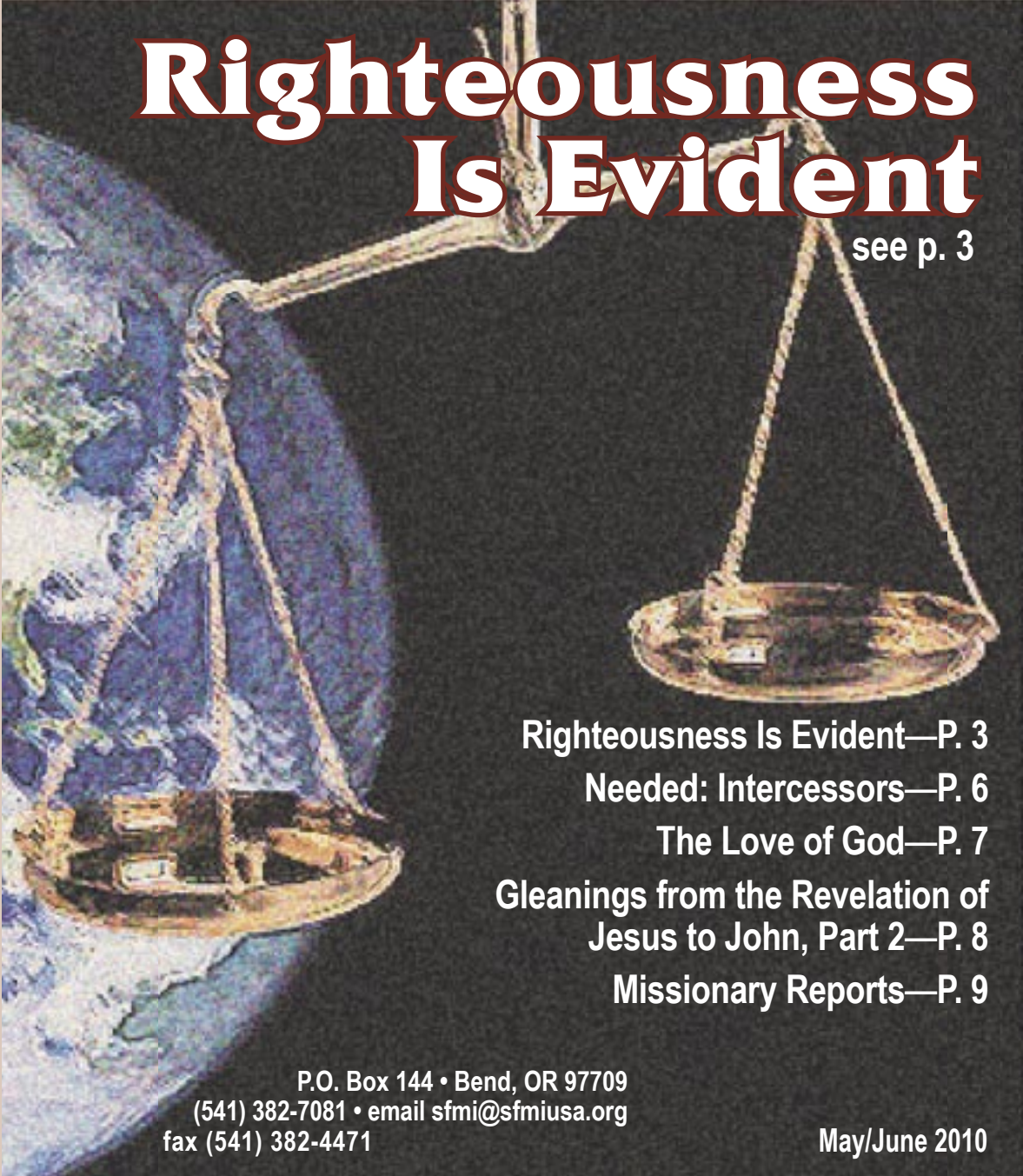


SHIELD OF FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

**SFMI**

**Prayer/News  
UPDATE**

Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches



# Righteousness Is Evident

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May/June 2010



## From the President's Desk

### Showing Forth the Praises of Him!

I once spoke with a man selling a Hare Krishna magazine, *Back to Godhood*. Note he was not calling us “Back to the Godhead” but, as he imagined, back to our innate divinity. While that call was more blatant than most, the call to exalt ourselves, to put ourselves forward as the solution, remedy, center, and goal of all things is constant in Adam’s race, present even in some so-called “Christianity.”

In stark contrast, we read in 1 Peter 2:9:

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

We are made a priesthood and people for one purpose: to show forth the praises of Him. “Praises” is used in the sense of “virtues.” We are not simply called to praise Him but to show His praises (plural); that is, to manifest in word and deed His virtues, His praiseworthiness.

This issue of the *Update* seeks to do just that.

Dick York challenges us to show God’s praises by letting the grace that saved us teach us to deny ungodliness and live righteously in this present world (Titus 2:11).

Jim Lucas calls us to let God’s love be shed abroad in our hearts, declaring His love as we learn to care for our neighbors just as we care for ourselves (Romans 5:5).

Declaring His virtues will include a response to a call for intercession such as “Wanted: Intercessors for Mexico’s Battle Zones.”

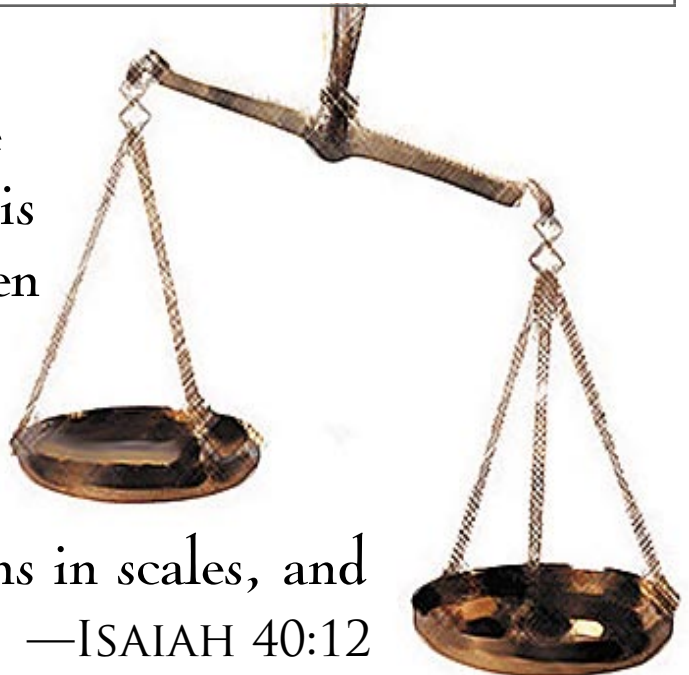
Finally, to show forth His praises includes doing so in different countries and cultures, as you can read in the reports from the field.

Gleaning from the Book of Revelation, Mike Ball shows us how we can show forth Christ’s praises by walking in His patience and in His testimony.

May we take God’s grace in our daily activities of family, school, work and worship to consistently declare the virtues of Him!

*Steve Montgomery*

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? —ISAIAH 40:12



# Righteousness Is Evident



By Dick York

If you were a “gamblin’ man,” would you wager your eternal fortune on what someone else believed to be true? That would be like a man going to the racetrack and betting his entire estate on a horse he had never seen and knew nothing about because some guy with dark glasses and a pin-striped suit gave him a tip that it was a sure thing: “The odds are a hundred to one, but it’s an absolutely sure winner. Believe me, you will make a bundle.”

Well, maybe you *are* a gamblin’ man. Here are some of the symptoms: First, if you are putting your faith in what someone told you the Bible says because you’ve never read it yourself, you’re gambling; second, if when you do read the Bible and find verses that seem to contradict what you have been taught to believe, you go to your teacher to have him explain them away, you’re a gambler.

There are many such gamblers among professing Christians. It is possible to become locked into a doctrinal school of thought before we have had time to read the Word of God for ourselves and, subsequently, be closed to whatever the Bible says that we perceive to be contradictory. The consequence is that we harden in our bias and find ways to avoid or explain away that which should have been used to modify our position and expand our understanding of God’s truth. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would *guide* us into all truth,<sup>1</sup> indicating that there should be an on-going expansion of our understanding. We do not start out with “all truth;” we are guided into it line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

There is a sense in which we do have all truth from the beginning if we have Jesus, because He *is* The Truth.<sup>2</sup> Also, we have the Bible, which is God’s full revelation to man; but, like newborn babes, we must desire the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow in our understanding of that revelation.<sup>3</sup> Some saints, of course, are no longer considered

babes; but nevertheless, even they are not yet fully grown. Even the apostle Paul did not claim to have fully apprehended that for which God had apprehended him.<sup>4</sup> We will have arrived at the full revelation when we see Jesus and are made like Him.<sup>5</sup> That may be soon, but it is not yet. In the meantime, we need to remain open to further personal revelation of what the Scriptures teach.

An area of conflict between believers that has been of long duration but, in fact, should not even exist is the seeming contradiction of faith and works—between *believing* and *doing*. I remember as a young believer—nearly sixty years ago now—sitting around someone’s kitchen table or in a booth in a restaurant, sometimes into the wee hours of the morning, fellowshipping (read “arguing”) about “eternal” versus “conditional” security. Even at that early point in our spiritual lives, some of us were firmly fixed and, in some cases, already closed to hearing anything else. So we vehemently pitted one verse of Scripture against another. (Actually, it was probably a good exercise for our young and eager spiritual minds at the time, but we don’t do that anymore—at least some of us don’t.) But the Scriptures do not contradict themselves. It is only our firm embrace or rejection of one end of a spectrum that produces perceived contradiction.

For example: if my concept of “believe” means mere academic assent to the validity of a statement of fact, I may see the inclusion of any contingent action (such as repentance) as contradictory to simple believing. There are things that are the automatic consequence of believing, which, when present, are the evidence that one has indeed believed and, when absent, are the evidence that one has not.<sup>6</sup> The evidences are not causes but automatic, consistent effects. They are evidentiary, not causal, but they are always a part of the equation.



Paul wrote, “For by grace are ye saved through faith.”<sup>7</sup> That is a true, incontrovertible statement, in context or out. But when Paul preached the gospel, he called for “repentance toward God, *and* faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>8</sup> Through that preaching, the Holy Spirit convicted men of sin, righteousness, and judgment.<sup>9</sup> If they believed, they then were moved to repentance—abhorrence of that which offended God and condemned their souls—and to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their only hope of deliverance and salvation. “God...commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”<sup>10</sup> Repentance, therefore, is the expected evidence of believing.

Romans 5:17 contains the rather complex statement, “For if by one man’s offense (Adam’s sin) death reigned by one; much more they which receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” It is significant that the gift we received through abundant grace is

“Righteousness.” Jesus came to save his people *from their sins*,<sup>11</sup> not just *the consequence of their sins*. The result of that salvation is that “sin shall not have dominion over you.”<sup>12</sup>

There are those who will insist that since Christ was/is the propitiation for our sins, His righteousness was imputed to our account, and we are thereby made righteous “positionally.” Since that is now how God sees us in Christ, what we do in the flesh is of little importance, inasmuch as our behavior here does not contribute to our justification. The fact is, though, that there are two aspects to this important issue: what Christ has done for us (positionally) and the evidence that it has indeed been personalized to us individually. That evidence is on display in the daily life of the believer. Once again, this behavior is evidentiary, not causal.

Romans 5:12—“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”—leaves no doubt that

sin was introduced into the human race by Adam, thereby altering the normal state that God intended for humanity. There is also no doubt that all who received by “grace” [*not by anything we did personally*] that gift of sin from Adam demonstrate it in a practical and apparent manner every day as evidence that they were made sinners by the disobedience of that one man. Why, then, would the gift of righteousness received by grace through Jesus Christ be any less demonstrable? Of course it would not. “For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, [he] who knew no sin; *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*”<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 20:11 reports, “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” Why, then, would that not be true of a believer?

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.”<sup>14</sup> “All things” would no doubt include the condemnation that was upon us because of Adam’s sin, and all that was included

**...when Paul preached the Gospel, he called for “repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>8</sup> Through that preaching the Holy Spirit convicted men of sin, righteousness and judgment.**


in Adam’s legacy. It would include, as well, the patterns of daily life that were the result of the Adamic nature dominating our unregenerate souls: our thought patterns, our language, our habits, our addictions, and that which dominates our time and our money. All of these things are controlled from within and reflect the relationship that we have or do not have with the Father.

Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see (discern) or enter into the kingdom of God....That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”<sup>15</sup> Paul wrote, “...if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”<sup>16</sup> Writing to the Galatians he said, “The **works** of the flesh are [these]; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions,

heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” These are the insignias of the flesh and of the Spirit. “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”<sup>17</sup> Once again, these are evidentiary not causal.

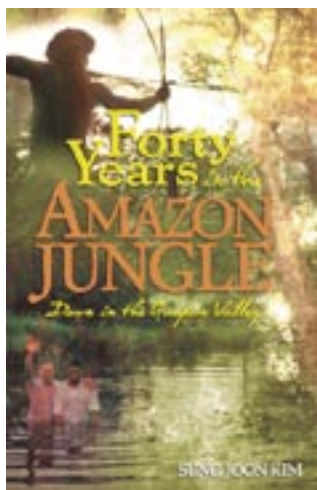
I guess the arguments that we had as young believers hinged on the fact that we were each looking through only one lens: we on the eternal security side justifying the sin of those who professed to be believers because we could see that salvation is solely by faith, not works, while those on the conditional side, seeing that ungodliness was not consistent with what the Bible teaches about those who are saved, thought that conforming to a behavioral standard was the way to guarantee salvation. Our arguments were shortsighted. Obviously, eternal life is *eternal*; everlasting life is *everlasting*. But salvation is more than a philosophy—more than subscribing to a catechism. Not all who say, “Lord, Lord,” or “I believe those facts,” shall enter into the kingdom of God. It is they that believe to the saving of their soul.<sup>18</sup> It is the evidence that renders the verdict.

The Apostle John summed it up this way: “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous, even as [Christ] is righteous. If ye know that [Christ] is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him.”<sup>19</sup>

So don’t be a gamblin’ man. Mental assent to some gospel facts is one thing, but repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ is the “believing” that produces the evidence. Righteousness is evident. 

### Endnotes

- 1 John 16:13
- 2 John 14:6
- 3 1 Peter 2:2
- 4 Philippians 3:13
- 5 1 John 3:2
- 6 James 2:20,26
- 7 Ephesians 2:8
- 8 Acts 20:21
- 9 John 16:8
- 10 Acts 17:30
- 11 Matthew 1:21
- 12 Romans 6:14
- 13 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 14 2 Corinthians 5:17
- 15 John 3:3-7
- 16 Romans 8:13
- 17 Galatians 5:19-24
- 18 Hebrews 10:39
- 19 1 John 3:7; 2:29



## **New!** Forty Years in the Amazon Jungle

(Sung Joon Kim)

In 1968, Sung Joon Kim, with his wife, Je Sun, left his homeland to be the first missionary from South Korea to carry the gospel to an unreached tribe of primitive Indians

in South America’s vast Amazon Basin. His destination: the Valley of the Guapore, a river

tributary to the mighty Amazon. His mission: to bring the light of the gospel to a people living in heathen darkness and to bring them into the twenty-first century.

Living where they lived, sleeping where they slept, eating what they ate, and feeling what they felt, he became their advocate—fighting for their right to be treated as human beings in a developing country. Along the way, God used him marvelously and provided for Sung Joon and Je Sun in remarkable and miraculous ways.

This is a worthwhile and encouraging read. It will make a wonderful gift with which to edify your family and friends.

Highly Recommended. **Price \$12.00 includes shipping and handling in the United States**

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# Wanted: Intercessors for Mexico's Battle Zones



On February 17th, President Calderón promised that “Juarez will again be a city of laws,” giving voice to the reality of what Ciudad Juarez is *not* at the moment. The Texas Department of Public Safety has issued a warning urging tourists not to go into the border cities along the Texas border. The U.S. Dept. of State is urging U.S. citizens to delay unnecessary travel to certain parts of Mexico, especially Michoacan and the border area. The U.S. Mission in Mexico currently restricts non-essential travel for U.S. government employees assigned to Mexico for almost the entire border area. The U.S. Dept. of State further observes,

Some recent Mexican army and police confrontations with drug cartels have resembled small-unit combat, with cartels employing automatic weapons and grenades. Large firefights have taken place in towns and cities across Mexico, but occur mostly in northern Mexico, including Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, Chihuahua City, Nogales, Matamoros, Reynosa and Monterrey.

The accompanying article states that residents are putting pressure on politicians to act. Recently, hundreds marched in a “March of Anger,” demanding that the military leave, which amounts to a *de facto* capitulation on the part of some, preferring that things go back to “business as usual” with the cartels unchallenged. “At least,” the thought seems to be, “they won’t be shooting at *me*.” The cartels, who started the violence by fighting among themselves for reducing territory and income, appear to have realized that violence is their ally, as the public gets fed up and hungers for the “good old days.” Yet nearly 10 percent of the population of Ciudad Juarez claims to be Christian! We need to intercede for this devastated city, bind the Enemy from its streets, and pray that the churches of Jesus Christ would be bold, strong, and do exploits of courage to see men and women come to Christ.

Please don’t let these things alarm you or

discourage you from visiting the interior of Mexico. None of this is touching us here. We are fine, and the churches here are growing and prospering. But please, come alongside the people of Cd. Juarez in intercession. Ps 119:126, a promise we have taken for the region of the Highlands, applies well to Cd. Juarez: “*It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.*”







# The Love of God

By Jim Lucas

The first year in the Lord Jesus was a very special time for my wife and me. I believe that what Jesus was teaching us were the foundational things that would set us on the right course of life. The lessons were clear, yet I have been slow in learning them. One such lesson came in the way I was reading the gospels. I came to the text that said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:37-39). I read this and began to realize that I certainly *didn't* love God this way, nor did I love my neighbor as myself. I knew that I loved God, but I also knew that there still were other things that I also loved—and God was not going to be satisfied until He was first in everything. When I thought about my neighbors, I knew I wasn't as concerned for them as I was myself. I couldn't see myself taking a check that I had received from selling our logs and giving it to my neighbor. I began confessing this to the Lord and asking Him to change me. I prayed this prayer for many days, and it was a real burden, for I felt like a hypocrite. The days turned into weeks.

We were going to a prayer meeting every week at the home of Bernice and Odell Rogers. One particular time when we were there, Odell asked me to stay after the meeting because he had something he wanted to ask me. I stayed and he asked me if I would like to go visit his neighbor with him. His neighbor was a man who had a very serious drinking problem, and his mother was in the hospital dying of cancer. It turned out that the mother was a Mormon and had been for many years. His neighbor wanted to know if his mother was going to heaven or not. Odell knew that I had been a Mormon and thought that perhaps I would have something to tell him. I said that I would go with him, but I didn't know what I could tell him. I didn't tell Odell that I could never tolerate a drunk. I had no patience for them at all. When we arrived,

this gentleman began to tell how his mother was suffering and wasn't expected to live. At first I had a very indifferent attitude. Then the seriousness of it all hit me. What could I possibly tell him to comfort him? I was sure that his mother was not going to heaven unless she came to know God, and the Mormons believe in another Jesus. “No man can come to the Father except through the Son.”

I began to speak to him, explaining these things, and the Holy Spirit came upon me in a very surprising manner. I don't remember what I said to him, but I know that the passion of Christ was there in a very powerful demonstration of the love of God. The Father was pouring out His Spirit on me in strong waves. The Spirit would come until I could barely stand it. The waves would stop, but then come again and again. I had to tell the Lord that was enough—I couldn't take any more! I believe it was a baptism of the love of God. Neither Odell nor this man were aware of what was going on, but the Father had answered my prayer. I confess that I still fall far short of being filled with the love of God, but at least I know now where to find it, because it is not in me but in God, for God is love.

This was a very special time in my life. Prayer was something very special. At first I was so proud, I didn't even want to get on my knees to pray. I wouldn't, until I realized why I was reluctant to do so. Then I humbled myself and began to pray on my knees. I began to have good times of prayer. I would be praying and would feel the presence of God in a very physical way, almost like electricity was flowing through me. It was wonderful. One night after such a time, the Holy Spirit revealed to me that this wasn't going to continue to happen because God wanted me to walk by faith and not by my feelings. That was the end of those experiences and it was a real challenge to walk in faith. I knew that without faith you cannot please God. I prayed that He would help me. He did, and I found even greater

satisfaction in knowing that the faith of Christ was at work in me.

The Lord Jesus was teaching me to get my priorities in order. I had always told myself that I needed to work and make money for my family. That was true, but money could not do everything. There were many things in His Word that He has commanded us to do and that I knew I was not doing. For example, the Word says “love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). Giving my wife and children money did

not prove my love for them. They needed to see me giving them my time personally, providing spiritual guidance, and being an example to follow. It seems these lessons are so hard to learn. Later on in my life, the work of the Lord or the ministry would take priority even over my personal time with the Lord Jesus and my family. It seems to me that Christianity can be summed up in the word “relationship.” When I am in a good relationship with Jesus, I will be in a good relationship with my family, friends, and neighbors. 🙏

## Gleanings from the Revelation of Jesus to John - Part 2

By Mike Ball



Revelation 16 with the Valley of Jezreel (Megiddo/Armageddon) in the background (Photo by Ray Irvin).

We begin this segment by looking at Revelation 15:2-4. This is astounding! Those who “had gotten the VICTORY over the beast” sing this song: “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” Look at the paradoxes found in this song! They had gotten the victory? How? It says in 13:7 that this beast had been given the power to OVERCOME the saints. But now that they are in heaven they have the victory over said beast? How can this be? They got the victory over him by loving “not their lives unto death,” by dying rather than worshipping the beast or his image or taking the mark. Now for the second and third paradoxes:

they sing this song to God ALMIGHTY. Almighty? When He allowed them to be overcome? “King of saints”? What kind of king would not be there to rescue them from the beast? Third paradox: “just and true are thy ways.” What is just about letting His children be persecuted, tortured, and killed? What is just about any of the trials and afflictions that you or I may experience? We may not see the justness of it now, but we know we will see it in heaven. You see, God is allowing us to get a glimpse of what is going on in heavenly places while we are going through trials here on earth. Why? So that we, with our eyes on

Continued on page 13



# Missionary Reports



## Africa (Loma Tribe) Jerry Skiles



“Adapted and settled into the village ministry” is how I would describe Cherry and me. When the ministry requires travel, we discover that we do not sleep as well, and we look forward to returning back home, to the village. We have regained our village mentality. Our home is as comfortable as can be expected for the location. We continue to improve it, but we have all that we need.

We also look for ways to improve life here for the villagers and to improve our methods of seeing the gospel’s work move in the hearts of the people. Occasionally God brings people into our lives who are seeking Him, but, for the most part, we fill our lives with working in practical and simple ways with the people.

The schoolteacher is doing well. He has 34 students. We provide lunch for them. UNICEF and USAID have some food for the schoolchildren in the area, but it does not get to the most remote areas. The resources are limited and get used before they reach the areas of greatest need. We are expanding the lunch program to two other schools when we find individuals who can be trusted. If all goes as planned, we hope to provide lunches to more than 150 students.

The cashew plantations are doing well. The Loma and Loron villagers are harvesting tons of nuts and it provides much-needed cash. They have little knowledge of pruning and spacing of trees, so, by example, I am working with the growers to help them improve their plantations. Cherry is teaching the locals to bake bread. Cherry uses an American recipe and it is getting a reputation as being good bread. It is! The last day she worked with them, they made over 100 loaves and still did not fill the demand. Other girls from the area want to learn bread making and business as well. It’s a learning process for everyone, as we have to use a wood-fired oven, which I constructed from local materials. Needless to say, it is an adventure in discovering and improving techniques. One batch baked in five minutes, while another took almost an hour and never did get brown. So far, nothing has been wasted. Since I have been thinning cashew orchards, we have plenty of wood to keep the oven fires going.

Hovare has started working on the translation of the Gospel of John into the Loma language. That is going well. Repairs are continuing on the schoolhouse. Accomplishing simple tasks requires patience; fortunately, I can wait for others to get their tasks finished because I have plenty of other tasks to do while

waiting. One huge blessing is that we got a 10-mile “road” cut through the bush, which knocks off over an hour of travel when we leave the village. It will only be usable during the dry season, but it is wonderful for the moment! It would take three hours to get to the first town, now only two.

We visited the Dagomba tribe in Ghana. We were warmly received, and they talked of plans to make me a chief at their next ceremony. They are more excited about it than I am. When I was sitting with the elders, I shared with them principles from Proverbs. They are Moslems, and the priest and four other men walked out as I was speaking. I asked my translator about it. She said they wanted to show their disapproval of the Bible. I thought, *How ironic it is that they want a Christian to be with them, as the group is 100 percent Moslem!* While 5 left, 11 stayed. Not bad, I guess! We tried to get a Nigerian visa in Burkina Faso, but the embassy there said we need to go to Accra, as we will be leaving from Ghana to arrive in Nigeria.

We are traveling to meet David and Miriam Kangni in Ghana, so we will try from there to get our entry visa to Nigeria for the conference in Nigeria this May. As always, we thank you for the part you play in the ministry as you serve the Lord Jesus with your lives.

In His Love (Always)

Jerry & Cherry Skiles

## Rogers, Arkansas Jim and Fran Lucas

Beloved Prayer Warriors,

Thank you for praying for the ministry in Talladega, Alabama. We are back home in Rogers, Arkansas. We left the 24th of March and returned the 12th of April.

The location for the tent was nice. It was adjacent to the City Hall and Fire Station, so there was no problem from hecklers or vandals. In fact, it was a little *too* quiet. Jim Bullard, my friend and brother in Christ Jesus, lives in Talladega, and he was a great help to me. His nephew Bob helped us set up the tent and take it down. I had some great times in prayer and enjoyed interceding for the city.

We went out preaching daily from house to house and at the shopping markets. We gave out a lot of gospel tracts that were received very well. Jim B. has some health issues and wasn’t able to continue in the evangelism. I found that a lot of people like to come out and sit

on their porches, so I would drive around until I found an area where quite a few were out. I would park and visit them on their porches. I found this to be a good way to talk to a number of people. Eternity will tell us just how effective it was, but I do know a lot of people did hear the gospel and were under great conviction.

I was quite surprised at the conduct of the people in the heart of the Bible Belt. They all have a “form of godliness” and seem to receive you very well and volunteer to come to the tent meetings even before you invite them. I found, with almost no exceptions, that they are all liars, because they never came. There were a few exceptions, and these were obviously some truly born-again believers.

The city is full of churches but has a very high crime rate, with a huge drug problem and a large police force. I preached to several who had just come out of prison. One of them was in for selling drugs. I told him he was fortunate that he hadn’t died and gone to hell because many of the people he had sold drugs to would be there to add to his torment. He seemed to acknowledge that it was true and indicated that he wanted to repent. He agreed to come to the tent and give his life to Christ, but he didn’t show up.

After about two weeks of preaching and seeing very little turnout, we began to wonder if the Lord wanted us to move on. I decided to spend some time in prayer and seek the will of God concerning that. I prayed for about ten minutes, and a car pulled up to the tent. A brother in Christ named Jimmy Dean said he was driving by and the Lord told him to come back and encourage me to stay on.

He also had been a drug dealer, but after being shot twice, he had repented and seemed to have a strong testimony. Our Father had confirmed that we were to stay until the allotted time was up. I thank all of you for holding this ministry up in prayer, and I know it has not been in vain.

We will be informing you before long where and when the next event will take place.

Lord bless,

*James and Francille Lucas* 

### **Valle De Juarez, Mexico** **Ed and Abby Drysdale**

It is so amazing to be able to fellowship with other believers on a regular basis! Even though there are so few of us, it is still so much more encouraging. Misael and Claudia have stated their decision to follow Christ and were baptized. Little did we know the stir this would cause!

With this simple act of obedience, the others began to realize what God expects of them someday. Ricardo and Lety, as well as Judith and Alejandro, began to count the cost of following Christ. Unfortunately,

they’ve decided it’s more than they are willing to give. Both families have quit coming to Friday night Bible studies.

I have since started a Bible study with Ricardo and Lety at their home. We have had some heated discussions, and yet they are still receiving me. I must admit that this is one of the most frustrating studies I have. They listen and yet are not changed by what they hear. In a way, I want to just quit, but then I think it’s not up to me to give up on them. Please pray that God will give me discernment.

The only ones still attending on Fridays (apart from Misael and Claudia) are Oscar and Gaby. They are faithfully coming to a Bible study here at our house, as well as on Fridays at church and Sunday service. Oscar is reading his Bible at home. He’s also preparing for the Bible study we have at our house. He’s handing out tracts to unsaved people and practicing worship songs on his guitar. Gaby is telling people at school what she is learning at the Bible studies and attending almost as regularly as Oscar. And YET neither one are ready to take the step towards salvation. When we asked them why, they said, “Do you remember that verse you read about the light coming to the world, but people like the darkness more? Well that’s us.”



Misael and Claudia are growing by leaps and bounds. They are growing in their personal lives. They have seen God give them victory over past sins. They are growing in ministry.

Misael is witnessing to his co-workers and family. He is beginning to minister a little bit at church as well as helping me with a Bible study during the week.

They have been a little discouraged with the lack of people coming to church. They desire to have more fellowship and love any opportunity to get together with brothers from other congregations.

We have set up a schedule to have different brothers come and minister here at least once a month. We hope that through this they will be edified as well as learn how God desires the church to work together.

We are planning our first small outreach with them this weekend. To this extent, we’ve had a church work party to get everything in order. It was encouraging to have not only Misael and Claudia’s support but that of Oscar and Gaby as well. Both couples are inviting people to come. They are excited. Please be praying that the Lord will bring people and that they will listen to the gospel. Please pray for us, that we will be able to present the gospel clearly.





Don José has had many physical challenges these last months. This has caused them to miss a lot of church, but they still come when they can. Dona Raquel continues

to grow little by little. Don José is still holding back. They have been a big support to Priscilla. They've reached out to her in friendship. This seems like a small thing, but it is big when what you need more than anything is a friend.

As for Priscilla, we are sorry to announce that she has decided to go home. She will be leaving sometime next month. Having her here has been such a big help with the school. We are praying that the Lord will line up someone else who will be willing to take her place. If you know of anyone who would be interested, please contact us.

I have continued my Bible study with Luis and Anna. I know that Luis has understood the gospel and has been touched by it. In his words, "I'm so relieved to know Christ did it all." Yet, with every Bible study we have, they become more and more devout Catholics. They've begun to watch the Catholic channel on TV and attend Mass more regularly than before. I recently found out that they lost their job at the hotel. Please be praying for them.



PS. Good News! Don José apparently gave his heart to the Lord when he got very sick. He cried out to the Lord. Now he wants to be baptized. Praise the Lord!

*The Drysdales* 

**Contact:** Want to know more?

Call us anytime at (541) 728 5946. Yes, that is a U.S. number! Want more regular updates? Search for Abby Drysdale on Facebook. A first-class letter will get to us in about three to five weeks; so if you prefer pen and ink, here is our address:

Ed and Abby Drysdale  
Apdo # 22, Calle Morelos 353  
Valle de Juarez,, Jalisco 49540, Mexico

**Atotonilco, Mexico**  
**Steve and Linda Montgomery**

### SIFTING

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired [to have] you, that he may sift [you] as wheat:

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Spanish provides an interesting insight to this

verse. It reads, "...Satan has desired to have all of you, that he might sift all of you like wheat: But I have prayed for you [*that is, personally for Peter*] and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren."

Satan sought to shake all of them as in sieve, but Jesus had prayed specifically for Peter, that he might strengthen those around him. That would have seemed an unlikely task to give this impetuous disciple. Peter's strong point was probably not patience, and we know that he had a limited view on how often he should have to forgive others (Matthew 18:21).

And the unlikelihood of that call is, of course, the point. The Lord Jesus was calling him to something beyond himself, something he would have to *learn*.

So we can expect that the church will be sifted and shaken, and we can expect that we will all have the opportunity to strengthen those believers around us in times of sifting.

As you know, we are planting and establishing churches in the Jalisco Highlands, alongside a great team of dedicated men and women. In these days, we have seen some sifting:

In Atotonilco, one woman has left the church to join another congregation, even though her husband continues to faithfully meet with us. Another family is in crisis, as the old wine of family order and attitudes crashes against God's New Wine. And it has been necessary to put a man out of the assembly in discipline. He has recently confessed repentance, and we are going through a hard and painful time of restoration with him and with his wife.

In El Maguey, where we are planting a church, one family has distanced themselves from the group there and has given themselves to backbiting and rumor-mongering, so much so that another woman has been swayed.

However, not all the shaking has been sifting from Satan's hand. In San José de Gracia, where there is a congregation in formation, God Himself has been stirring things. Several young people have come to Christ in the last six weeks. It seems that every time we meet, one of the new believers has brought someone else to hear the Good News. This congregation, which was 9 or 10, is now approaching 20!

Pray that all of us will learn how to strengthen our brethren in times of sifting and pray that the stirring that God is bringing to San José continue and bring lasting fruit.

*Steve and Linda Montgomery* 

**Atotonilco, Mexico**  
**Daniel and Mari Fontanez**

*(Editors Note: Daniel and Mari Fontanez are serving in Mexico's Jalisco Highlands, where they work with Steve and Linda Montgomery. Daniel is originally from Puerto*



*Rico, while Mari is from here. They met in Mexico.)*

Dear Friends:

It's been a long time since our last report, but here is the latest on what's been going on. Part of the reason that it took me so long to write is that the Bible studies at Maguey and the jail have had their ups and downs but are nonetheless in a healthy and steady rhythm. However, there is new and exciting news.


**IN THE JAIL:** We are 16 chapters into the Gospel of Luke in the jail, and there have been many great lessons learned. As you may already know, the Jehovah's Witnesses have been sowing their heresies in the jail. I admit that this has been a hindrance, but I can also see that those who have a personal commitment to Christ and whose faith has matured are still standing strong. The most affected are the newer guys. So I do ask that you pray for this. The Lord has already been answering prayers on this matter. In one very memorable meeting, we studied Luke 13: 22-30, and we were called by the Lord to examine ourselves to see if we were inside the door or not. This was during a time when some were in doubt because of the JW's. That is just one example of many Bible studies in Luke that have called the men into a stronger commitment to Christ. In the other side of the jail we have finished going chronologically through the Bible and are doing a review. Also, in answer to prayer, Linda Montgomery has committed to teaching the women in the jail. I think she'll be doing six evangelistic lessons. I ask that you pray for Toño and Jonatan. These two young men from Atotonilco had heard the gospel when young from believing family members but weren't walking with the Lord. They spent about nine months in Bible studies in the jail and just got out three days ago. Both said that they would attend the Sunday meeting tomorrow, so please keep them in your prayers. May the Lord let us see them grow in the local church.

**IN MAGUEY:** Lately, Steve Montgomery has led the Bible study at Maguey. There had been a few questions about the prophecies of the last days and some confusion concerning what the JW's teach, so I asked Steve to share on the topic. Chely, now a believer, has agreed to have a discipleship Bible study with me. Her husband hasn't made a choice for Christ, so I ask that you pray for him. It's our desire to see the whole family come to Christ. I ask that you pray for Rosy and Chely's relationship. They have been having problems getting along. Rosy also needs of your prayers concerning a children's class that she has been struggling to give at Maguey.

**TRIP TO THE STATES:** We are grateful to the Lord because our two girls, Daniela and Mariana, now have their U.S. citizenship and their Passports are on the way. Mari is the only one left. Please pray concerning her

visa. Elias Garcia from New Life Hispanic Ministries has invited us to visit Yakima and has been helping us with the paperwork. The plan is to go for a visit this summer, so pray for this as well. The Lord willing, we'll be part of an evangelistic outreach in the Yakima valley. It also will be a chance to meet a lot of you who pray for us. We're excited!



*Daniel and Mari Fontanez* 

## **Asia L&M**

Dear Friends,

We have now been in this country for a little over a year, and as we reflect back on our time here, we have so many things to be thankful for. One of them is your prayers and support as we have made this transition and entered into the work of bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to this land.

Our first task upon arrival was language learning and God providentially brought to us an excellent language teacher! She is a young single woman, who has become a friend. She has had a very hard life, being orphaned at five and sent to live with a poor aunt who already had too many children to care for. As you might imagine, she was not loved and was barely cared for. She carries these scars deeply in her soul. We have had the opportunity to share with her, and she now keeps her Bible under her pillow and likes to call it the "medicine" for her heart and soul.

Our second task was to begin the process of registering the business, and we pray that it will give us the open door to remain in this country for an extended period of time. We have had various difficulties as we traversed the very intricate bureaucratic maze that you must complete to register a business. But, in the end, God truly went before us, and we are now a legal entity in the country and are in the process of applying for work visas so that we will not be required to leave the country every 60 days as we currently must do.

We have hired a local man to be our business manager. He is only 27 but is a mature believer who understands our vision to reach one of the unreached people groups in his country. Although this particular people group is almost universally held in contempt by the local population, this young man had already caught the vision for reaching these unreached millions and has even been studying their language. God has given him a love for them that is almost unheard of in this land. We cannot imagine how we could have found a better qualified person for this position.

*Continued on page 15*

*Gleanings from Revelation, continued.*

our Forerunner in heavenly places, can endure these trials with patience (this is the patience and faith of the saints of Revelation 13:10; 14:12) knowing, now, that this is the just and true way to overcome the enemy.

Remember the patience of Job. By it, he overcame the enemy while he was still afflicted with his sickness. Satan's purpose was defeated by Job's patience and his trust in God's sovereignty. Look at the verses in Revelation that speak of patience. John was a companion in this patience, which is the Lord's patience (1:9). The saints in Philadelphia had kept the word of HIS patience (3:11). Our Forerunner, who ran with patience, now walks in the midst of His candlesticks; and He knows the patience of the saints—not only in Philadelphia but also in Ephesus and Thyatira (2:2,19), and all saints, down through time, who have kept His patience.

In 13:10, patience and faith go together. It is because of our faith in our King, our Forerunner, and His way to victory that we can have patience. In the trials, we receive chastisement. Through these we become partakers of His holiness - Heb.12:10),

persecution, yes, and even in peace, freedom, and prosperity. We must let patience have her perfect work (James 1: 4). We do not and must not wait until we are in heaven to know that His ways are just and true. That is the reason for this Revelation. He shows us the scenes in heaven and

how it is all to end so that we can have faith *now* that His ways are just and true—that the way to overcome is to hate your own life (Luke 14:26), deny yourself (Mathew 16:24), and love not your life unto death.

Another phrase that is repeated throughout this book is “the testimony of Jesus.” This, also, gives us a clue as to how to overcome. We see this phrase, or one very similar to it, nine times in this Revelation. God wants to reveal something to us through these words. We begin with 1:2, where we see that this Revelation given to John is the “word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” This word “testimony” is the same word in the Greek that is also translated “witness,” as in 1:5. There, Jesus is said to be “the faithful witness.” Again, in 3:14 He is “the faithful and true witness.” Of whom was Jesus a faithful and true witness? During His life on earth, Jesus was the true witness of what the Father is like. It says in John 1:18 that He has declared the Father. He showed the Father unto His disciples. In John 14:9, Jesus tells them that if they have seen Him, they have seen the Father. How did Jesus witness of His Father? The answer is found in verse 10. “I do not speak out

of myself,” He says, “but the Father that dwells in me does the works.” Jesus testified that He did nothing of Himself. His works were not His, the teachings were not His, and the strength to do and speak these things was not His. He had emptied Himself of *self* and drew only from the Father, so that all that was seen and heard from Him was a witness of His Father's person. His witness in word and deed was a true and pure witness of His Father—not mixed with anything of self. His witness was also a faithful witness, “faithful unto death.” His witness remained true before the Jewish council, before Herod, and before Pilate. He spoke the few words that His Father wanted Him to speak and nothing more. On the Cross, He remained this true witness, faithful unto death.

In the letter to Smyrna, this faithful church, he tells them to be *faithful unto death*, having warned them that they would suffer persecution that would end in death. How can we be faithful witnesses unto death? How can we love not our lives unto death? By having the testimony of Jesus. In 12:17, we see that the dragon makes war with those who “have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” In 19:10 the brethren are said to “have the

testimony of Jesus.” You see, just like the *patience* of Jesus, the *testimony* of Jesus, which is faithful and true, is now the testimony of the saints. This is their testimony by which they overcome the accuser, the great dragon, and the old serpent (12:11). In the first chapter, John identifies

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

—Revelation 22:7

himself as their companion in the patience of Jesus Christ. In 3:10, Jesus speaks of them keeping the word of His patience and then later He speaks of the patience and faith of the saints. The same is being said of the testimony of Jesus. What we are seeing is that, by faith and dependence on Christ, His patience becomes our patience, and His faithful witness of His Father becomes our testimony of Jesus in word and deed. We also see in this Revelation that His faith is the faith we must keep: “I know thy works...and hast not denied My faith” (3:13). We are to keep His works unto the end (2:26). Through faith in Him we are able to manifest the person of Jesus with His faith, His patience, His works, and His testimony. We are able to “love not our lives unto death,” and thus, that enemy, in his varied forms, is overcome. If he comes as the great dragon with persecution and death we are able to overcome him by the faithful witness of Jesus that is now ours by faith and by denying self unto death. If he comes as that old serpent, with his subtle temptations of worldliness, materialism, or selfish living, we overcome him by denying self unto death—that is, the death of self, as

Jesus did, taking up our cross, as He did. Saints, this is how we are being attacked in our country. Our only weapon is to draw from Christ His selfless living.

First, we need to go to those seven letters in Revelation and obey the commands found therein. See how far we have fallen into living for self, losing that first love. Notice how much worldliness is in us, and repent! That is the first step to be taken. Repent of loving our lives. Repent of having the testimony of the flesh. Accept His cross as ours. Let His death become our death. We will suffer offense, we will be taken advantage of, and we will end up with the short end of the stick, many times, as we give up our rights as human beings. If we are in Christ, all our rights are to heavenly things as we lose all the rights to earthly things. We have been deceived, saints, by the old serpent, into believing that the rights granted to us by this country's constitution (I do not say ours because our constitution is from heaven) are God-given rights.

This is a lie of the enemy who wants us to defend and stand on our rights instead of giving them up and living for the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We must make a decision, saints. We can't have the best of both worlds (kingdoms). Are we companions with John and the saints of those churches in the kingdom and suffering of Jesus Christ? If we are, we must deny all rights that belong to those of any earthly kingdom. These sayings that we have seen in this Revelation are what motivated the saints down through time to be faithful to that witness unto death. What witness do you have? Is it the true witness of Jesus?

I want to share at this point some testimonies of the early martyrs. These are included so that we can see the mentality of those saints who lived shortly after the writing of this Revelation. Ignatius lived in the time of the writing of Revelation. Between twelve to fifteen years after this last book was finished, he was arrested in Antioch, where he was bishop. After being tried, he was bound with ten chains to ten soldiers and forced to walk across Syria and Asia Minor before being shipped to Rome. Along the way, he wrote letters to the churches in Asia Minor and Rome. The following are some quotes from those letters:

I am writing to all the churches to tell them... that I am, with all my heart, to die for God—if only you do not prevent it. I beseech you not to indulge your benevolence at the wrong time. Please let me be thrown to the wild beasts... I am God's wheat; and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts that I may end as the pure bread of Christ. If anything, coax the beasts on to become my sepulcher and to have nothing of my body undevoured so that, when I am dead, I may be no bother to anyone. I shall be really a disciple of Christ if and when the world can no longer see so much as my body.

Ignatius understood that a disciple is one who follows the example of His master all the way. He took the teachings and the way of Jesus as his own way of living. He wrote: "Allow me to be a follower of the passion of my God." Later he wrote things like: "In my chains I am learning to have no wishes of my own.... Desire within me has been nailed to the cross and no flame of material longing is left....my spirit is devoted to the Cross." He wrote to the Christians in Rome: "If you will say nothing on my behalf, I shall be a word of God. But if your love is for my body, I shall be once more a mere voice." This was one saint who understood quite well the teachings of this Revelation and he kept the sayings of it. He loved not his life unto death.

About seventy years later, many Christians in Lyons, France, suffered martyrdom. The following testimony concerns the suffering of Sanctus: "and Christ suffering in him manifested great glory, routing His Adversary," and in his "body Christ suffered and accomplished many wonders." Another testimony of the suffering of Blandina: she "had put on Christ; ...she, the small, the weak, the despised, who had put on Christ the great and invincible Athlete, and who in many rounds vanquished the Adversary," and "that by conquering through more trials she might make the condemnation of the crooked serpent irrevocable." Of Pothinus: "Although his body was weakened by old age and disease, his soul was kept in him that through it Christ might triumph."


Now, I doubt that these saints had the same beliefs as many of us do concerning the end times, but they, without a doubt, understood what the Spirit was saying to the churches, and they overcame. They had the testimony of Jesus in them. They allowed Jesus to overcome Satan through their tortures and deaths. We don't even want to suffer the offense of words. We feel that we must defend our rights as human beings. Saints who are going through relationship problems, this word is for you. How can we call ourselves companions of these saints if we cannot even stand to have our rights abused? Saints, do you understand why I say that we have missed out on what Christ is saying to His church by focusing on the events of the prophecies?

At the close of this Revelation, Jesus reminds us what He wants from His servants to whom he has revealed "the things which must shortly be done," saying, "Blessed is he that keepeth the saying of the prophecy of this book" (22:6-7). This is the same blessing He promised in the opening of this Revelation (1:3). It must be important—maybe the most important thing we can get out of this book! No blessing is promised to those who understand the prophecies, the symbols, and the mysteries of this book. Our Lord's desire for His servants on earth is that they hear and keep the *sayings*. We see, in 22:9, a special group of people, made up of those who "keep the sayings of this book." The blessing



of verse 7 is repeated in verse 14: “Blessed are they that do His commandments.” In 12:17, we see that to “keep the commandments of God” goes hand in hand with having the testimony of Jesus. We cannot have His testimony, thus defeating the enemy, without obeying God’s commandments. In our struggle to understand the mysteries of this book, let us not miss the commandments of God contained therein. Jesus said to the saints in Philadelphia: “for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word.” We may be small, or even have little understanding of the end times, and still understand the sayings to the church revealed in this book. If we do and keep them, then we will do quite well no matter what we may go through before Jesus comes for His church.

In closing, I remind you of what Jesus reminds us of as he closes out His last revelation: “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify of these things in the churches” (22:16). This book starts out being addressed to the churches (1:4). We can forget this as we get caught up in

the excitement and, for some, (like me) the confusion of everything that lies between these two verses. All of the things in this book that are so exciting or confusing are the very things that have been revealed to the churches so that we will live as true followers of the Lamb, as kings and priests for God. Yes, we can and are to reign in this “life by one, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17). The narratives in Revelation are not there for the purpose of scaring the unbelievers into repenting (there is good evidence in this revelation that that will not work) but for the purpose of spurring the saints into continuing the testimony of our Forerunner faithfully unto death—death of self unto the death of the body or the taking up of the church. Saints, let us quit focusing on the confusing and divisive prophecies, and let us focus on keeping all of the sayings of this prophecy. After all, as it says in 19:10: “the testimony of Jesus” that we are to have “is the spirit of prophecy.” Therefore, let us focus on the spirit and not the letter of the prophecy of this last Revelation of Jesus to all of His servants. 

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### *Missionary News, continued.*

and God literally brought him to us!

We are also active in a thriving church in our city that is attended by foreigners only, due to local governmental restrictions. L is now part of the Sunday preaching rotation and M has an active ministry with seeking women and young wives and mothers. Most of these expatriates are the “cream of the crop” in their professions, and that is why they have been sent to represent their employers in this land. It is a unique opportunity to minister to so many people who are successful and influential in their home countries. These are “movers and shakers” who will be carrying back their new passion for Jesus Christ to each of their homelands.

Even though our language skills are still quite limited, many of the local people speak English well, so we have many opportunities to speak about Christ. L was recently on a two-hour train trip and was seated next to a young college student who shared with him that all of her friends were terrified that the world was about to end. They had all seen the movie *2012* which apparently predicts that the world will end in the year 2012. They have also been seeing all the reports of earthquakes and volcanoes on the news, which just fueled the fire of their fears. L was able to share the hope of life eternal with this young woman. She went home that evening and confessed her sins and received Jesus Christ into her life.


We recently made a trip from the large city we now live in to the very remote and rural area where our target group live. We had hoped to rent an inexpensive apartment there so that we could begin to spend extended time in the area, living and establishing our

business. We met with a fair amount of suspicion from the local government that had not had any foreigners residing in their city for more than 500 years. We had to change hotels 4 times in 8 days because it seemed that they just did not know what to think of us and kept asking us to leave our current hotel. We also attempted to rent an apartment but were denied permission by the local police. But God is not done with this city and we are in the process of going through governmental channels to prove the legitimacy of our business and requesting governmental approval to live there. All signs indicate that they are favorable to our requests but are still working through the technicalities of granting our requests. We are very hopeful that permission will be granted very soon.

News for the Knees:

- For successful language acquisition
- For quick approval of our work visas
- For an open door to live among our targeted people group
- For Jack, our business manager, that he would continue to grow in grace and wisdom
- For L. who continues to struggle with health issues
- For our local body of expatriate believers that they would become a fire and burn brightly, both here and when they return to their homelands

Once again, thank you dear friends.

L & M 

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## **The Memorial Day Conference—Please read**



Because conference is a time to hear from all the participating churches so that we can more effectively pray for one another and cooperate in furthering the collective vision, it seems an imperative to maximize the use of our time. To do that, we are requesting that each church come prepared to fill a block of time with reports, testimonies, ministry or special music. Your group may need simply fifteen minutes to make a report about your projects, problems or prayer requests. Or you may need an hour for special presentations or ministry. Each church will be in charge of the time they request. Please give some thought in advance to what your group will contribute, and let the SFMI office know that you are going to participate and how much time you anticipate filling. This will regulate the open meetings to a degree, but it will make the use of our limited time somewhat more efficient and perhaps encourage more participation. Please encourage the saints to come prepared and ready to present without hesitation what God has given them. We look forward to hearing from all the churches, and perhaps from many voices not heard heretofore. It would be helpful if you would notify us before conference time as soon as possible. Thank you.