that can cause our faith to fail. God always has the right answer to any struggle.
- Online Extras are articles that didn't make it to our print magazine due to space limitations. Enjoy the wide variety of topics.
- Media4U covers faith-based movies, apps, books, and other media. Check out what you and your family can enjoy.
- Audio BA makes it possible for you to listen to the entire issue of the *Bible Advocate* in English and Spanish. The BA also streams on all main audio online platforms.

Ruhama Tewodros Assefa writes from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



David Discovers

Jesus' Power



© Ranta Images | istockphoto.com

by Marcia Sanders

"Wow! Jesus healed so many people when He was here on earth," David said. "Blind, deaf, mute, paralyzed, lame, demon possessed. He was one busy guy."

Jason smiled. "But do you know which story is my favorite?"

David thought for a moment. "Was it the lame man who had been trying to get into the pool at Siloam all those years, but someone always beat him to it?"

"Nope. My favorite is the guy who had been blind all of his life — from birth! Can you imagine never seeing your mom's or dad's face?"

David stared into space. "No, I can't imagine it. Is that why it's your favorite story — because he had been blind his entire life?"

"Not really. I like the stuff afterward. I mean, some of the people weren't sure it was the same man. They were arguing among themselves because they were so shocked that he could see. Then they dragged him before the Pharisees, as if they could explain something that they had not even witnessed."

"Yeah," David laughed. "Those Pharisees couldn't get past the fact that it had happened on the Sabbath. As if they could have healed the man on any day. Then they tried to say that the guy had not really been blind! But too many people had known him. They couldn't pull that one."

Jason grinned. "Then they dragged in the guy's parents — and he was a grown man! But the parents had a great answer: 'He is of age; ask him.'"

"Yeah." David nodded. "And when they did ask him, he had an equally good response. They tried to get the guy to say that Jesus had sinned because He healed on the Sabbath. I love how the man basically said, 'Whether He's a sinner, I don't know. But I do know this: I was blind, but now I see.'"

Both boys were laughing as Dad came into the room. "OK, what has gotten you two going?"

"Would you believe we were just reading about the miracles of Jesus?" David asked.

"Well, while I enjoy studying them, I've never found them funny," Dad replied.

"Oh no, sir," Jason spoke up quickly. "We weren't laughing at Jesus or the miracle He performed. We just love how confused those Jewish leaders were. They wanted to condemn Him for healing on the Sabbath, but Jesus was performing amazing miracles that they had never seen before. They were so out of their element."

"I'll have to agree with you there," Dad said.

"They didn't know how to respond to Christ, and, unfortunately, too many people today still don't know what to do with Him. They can't seem to just simply trust Him."

David grew serious. "But we trust Him, right?"

"We do." Dad smiled reassuringly. "And maybe our trust will help others come to trust Jesus too."

BA

Marcia Sanders writes from Fort Smith, AR, where she attends the Church of God (Seventh Day) with her husband, Randy.



My Favorite Verse

1 Peter 5:7



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Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you (ESV).

by Keziah Gonzalez

This is my favorite verse because it reminds me that I do not have to hold on to all of my worries. I can hand them over to God, who always provides peace for me.

God never wants anyone to carry any anxiety about events we cannot control. He wants us to trust Him and give Him control. As humans, we are not meant to control our lives. When we try to, anxieties accumulate because we are not relying on God to help us. God has the first and last word in our lives. He knew how our lives would go when He created us.

Another reason 1 Peter 5:7 is my favorite verse is it ties in with fear, an emotion we tend to create. For example, we might think that trying new things will lead to

bad consequences. The majority of the time, they are not as horrifying as we imagine.

Sometimes we suffer consequences to our actions, and we feel anxious. God wants us to cast those on Him as well so He can help us through them. He will keep us safe and help us avoid situations in the future that will hurt us.

Injuries play a role in worrying as well. I take part in sports and have suffered many injuries, which take me out of a sport for days, weeks, or months. So I cast that worry on God.

After a while, the thought of never fully healing and participating in sports crosses my mind. But I have to remember that God knows how long it will take that injury to heal. He has planned my entire life since before I was born. Every event is in His hands.

“Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” This verse also reminds us that we should not worry over the smallest things. God knows exactly how I am going to arrive at school tomorrow. He knows about our jobs and activities. He will provide food, provisions, and shelter. Every day when we wake up, we can give any worries over to Him. In that way, we will experience His peace no matter what happens. **BA**

Keziah Gonzalez

is fifteen years old. She is the daughter of Gerson and Kristin Gonzalez and attends the Claremore, OK congregation.



Editor's note: "My Favorite Verse" is a new column in the BA. Submit a reflection on your favorite verse to jason.overman@cog7.org.



Jesus, Like a Seaside Cliff

Temptation slips around my feet, a tide that rises — ankles, knees — and tugs and crawls away. The sand deceives, seems firm, but slides and sucks my feet beneath the muck — I fall.

Temptation crashes like a tempest wave against my feeble work to rise, and down with giddy rage it slams me. Hope to save myself is lost. I fear that I will drown.

But Jesus, like a seaside cliff, resists the current's tug and drift. And Satan's best temptation wave can only break and hiss against the rock that weathers every test.

I'm washed against this cliff, and climb to stand on ground that's strong and safe — not sinking sand.

Zachary Sigmon

Celebrating "Now What?"



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Did you know that 2026 marks thirty years since *Now What?* started online? In 1996, the Internet was just getting started, and the Bible Advocate Press saw an opportunity to tap into a new readership. People could read stories about how Jesus entered the toughest situations and turned lives around.

In thirty years, *Now What?* has covered such topics as sexual addiction, death/grief, mental health struggles, physical health issues, abuse, and dementia/Alzheimer's. Stories focus on people who have nowhere else to turn but to the One who's eager to redeem and restore.

Here is feedback we've received from recent stories. Check out *Now What?* for yourself. And share a story with someone who needs to hear the good news. Visit nowwhat.cog7.org.

Matthew! It is *all* so true — He does not waste these things in our lives.

Thank you for your transparency and sharing how God grows you and teaches you as you walk with Him. (I also love your bits of humor with a powerful, strong message.)

I will be praying for you and full recovery.

Jacki



"Concussed," by Kristen Joy Wilks

A health crisis reaps an unusual harvest.

This is just what I needed to read. I have asthma and I've been lying in bed for days, a little tough to breathe at times. But I know God is with me he sent an angel named Kristen to encourage me. Thank you.

Julie

This spoke to me in a place of limitations and brought a lump in my throat. Thank you for sharing this. We can never hear enough about God's faithfulness. And

thanks for making it so readable! From the first paragraph, I had to read the whole thing.

Melody

Thank you so much for sharing this post. The head injury is so serious. I am convinced this is ultimately what took [my husband] as he had fallen so many times. Hope your head continues to heal.

Dottie

Thank you, Kristen. I so appreciate hearing just a bit of what you learned. You've encouraged me. I love your explanation of that difficult phrase in Matt. 25.

Judy

Your way with words as you told your story came alive for me. I am so encouraged by what you shared about the Master in



"Where I Found Forgiveness," by Sue Laramore

Jesus makes the difference in healing past hurts.

That is a beautiful journey of walking the true path of forgiveness. Thank you, Sue, for sharing your heart with all of its hurts. And then letting God heal you! It's such a testimony to your relationship with Jesus! Thank you.

Cindy

What a wonderful reading for this season. Blessed be God forever! A most beautifully written message that everyone can learn from. Emotion and tears for you and for your mother!

Marsha



ASLEEP IN JESUS

Nick Nimchuk

1933 - 2025

Nick Nimchuk (92) was born to Mike and Dora Nimchuk on December 4, 1933. He passed from this life on December 31, 2025.



Nick was raised on the family farm near Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. The family later moved to the farm in Hazel Dell, Saskatchewan. In 1957, he left the farm to work in the British Columbia mills. He married Dorothy Stiede on December 19, 1959, in Tacoma, Washington. They made their home in New Westminster, British Columbia, before moving back to his Saskatchewan farm in May 1960. Four daughters were born during these years.

In 1965, the Nimchuks moved to Stanberry, Missouri, where Nick attended classes at Midwest Bible College. He also worked in the print shop of the Bible Advocate Press.

Upon graduation, Nick preached for the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Saskatchewan, Alberta, South Dakota, and British Columbia. He retired in 2002, and he and Dorothy eventually settled in Medicine Hat as a final move.

Nick leaves to mourn his beloved wife, Dorothy; daughters Karolyn (Lowell) Forbes; Virginia (Paul) Ling; Florence (Omar) Mellado; and Judi Nimchuk; nine grandchildren; nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

For a full version of Nick's memorial, please visit our online Memorials page at churchright.org.



Let's Catch Up!

Check out our newsletter (artioscollege.org/newsletter/) where we highlight what happened in 2025, then subscribe at artioscollege.org/sign-up-for-news/. You will receive the newsletter in your inbox a couple of times a year so you don't miss out on the latest news, encouragement, and celebration!



Orphans and Widows

GC Missions is committed to helping orphans and widows in different countries where sister conferences are serving those less fortunate. You can donate through the following methods:

- Zelle, to give@cog7.org;
- check, mailed to P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233 (make sure you write "GC Missions" on the memo line);
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Missed Opportunities

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Shining the light of Christ
in your own corner of the
world.

by **Ronald Rousseau**

When people think of missionaries, they think about those who share the gospel in remote areas. But that takes most of us out of missions. The truth is, there are opportunities to be missionaries right where we are.

Unfortunately, other things can get in the way of seeing those opportunities to shine our light. Insight from God's Word shows us how to avoid doing this.

A mission story

I once spoke to a missionary about a mission she was involved with in South America. It was not the first time she had ministered there. While setting up the clinic site, she noticed two boys who seemed troubled, so she inquired of a church member about who they were. She learned that they were living in a broken home and facing many challenges.

One of the missionary's favorite methods of reaching children was to invite them out to have ice cream. She hoped they would come, and they did. The missionary noticed that when the children arrived at the ice cream store, their faces displayed disbelief. One of the little boys was submissive, while his brother was aggressive and angry. They looked at her with expressions

that asked, "What are you getting out of this?"

It took about three trips to get ice cream before the children softened up. These two boys needed profound intervention. While the ice cream was only a temporary fix, the missionary did what she could with the opportunity she was given.

Fortunately, the two boys returned every day to see this missionary. When it was time to leave, one of them asked her, "When will I see you again?"

This story leaves us with a question: Do we really have to travel thousands of miles just to minister to two young boys?

Basket and light

The answer is no. We have opportunities to shine Christ's light every day, but other things

can get in the way of this. Jesus explains in Matthew 5:15, “Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp-stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”

What is the basket that hides our light? Often it is our material possessions. In a recent sermon by Brother Josue Aleman of the 71st Street church in Sacramento, California, I was reminded of something I had forgotten about after living in the United States most of my life: We have a lot of stuff! Most people in the rest of the world do not. In many places, every item in a home serves a specific purpose, and most of the time there is nothing extra.

I remember during one mission trip, we visited a patient too sick to come to the clinic. A doctor from Monterrey, Mexico, and I walked about a mile and a half to his home. When we arrived, I was taken aback by the scarcity. The home was simple — a dirt floor with few belongings — but the purpose of each item was evident. One plate and one spoon for each member of the household. Three stones in the middle of the room for cooking. The father lay on a mat on the floor. I thought of my basement and all the stuff I own.

When we picture Matthew 5:15, we should imagine a home like that, where each item has a specific purpose for survival. Jesus’ mention of a basket isn’t accidental. In that time, the basket was used to carry provision to the home in the form of food. A visitor could easily judge the health of a household by glancing at the basket and whether it was full or empty.

There is a direct relationship

between the basket and the lamp: They signify our provisions and God’s presence. In this passage, Jesus isn’t just talking about any lamp; He’s talking about Himself. Throughout Scripture, the lamp symbolizes God’s presence and His Word. Jesus is *the* light that has been brought into the world.

So the question becomes, will we let Him shine in our daily lives, or will we cover Him up?

We may not have a lot of material things, but our basket can be anything: professions, positions, or pride in what we’ve achieved — the things we use to provide for ourselves. Matthew 5:15 tells us that these things should never become a hindrance to God’s light or blind us to the mission He has given us. Rather, our baskets should be resources through which His light can shine as we share our abundance.

This is why during GC mission trips, we take the opportunity to bless the community with gift baskets at the end of our nightly revival-style services. The baskets contain household essentials: groceries, blankets, hygiene products. We also have toys for the kids. It is telling that sometimes the children prefer to get a food basket than a toy when given the choice. This indicates their real need.

The proper place

There are surely “two boys” — or whomever — within your circle of influence whose lives could be brightened by an act of



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generosity or kindness. As Matthew 5:15 reminds us, it simply requires us to not cover our light with our basket. Once we put the basket in its proper place, the light of the lamp will become a tool to help those who are in need. We will find those two boys close by. If we don’t, we will discover that we’ve missed opportunities to do mission work right where we are.

The Great Commission tells us to make disciples wherever we may be. Sometimes it’s more intimidating to reach out to those closest to us, but we don’t want to pass anyone by. Your generous support allows the General Conference to do mission work in nations everywhere, but that doesn’t mean you can’t do missions where you live and work. Wherever that is, God wants you to shine His light and share your basket.

God is hoping you receive this message. And so are two little boys, somewhere. **BA**

Ronald Rousseau is the director of GC Missions and superintendent of the Central District. He writes from Chicago, IL.



Jamaica Disaster Relief Update



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GC Missions has been working with the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Jamaica to help in disaster relief efforts due to Hurricane Melissa that impacted that country. Here are answers to common questions about the response to the hurricane and the status of rebuilding in that country.

How are things in Jamaica right now?

The initial response in Jamaica came under the umbrella of disaster relief. We were focused on providing basic needs, such as drinking water and toiletries. Right now the focus is on rebuilding. The Church of God is looking to rebuild what was damaged and get the churches in Jamaica back to pre-disaster condition.

What did GC Missions do?

Once we understood the severity of the situation, we scheduled a meeting with the Church in Jamaica. GC Missions and the International Federation (IF) directors made sure the help we were going to provide was exactly what was needed. We also made sure that the proper accountability and transparency would be available.

We communicated to all of our General Conference churches and provided a means for them and individuals to contribute to this disaster relief effort.

Who else contributed?

While we have sent \$10,000 in cash so far, the Church in England has sent \$20,000. We are also aware that many in the Jamaican and Caribbean communities have participated in the relief effort

by sending funds and materials to alleviate the suffering.

What is next in the short term?

GC Missions is in talks with the Jamaican Church to see what is next and to collaborate with them. We continue our fund raising for them.

What is next in the long term?

Long-term plans will be developed in collaboration with the Church in Jamaica. We keep praying for Jamaica in its disaster relief efforts.

How can I help?

You can pray and donate to GC Missions several ways:

- Zelle, to give@cog7.org;
- check, mailed to P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233 (make sure you write "GC Missions" on the memo line);
- online at secure.cog7.org/giving/.

What if I want more information?

Please reach out to gcmisions@cog7.org.



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To All Nations

Scripture tells us that during the forty days between Christ's resurrection and His ascension to glory, Jesus, "through the Holy Spirit," gave commandments to the apostles and spoke to them of the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:2, 3).

During these days, the apostles, sitting at the feet of the One who conquered death and anticipating what was next in the kingdom of God, must have hung on His every word. Would it not have been amazing to listen in on that series of teachings? We can be confident that Jesus' teaching and commandments have been faithfully preserved and transmitted to us in the New Testament, as the lives, writings, and martyrdoms of these faithful servants testify to their dedication to do so.

One of Jesus' most impactful commands is in Luke 24:47: "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations. . . ." Note how Jesus connects repentance and remission (forgiveness) and how one leads into the other: Preach *repentance* and *remission*. Jesus directly ties in with John the Baptist's earlier preparatory message. As the forerunner to Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, John also preached repentance and remission (Luke 1:16, 17; 3:3).

Jesus declared that this message was to go to *all the nations* — not *some* but *all*. The call to turn from sin is not a nonessential doctrine. As the church carries the heart of Christ into the world and desires the healing of the nations, this is the good news that must be preached.

Why? First, because Scripture is clear to link

repentance, forgiveness, and healing in one inseparable whole (Luke 4:18; Acts 26:18). Second, *because the healing of the soul depends on it*. Scripture declares that without repentance, there is no forgiveness (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38). Yet in today's modern church, the Laodicean backdrop (Revelation 3:15) looms large as an obstacle to true gospel preaching that deals with sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Perhaps the preaching of repentance has never been so difficult or unpopular. But in truth, its importance has never been greater.

In our world, healing is the work of doctors, and their success is found largely in their ability to identify and diagnose disease and illness. If they do not, they will be unprepared and unable to bring the treatment that is needed. This natural work parallels the work of the Spirit. As the church preaches repentance and forgiveness in Jesus' name, the Spirit convicts of sin (John 16:8). In repentance and humility, the heart is positioned to receive the atoning work of Christ, which alone can pay the debt of the sinner and bring spiritual healing to the broken.

Family of God, in truth we desire the healing power of the gospel in our midst and in all the nations. Praising God, we recognize that we have received the truth that brings healing: the message of Jesus Christ. But let us remember, *repentance and remission* are part of His message. By His grace, may we proclaim this good news that all nations may find healing and grace. *May it be so!*

— Greg Lincoln



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