

What The Bible Says

in 52 Penny Pulpit Essays

by Pastor Ed Rice



**52 Weekly Messages
Preached by a Rural Pastor
with a Royal Message**

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*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;
teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns
and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
Colossians 3:16*

Previous Year Penny Pulpits

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Msg #801 Lest I Forget

The Bible tells us *“but this one **thing** I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.”* There are four things we should forget as we press on in the new year. Genesis 27 finds the first mention of forgetting anger. Put it behind you, don't stew and embitter. A Christian should not let the sun set on anger. The second mention is Joseph's forgetting. *“For God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.”* We remember them as 'good old days' because we have forgotten the toil and struggle. It is wise to do so. Thirdly forget all the accolades that you receive. You are never as great as you have imagined yourself to be. Fourthly forget the sin that is under the blood of Jesus Christ. When God forgives, he remembers your sin no more. That means He will not bring it up again. If He will not, you should not. Put sin under the blood, then put it behind you and press on in righteousness.

But the Bible says there are some things we should never forget. *“Only take heed to thyself, ... lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen: ... but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;”* Never forget God's goodness. The Psalmist sings *“Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?”* (Psalm 88:12) Never forget God's mercy. *“Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the ... house of bondage.”* Never forget God's commandments. *“Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes.”* Lastly, never forget your promises to God.

Msg #802 Going to a City

The Bible says *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee:”* (Gen 12)

Each new year recall that 'This world is not my home, I'm only passing through. God's Word says *”By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. ... For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* The songwriter says *“I am going to a city where the roses never fade.”* And our Lord said *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* Christian, don't forget where you are going. And you don't need that much baggage to get there. Carry to much and you won't enjoy the trip. Lost one, don't trust a religion, priest or prophet to get you there. *“Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* (John 14) There is not a more blessed journey than the one through the straight gate and up the narrow way that leadeth unto life. Only a few find it. Be on your blessed journey now, and stop whining about it.

Msg #803 Seek Wisdom

The Bible says that “*Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.*” In Proverbs 9 it is as if there was a mansion all assembled for your exploration, a meal spread for your delight and an invitation sent that you spend your life therein. In this description seven is the number of completeness, and pillars paint the picture of strength and majesty. Explore God's wisdom. It is laid out on 12 foundations with 12 gates in 66 books written by 40 authors over 3000 years. Gaussen said that “God put his left hand on Enoch, the seventh man from Adam, and his right on John, the humble and sublime prisoner of Patmos. The celestial anthem, seven hundred years before the flood, began with these words, “*Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all;*” (Jude 1:14) but already, in the mind of God, and in the eternal harmony of his work, the voice of John had answered to that of Enoch, and closed the hymn, three thousand years after him, with these words, “*Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him! Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen!*” (Rev 22:20) And during this hymn of thirty centuries, the Spirit of God never ceased to breathe into all his messengers; the angels, an apostle tells us, desired to look into its wondrous depths.” This book of Wisdom, banned from America's education system, to often lies closed and dusty on our shelves. You could easily read the 66 books of your Holy Bible through this year. You would find the wisdom of God in there. You could find His only Begotten Son as wisdom personified. Learn more Bible truths at GSBaptistChurch.com

Msg #804 A Bishop a Deacon a Christian

The Bible says *“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ... Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.”* (1Tim 3) These things were written down for us *“that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* Clearly, those who would be leaders and ministers in His Church will be husbands. Modernists and progressives who think we have evolved way past what God wrote for us 2 and 3 thousand years ago, do error when they put wives in positions to rule. Annually we revisit the responsibilities and Biblical qualifications of God's two Church offices, Bishop-Pastor-Ordained Elder, and Deacons-Ministers-Servant Elders. They are surely husbands and rulers of their homes and children. *“(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)”* But they are also to be *“vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; ... not a novice.”* A Church Pastor (shepherd), holding the office of Bishop (overseer) and exemplifying the maturity of an Elder (in Greek 'presbyter' and NOT the Latin 'priest') should say *“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”* Our Deacons (ministers, servants) should be *“men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.”* Indeed our leaders and ministers are to be examples so that all Christians will be Christlike. How are we doing? How are you doing?

Msg #805 A Sovereign God Who Cares

The Bible says that in Jesus Christ we have a high priest which can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; for he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet He was without sin! (Heb 4) Frank Graeff asked the question in hymn “Does Jesus care when my heart is pained to deeply for mirth and song? As the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long?” He responds in chorus “O yes He cares, I know He cares! His heart is touched by my grief; when the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Saviour cares.” The sovereignty of God requires that He not only cares but he is in control. He knows every fiber of your being every thought and intent of your heart. He is in control of every circumstance that surrounds you. The Bible never portrays a God who has fatally plotted out details of our lives, nor predetermined the decisions we make. Instead an infinite God is present and in control of every detail of every finite being that is made in His image. An insignificant sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His eye, *“Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”* (Matt 10) He cares. He knows. He controls. He answers prayer. Does he care when the test results are malignant? Is He sovereign when it is our son or daughter? Does he care when the ambulance door closes on the crumbled body of our loved one? Is he in control of that aneurysm that breaks or that clot lodging in the heart. A Christian knows the Sovereign God of the universe is in complete control of His precious children. They know and they trust Him.

Msg #806 Sanctified Christians

God states clearly in His Word *“I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.”* You can realize the seriousness of that statement by reading its context in Leviticus 10. The Old Testament tabernacle, priests and sacrifices are more than ceremony, more than symbol, they are types of Christ. They had outward physical meaning, inward spiritual meaning, and anticipatory meaning. They display, affect, and anticipate the real event of the coming sacrifice of the Son of God. God is serious about your sanctification if you draw near through His only begotten Son. Christians are to be separate from the world. 'If it is doubtful it is dirty' is a good rule for both shirt collars and Christian living. Priests were expected to live holy lives; we more so. Christians are to be holy and *“perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect”*; expected to *“Flee ... youthful lusts”*; expected to *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* Leviticus 10 demonstrates God's seriousness about sanctification of those who would picture every detail of His Son's sacrifice. If you are a Christ-In you may be the only shekinah glory that your kin and neighbors ever see. Ghandi, who led millions in the Christless, hopeless religion of Hinduism, said before his death *“I would have become a Christian, had it not been for Christians.”* The message of God was clear to him; Jesus said *“I am the way, the truth, and the life:”* God's few witnesses in America are to often more tarnished than Nadab and Abihu, of whom God said *“I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.”* Live Christ-like this week. Let your light so shine before men.

Msg #807 It Takes God's Love in a Home

God designed and created the marital union between a man and a woman to typify His endearing and intimate, precious and submissive relationship with us. The relationship is to touch every fiber of our physical, emotional and spiritual being. (Gen 2:) In no other human relationship is the depth of emotion so effected. In no other relationship is the intimacy of body and soul so exposed. It is to be a purposeful exposure of vulnerability and trusting submission to another. When the trust is broken there is no pain nor knife that can cut so deeply into the heart, spirit and soul on an individual. Although man vows to never break this trust and to be faithful to it until death do us part, they often fail and inflict such pain as this unfaithfulness can only attest. God is NEVER unfaithful. God can always be trusted in this intimate relationship. Man is always the broken link when it comes to this so great love.

First Peter 2 included our command to “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear (obey) God. Honour the King.” (1Pet 2:17) Then the Apostle Peter illustrates how Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls so loved us. That He “Did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; When He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously: Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed.”

Outline each part of this verse because the clincher for our relationship in marriage comes in the next chapter where it says “Likewise ye wives, ... Likewise ye husbands, ...” Indeed we are to do likewise. Happy Valentines.

Msg #808 A Godly Wife

The Bible says that the meek, quiet spirit and chaste, submissive, Christlike conversation of a wife can win the souls of any that obey not the word. It is not in our nature to submit like Christ submitted, but 1Pet 3:1 starts with 'Likewise ye wives' indicating God's command that wives so be in subjection to their own husbands. A Baptist preacher running for political office publicly admitted that the Bible does say that, but for politics he added "My wife is anything but submissive." That appeased the world's views but it did not please nor honor God. In our society the submission of a woman to God's Word, God's plan for marriage, and her own husband is one of the most rebelled against commands in the book. Just ask your preacher, who is 50% likely a woman in open rebellion to that command! One of the reasons we are not fulfilling the great commission to win the world to Christ is the disobedient rebellion in the Christian home. I can count on my fingers the homes I know to that have a chaste, submissive, meek, quiet, Christlike wife. Yet God has given this great promise that such a conversation will win the unbelieving brothers and sisters, cousins and nephews, neighbors and kin of such a woman. For your home to be what God commands in I Peter 3, your heart will have to be what Jesus commands in John 3. *"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"* ... nor see a submissive life, nor see a chaste submissive behavior, ... nor see *"that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives."* Pray the Lord will make you that submissive, that Christlike, that holy.

Msg #809 A Husbands Love

The 'likewise' in 1Pet 3:7 is different than the one in verse 1. In verse 1 it was a lesson in Christ's submission; in verse 7 a lesson in Christ's love. "Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge"; knowledge of how much Christ loves His Church. He went through cruel mocking, punishment, and death for her, and gives us a model for how much we should love our wives. "Giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel." Jesus, the perfect unspotted 'Lamb of God' gave honor to mankind 'while we were yet sinners.' "Likewise ye husbands," ... honor the wife. A woman is packaged differently physically, emotionally and mentally. That does not make them the weaker vessel as much as God's command to them that they be in subjection to their own husband. The husband's charge here is to recognize their vulnerability and love them as Christ loved His Church. Christ loved you when you were unlovely. The Bible commands you to 'so love' that lovely one who vowed to love and obey you 'till death do us part.' 'Likewise' here is a tall order, but it is an order. Often our love pales in comparison.

In the Bible saved women are rightly called 'sons' of God. (John 1:12) My wife responded "Yes, and men are called the bride of Christ. Deal with it." Saved husbands and wives are "heirs together of the grace of life" ... eternal life ... joint heirs with Christ. Our homes are to portray the love of Christ. That love is in the submission of the wife and the love of the husband. When one would obey without the other that picture is more magnified not less; and Peter's 'likewise' is all the more the imperative. May God bless your marriage and home. He wants to.

Msg #810 The Ark of Covenant

It is curious that when approaching the Hebrew Tabernacle the Ark of the Covenant would be the very last of the furnishings seen; found buried deep under curtains and shrouded behind a veil. Yet when God instructs the construction of this tabernacle the very first thing in His priority is this ark of the testimony. Think of these words, ... the 'chest' where the testimony of a covenant between God and man is carried. God had said *“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”* (Exod 25:8) At the tabernacle's first mention, the central point and priority of God's description begins with this 'chest' called the 'ark of the testimony', the ark of the covenant', the 'ark of the LORD', and the 'ark of God'. The word 'covenant' is for an alliance or pledge, treaty or league, agreement or marriage; while the word 'testament' is more for a witness, a testimony, or evidence of the agreement. In the whole of Exodus it is referred to as the evidence of the agreement, 'Ark of the Testimony.' Shittim wood used in the ark represents the feeble, frail, fallen, flesh of humanity. The word became vulgar in colloquial use for what is separated and discarded from the flesh, but in this ark of testimony the base wood is not discarded, it is gold plated. The awesome representation brings together the depraved humanity of man, shittim wood, with the full deity of God, pure gold, and combines them into one ark of testimony. It is a portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ, flesh and deity in one. If your a Christian, your old wood is to be gold plated and be beaming forth the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Learn more of this Hebrew Tabernacle at GSBaptistChurch.com/temple

Msg #811 The Contents of a Covenant

Everything in the Hebrew Tabernacle portrayed our Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby should portray those called by his name. In the tabernacle the ark of the covenant contained *"the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;"* (Heb 9) The tables are the commandments of God. Jesus said, *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* (John 15:10) Today, to enter into God's covenant, you must first obey his command. Not the ten in the Hebrew ark, but the one that says *"now (God) commandeth all men every where to repent:"* (Acts 17:30) Salvation does not come without following this command. Jesus then says to the saved *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."* (John 14:15) Aaron's rod that budded was a dead stick used to test who would be the priests of God. Aaron's dead stick came to life, blossomed and bore fruit. So did the author of our salvation. *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* (Heb 12:2) He was raised from the dead, and if saved, *"you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;"* very much like Aaron's rod. When you have His salvation, you are a priest and can enter into his presence. The ark had a golden pot of manna. Jesus is the bread of life, as he said. The gold is his deity. Manna is also portrayed as *"every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* (Matt 4:4) The tabernacle is an awesome portrait, in every detail. Are you?

Msg #812 The 10th of Abib

For fifteen hundred years before Christ's arrival God had the Hebrews paint an annual picture of the day of his crucifixion. Exodus 12 records that on the 10th day of the month of Abib they were to choose out a lamb that was without spot or blemish, separate it from the flock and keep it up until the 14th day when they were to slay it and catch the blood in a basin. When the lamb of God, was selected from the flock, on the 10th day of Abib, He was escorted into the city of Jerusalem amongst garments and palm leaves strewn in His path and as the people cried *"Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord' Hosanna to the highest."* (Matt 21) Almost 2000 years ago now, it had become the custom that the Galilean Jews observe the passover meal a day early to alleviate the overcrowded city during this annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. So Jesus observes his 'last supper' with his disciples in the evening of the 13th day of the month Abib. On the 14th day of the month, on the very day prophesied and exercised for 1,500 years, the day and the hour that the passover lamb was to be slain in prophetic remembrance, the spotless lamb of God, was hung on a cross at Golgotha, and gave up his life's blood for you and for me. God still says *"When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the palgue shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land..."* Christianity is larger than one could portray in 300 words, it is the eternal plan of God for the ages, as portrayed in the whole of the Bible.

Msg #813 Serve a Risen Saviour

Of all the resurrection accounts Luke 24 records my favorite when he tells of two disciples explaining to the resurrected Jesus Christ the events of His own crucifixion. For the errant catholics they clarify the crucifixion was on a Thursday, three days earlier like the Bible says, not two like tradition says, but to the rest of us they demonstrate the love and tenderness of God. He did rebuke them as fools but then he showed them from the Scriptures, *“beginning at Moses and all the prophets”* how Christ ought to have suffered these things to *“enter into his glory.”* Indeed Baptist preachers of the gospel have been doing that for these past 2000 years. Paul said *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;”* We sing, as did Paul in 1Cor 15, *“I serve a risen Saviour, He is in the world today. I know that he is living, what ever men may say.”* Praise the Lord, Christianity does not pray to dead saints nor honor some dead prophet who gave out a life changing philosophy. It serves, yea it worships as God, the resurrected only begotten Son of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't be tangled in the counterfeits, and untangle your loved ones from man made 'religion.' Christianity is not a 'religion' it is a 'relationship.' Live that relationship before others so they can see your risen Lord, so they too can look and live.

Msg #814 Tabernacle Candlestick

The holy place of the Hebrew Tabernacle had three furnishings just outside the holy of holys where God met with Israel. (Exod 25) Only priests were allowed in this holy place even as all born again Christians, called priests and kings under the new covenant, are the only ones allowed in such a holy place today. Two furnishings, the table of shew bread and the altar of incense are typified by the song we sing in Sunday School, "Read your Bible, Pray every day, If you want to grow." The only light that shined in the holy place, the candle stick, with 6 branches and 7 lights pounded out of one piece of pure gold, does not signify the light of God unto the world; for it only shone in the curtain shrouded holy place where only priests entered. It excellently typifies the perfect and complete light of a pure and holy God that lights up the holy place where you, as a Christian break the bread of God's Holy Word daily, like the shew bread is placed daily. It beams light to the bended knee of the believer in his daily prayers, like the altar of incense is tended in the daily ministration. If you are not a born again Christian, you cannot enter the holy place, nor see the candlestick; you need to do your business outside at the brazen altar first. If you are a Christian, have you been in the holy place today? Your presence is commanded. Have you bathed in the light of God with an open Bible and bended knee as only a blind man that has received back his sight ever could. If you have been quickened, (Eph 2) you will long to be in the 7 complete lights of God's pure candlestick.

Msg #815 Redeemed by the Blood

The Hebrew Tabernacle that God designed as a portrait of his relationship with man had a central tent covered with four practical and symbolic curtains. (Exod 25) The inner most was a 28 x 40 fine twined linen curtain made of blue and purple and scarlet with cherubims of cunning work. Ten 4 cubit linen curtains came off the Hebrew loom symbolic with cherubims, the winged creatures present where God meets with man; with scarlet, the color of the blood that can wash away all sin; with purple, the color of the royalty of kings and priests which God has made his born again believers; and with blue, the marvelous backdrop of the heavens when man looks up through God's unpolluted air back lit by his Son. The 50 pure gold taches that connected one curtain to the next represent the pure righteousness of God that through mercy could robe saints in such linen. A 30 x 44 mohair curtain overlapped the linen and is picturesque of the scapegoat that went free while his mirror was made the sacrifice for sin. The goats hair curtain was seamed together with 50 taches of brass representing this judgment of sin. The soft mohair was covered with rams skin dyed red. The symbolism is clear and vivid for any born again believer. An outer layer of badgers skin served two practical and symbolic purposes. The heavy grizzled coat of the carnivorous burrowing badger was a protection from the harsh wilderness environment outside of the holy place, and its disheveled blandness concealed the inner gold and beauty of the tremendous contents of the Hebrew tabernacle. A born again believer may not look like much to the world, but nestled in that soul is covenant relationship with Jehovah God through the blood of His only begotten Son.

Msg #816 Unity in Christ Alone

The Bible says “*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*” (Psalm 133) but this unity is never condoned or expected for those outside of the Christ. Indeed this unity of brethren is attainable by those who are redeemed to God by the gracious sacrifice of His only begotten Son. The 20 boards that stood in the two walls of the Hebrew Tabernacle amply illustrate this. They were dwelling together in unity of mind and purpose and each was separated from the dirt of this world by two sockets of pure silver. God was emphatic about this and the silver pictures the act of redemption throughout Scripture. A Church should insist on, as Baptists always have, a testimony of a soul's redemption experience prior to entry into Church membership. Redemption is not baptism, and baptism is not redemption. A public profession of both the repentance and faith present in conversion cannot be replaced with some behind the door confirmation classes and it always preceded baptism in the Bible. If your Church receives members solely by this public profession of a redemption experience it may have the name 'Baptist' on the sign out front; no mere baptism will do, and certainly no infant baptism with ensuing confirmation classes will do. The unity of Psalm 133 is thus expected inside the walls of a Baptist Church, and when it is lacking there is usually a board that has no sockets of silver separating it from the world. Check your silver. Is it pure? Check your membership policy is it proper? If there is any un-Biblical board in your Church it will break the unity. Even a deacon board that is cited in NY State law, is nowhere found in my Bible. Keep all your boards Biblical.

Msg #817 The Temple Veil

When the Lord Jesus Christ finished his sacrificial work as the passover lamb He became our high priest and in preparation the veil in the temple was rent from the top to the bottom exposing the holy of holies and the ark of the covenant to the priesthood. (Matt 27:51) The picture which God had painted for 1500 years, using a veil of blue and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work with cherubims, was rent in two by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and under the new covenant a believer priest has full access to the very presence of God, into the place where Jehovah God dwells. Born again believers have this access with no other mediator than our Lord and Saviour. For the past 1500 years religionists have been wearing various robes, backward collars, and religious paraphernalia pretending to be your priest or mediator when the Bible clearly communicates the priesthood of all believers. My Bible still says *“And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven,”* (Matt 23:9) even while there are religionists who where a dress and insist that you call them 'father', or 'holy father', and one, who just visited NY, insists on being called 'The Holy Father'! If your pastor refuses to wear a robe or collar, portraying the connection with this error, you could be in a Bible believing Church with 'Baptist' on the sign and the priesthood of all believers in its statement of faith. Our priesthood is clearly contained in the ark of the new covenant, the Scriptures of the New Testament. Study it to show yourself approved unto God, and be careful with anyone presenting themselves as a mediator between you and your Father, even in their dress.

Msg #818 The Brazen Altar

The brazen altar for sacrifice was the 7th construction description given in the Hebrew tabernacle, God's explicit portrait of the redeeming work promised for mankind. Within this 5x5 cubit brazen altar priests would sacrifice the sweet savor burnt offerings, meat offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings and trespass offerings described in Leviticus. It was the first furnishing encountered in approaching the holy place, and portrays God's judgment upon sin; *“for the wages of sin is death.”* (Rom 6:23a) The picture is so powerful that brass comes to symbolize judgment throughout the remainder of God's revelation, just as gold represents His righteousness because of the mercy seat; silver, redemption because of the sockets holding the tabernacle. God is so holy and righteous, and His heaven is so perfect, that no sin can enter his presence. Sin must be judged righteously and His judgment says sin gets the death penalty; thus the brazen altar was a place of sacrificial death, and you cannot enter the holy place without passing by this place of sacrifice. But this was just the portrait. *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. ... He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* (Heb 10:4-10) Your sacrifice will not get you into the holy place. Jesus said *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* Receive Him, God's perfect, man's only, sacrifice for sin.

Msg #819 The Seven Things in Proverbs 31

Genius literature has a prologue and epilogue and the latter in Proverbs gives 7 things that mothers should be teaching. In the Bible, seven is the number of completeness. The righteous do not fall 7 times because someone is counting, nor are there 7 abominations in man because someone has a list. Likewise here, emphasis is on the completeness of a mother's teaching. In the 1st verse she teaches a son what God says, for the meaning of 'prophecy' is captured in the phrase 'Thus saith the Lord,' as used over 1000 times in your AV Bible. In the 2nd she teaches him his identity, and note particularly the reference to marriage vows. Mothers are to be married, life givers and teachers in this profoundly worded context. In the 3rd a son is not to be a womanizer and in the 4th he is not to be a winebibber. These two vices are the downfall of most wayward men and a mother is to keep sons off that path. The 5th lesson is one of compassion, found in verse 8, and the 6th one of sound judgment in verse 9. The most commonly referenced lesson which a mother must teach her son is the seventh, given in this closing chapter of the book of wisdom. It is that you marry a God fearing virtuous woman who can teach these 7 lessons to your children. It is unfortunate that these superb lessons are so little heeded in our twisted society. It does not take a village, it takes a Christian, God fearing, Bible reading mother, and they are all to rare in villages of America. Praise the Lord if you got one called mom, and all the more if you have one called sweetheart. I got both. Happy Mother's Day.

Msg #820 Got Life?

Jesus likens becoming a Christian to a new birth wherein one is added to the kingdom of heaven, completely saved from their sin debt and redeemed from this world's owner in a single act of spiritual new birth. (John 3) Likening this to a physical birth condemns the sacramental work systems developed by man made religion whereby do-gooders and church donors get in when 'Saint Peter tips the scales their way.' Thus a born-again Christian should perceive the three errant 'P's of apostasy wherein the Latin Vulgate translated the Bible word for "repent" as the Latin "do penance", the Bible word "elder" as Latin word "priest" and the Bible word "ordain" as the Latin word "predestinate." Be careful who does your Bible translation and your thinking for you. These three errors have permeated Christianity for 1700 years, and now we have the modernist and unitarian Bible Societies hobnobbing with Rome to do all modern Bible translations. Satan is ecstatic, but born-again believers need to be wary. The Lord Jesus Christs taught conversion by repentance and faith; He taught no New Testament priest-craft; and He taught that whosoever will may come. He also taught that He was God in the flesh, that there is only one way to eternal life, and that whosoever believeth on him would, in the present tense, receive it. The attack against the words of God is still rampant. But this word is sure; *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. ... He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (John 3:36, 1John 5:12) Are you 'born again' like Jesus taught? It is essential!

Msg #821 Justifying Faith and Justifying Works

It is clear in the Bible that justification of the sinner is by faith through grace whether you read Ephesians 2 *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* or Romans 1 *“The just shall live by faith.”* Justification, here, is declarative wherein God declares one 'just-as-if-I'd' never sinned. When justified, and there is no holy water, holy wafer, or sacrament involved in that justification, you are declared righteous by God the Father, because of your faith in, and conversion to, the redeeming act of His Only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Recall that He said *“Except ye be converted, ... ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* Justification is an absolutely free and undeserved gift. You cannot be declared justified because of any works, penance or baptisms you may do, it is only by grace. When Paul declares this truth in Romans 4 he directly quotes James, the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem, who said *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”* James was contending that faith needs to be justified after your salvation; Paul dealing with how we are declared justified. The word justify has two meanings; declared justification done by God and explained by Paul, and demonstrated justification whereby real faith is shown and evidenced in James' definition. God in Paul was not at odds with God in James. Romans sets about explaining how you are made the righteousness of God, James to explain the effect of that righteousness when it is real. Both clearly reveal, *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation”* Be saved and be real.

Msg #822 Pure Oil, Pure Light, Pure Word

Exodus 27:20 says “*And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.*” The first break in the construction details of the Hebrew Tabernacle deals with the oil that will burn inside the holy place. This oil, representative of the Holy Spirit of God, burns for a light, not to the world, but for the priests as they serve in the holy place. It must be a pure oil with no admixture of another spirit. There is a spirit that contradicts the Word in worship and causes people to babble or howl in confusion without edifying. There is a spirit of pride, apathy, or rebellion that competes in the holy place, but only pure oil lights the bread of life and the golden prayer altar. The olive source is representative of Israel, and only the chosen seed of Israel could be the Word which lights the Word. Modernized Bible versions do not light the true Word like oil of olive does. It is a beaten oil, pounded fine and pure in a mortar, even as “*he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: ... and with his stripes we are healed.*” (Isa 53:5) And it is an 'always oil' that was to burn from generation to generation forever. Some would have you think that the pure Word of God was lost for a thousand years and the efforts of Critic Tischendorf, Bishop Westcott and Professor Hort will restore purity by ripping 5,604 Greek words out of their Nestles bible. God says His light would burn always, and it did burn pure throughout those dark 1,000 years of Roman persecutions. Keep the oil pure and use His Light on His pure Word.

Msg #823 A Prepared Place for a Prepared People

The Bible clearly says that there is life after death and that Jehovah God has a prepared place for only prepared people. Every man made religion has God's heaven far less than the indescribable eternal place that His Bible describes. The Apostle Paul writes therein *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* (1Cor 2) Jesus, the King himself, says of His place *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"* (Matt 25:34) Cults of vulgar men try to make it a place of sexual gratification with available virgins or women perpetually pregnant. My wife won't go to Joseph Smith's imagined heaven. If the measurable spectrum were logarithmically stretched from your floor to the ceiling a child could see the ROYGBIV colors through a 1 inch slit about 3 feet up. Heaven is perfect, sinless, and beyond our eye's ability; are you perfectly prepared? Every man made religion has God's condemnation and wrath far less than the indescribable eternal place that His Bible describes. The Bible's hell has no purgatory, end, or drop of water. It is for the unprepared. The wages of sin is death; this death is passed upon all men; and *"the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."* (Rev 21:8) Choose life! *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."* (John 3:36)

Msg #824 Your Commission

Five times the commission of the Lord Jesus Christ to the disciples is recorded by them. In Matthew “*All power (i.e. authority, right, liberty, jurisdiction, strength) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ...*” (Matt 28); in Mark 16:15 “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*” in Luke 24:47, “*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*”; in John 20:21, “*Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*”; and in Acts, “*ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*” As a Christian you are commissioned, commanded, and expected to give the gospel to your neighbors, acquaintances and even strangers that you meet. If you are saved from the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev 20:14-15, 21:8) by calling on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9-10), how could you not tell your neighbor, who is headed there, how they too can be saved. More than telling them that 'you love Jesus' more than inviting them to Church, you need to tell them that 1) All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God; 2) Their sin has an eternal penalty in the lake of fire; 3) One cannot save themselves by works or deeds, memberships or baptisms, 4) Christ paid their penalty in full, and 5) their believing and calling on Him will enact their salvation from that lake of fire. Untold millions are still untold. You will talk to one of them today. Do not let them remain untold! Follow His command, not your spirit, tell them.

Msg #825 Is Acts 8:37 in Your Bible?

The Bible says in Acts 8:37 *“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest (be baptized). And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ... and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”* A Bible verse that clearly portrays baptism of only born again believers and that by immersion under water is so despised by baby sprinkling religions that it is ripped out of all the modernist versions of the Bible. Check your Bible for Acts 8:37 and if that verse got pulled take a note that you need to get an accurate Bible with all the verses included. The ecumenical modernists translate from the Alexandrian corrupted manuscripts from Egypt. They call these 'older and better' manuscripts to get rid of Acts 8:37, a myriad of other verses, and most all of the full names of “The Lord Jesus Christ.” Accurate versions and translations include these verses and full names all the way back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Back then there was no infant baptism, no holy water, no baptism by sprinkling, and ONLY baptism of believers by immersion, like Jesus was baptized and like Jesus taught his apostles. Baptists got tagged with that name because they are a people who kept going that far back to establish everything they believe and practice by the writings of the actual apostles. We call those writings the Holy Bible. With all the omissions in the myriad of modernist bibles, Baptists, of all people, should recognize the NIV, NASB, NEB, NJB, etc., as the holey bible, and get a hold of one that still has Acts 8:37 in it. God only wrote one book, don't trust a translator that won't get you the whole thing.

Msg #826 The Fearful Unbelieving

The Bible says in Revelation 21:8 *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”* This depiction of eternal punishment is often denied by man made religions but in the Bible there are only two destinies of the soul, this second death or partaking in eternal life. Your destiny is determined by what you do with the Only Begotten Son of God. We might agree on a fate for the abominable and the murderers but leading off in God's list is 'the fearful, and unbelieving' and that might describe some nice folks. In a study of God's 63 uses of the phrase 'Fear not' one realizes that the fearful are the unbelieving and the unbelieving have cause fear. *“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”* and God said *“Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”* Likewise for us; *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”* Then the Son said *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom”.* *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”* those found in Christ need not fear what their reward will be for *“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* Jesus said to believers *“Fear not; I am the first and the last.”*

Msg #827 The Abominable Things

There are 39 abominable things called out in the Bible and half of these had to do with keeping the Hebrew diet, behavior, and sacrificial system for their clean vessel and clear portrait of their coming messiah. That leaves 15 sins that God especially abhors still applicable to today. Five considered heinous to our Creator have to do with our procreation; involving sexual sins, adultery and homosexuality. But before examining any abomination to closely we should consider that *“whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all”* (James 2:10) and *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”* (Romans 3) The Bible says every one of us comes before God guilty and condemned until we call upon His Only Begotten Son for forgiveness and eternal salvation. The danger of these more abominable things is in their more catastrophic destructive results. Lives are ruined, children are marred, and incurable consequence are procured. Still many tangled in a 'sexual revolution' remain defiant of God's precepts and others may look down a self righteous nose at their awful plight, without remembering that *“Lying lips are abomination to the LORD”*(Prov 12:22), *“the froward is abomination to the LORD”*, (Prov 11:20) or *“A false balance is abomination to the LORD.”* (Prov 11:1) Being forgiven of the eternal penalty for sin, as a born again Christian is, does not get us release from the present awful consequence of sin. Salvation does not cure HIV or herpes but secures eternal forgiveness of the condemnation of sin. All of us should be especially careful of the sins God calls an abomination. They lead directly to present ruin; but the Bible still says *“whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* (Rom 10:13)

Msg #828 Where the Fire is Not Quenched

As a Christian our salvation experience and our love of Christ compel us to tell others how they too can be saved from the horrible eternal fate of the second death called out in Revelation 20:14-15. If one does not experience that compulsion they are likely yet in their sin; not understanding what they needed saved from, the principle of repentance, nor the sincerity of belief required in Romans 10:9-10. For those truly saved from that lake of fire and brimstone, called the second death, there is not only a compulsion to tell others there is a command. Jesus said 'Go ye and teach all nations (Matt 28) and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16) that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in my name; (Luke 24) as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you; (John 20) that ye shall be witnesses unto me.' (Acts 1:8) So why will they not listen when we tell them the gospel? Today the existence and doctrine of an eternal hell is being systematically removed from the minds of man. The word 'hell' is found 54 time in the Holy Bible but only 14 times in the modernist's NIV bible. Its eternal existence was denied by Charles Taze Russell, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen White and other cult founders of America. They are called unbelievers in Revelation 21:8, don't be their followers. Many reject the gospel message of salvation because they just don't understand what they need to be saved from, thinking God wouldn't really do what he said, or that they can save themselves. True Christians need to turn up the temperature of hell fire in their preaching until it gets as hot as Jesus preached it, *"where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."* (Mark 9:44,46,48)

Msg #829 America Has a Prayer

On this 232nd celebration of this great nation's independence I read aloud Daniel 9 where Daniel prayed for his country. And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, “O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our (governors), our (leaders), and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of (New York), and to the inhabitants of (Albany), and unto all (America), near and far... because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our (governors), to our (leaders), and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all (our United States) have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse (could be) poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. ... As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil (should) come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

Therefore (could) the LORD watch upon the evil, and (bring) it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his

works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. And now, O Lord our God, that hast ... gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from (us): because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, (These United States) are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon (this nation and turn our hearts again toward thee), for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and (this nation which was once) called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for this thy people are called by thy (Son's) name “

I am thinking what God said that “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Msg #830 Study the Words of God

In Daniel 9, the Bible reveals a gray headed Daniel studying the Scriptures written by Jeremiah the prophet and gaining an understanding of some things about God. The Bible reveals a challenge to young Timothy to “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” (2Tim 2:15) Before the modernists conjectured that “it is just a book written by man” Christians, young and old, were called 'People of the Book' and believed what it said that “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, (What IS right) for reproof, (How to GET right) for correction, (How to KEEP right) for instruction in righteousness: (How to TEACH right) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” (2Tim 3:16) When Daniel studied and understood, it did three things for him, first he says “*I set my face unto the Lord God,*” In your circumstance you need to do exactly the same. Second, Daniel said “*I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, ...*” In the mess of this world we need to do exactly the same thing. The key here is the study of God's Word. Study like God told Joshua “*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; (i.e. It will always be in your mouth) but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*” Oh, the third thing that Daniel got from the studying the Scriptures, ... The touch of God “*While I was speaking and praying ... about the time of the evening oblation.*” (Dan 9:21)

Msg #831 A Dysfunctional Nation.

In Ezekiel's prophecy the Bible says *“So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.”* (Ezek 39:7)) This follows a long and explicit justification of the slaughter and deportation of Israel from her promised land and she is likened to a whorish adulterous woman that forsakes her loving husband for a horde of other men. If a nation's religion is what is taught to it's children in their school systems the USA is fitting of the same description. The Bible says *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; (Jehovah)”* (Psalm 33:12) As a nation we, and Israel, horribly violated God's first three commandments. Israel is the nation that God chose and the USA is the nation that chose God. Our whoredoms after false gods will meet a justified judgment and God will not let us *“pollute his holy name”* much further. What God does to nations He does *‘for His names sake.’* (Psalm 23) God says that America who now rejects Jehovah God as their Creator, *“who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator,”* (Rom 1:25) will someday turn from their godless evolution, their humanist manifesto and idolized materialism to *“know that I am the LORD their God.”* (Exod 29:46) We could do it before our demise if we would *“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”* (Psalm 2:10-12)

Msg #832 A Nation Says 'Aha'

In a year filled with politics and many loose worded national opinions the Holy Bible in Ezekiel 25 gives us due warning to be careful what we say. Individually the Bible warns us in James that *“the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!”* (James 3:5) but nationally the most dangerous tongue was found in the land of the Ammonites. God says to them *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; ... Behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, ...”* (Ezek 25:3) The Lord GOD goes on to destroy Moab *“Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen; ...”* In this chapter God destroys Edom, because they *“dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance”* and He goes on to say *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy (Israel) for the old hatred; ... I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.”* These nations answered to an angry God because they spoke against God's Israel. Our politicians are becoming timid to call Israel the chosen people of the Lord GOD, dwelling in the promised land of God. It does not fit political correctness nor religious plurality, but Israel is just that, and our timidity to say it out loud is leading down a path of compromise which will end poorly. God's Word says that one day the USA *“shall know that I am the LORD.”*

Msg #833 Getting Nothing From The Bible

The Bible has much to say about **nothing**. It says in Ephesians 2:8-9 that there is **nothing** you can **do** to gain eternal life; it is a free gift of God received by trusting in his only begotten Son. In John 14:6 there is **nothing** other than Jesus the Christ who can usher you into the presence of a Holy God. In John 3:18 if you do **nothing** you are already under condemnation, indeed Romans 10:9-10 says you must believe and call on the Lord Jesus Christ to get out from under that condemnation. The Bible says in Mark 8:36 there is **nothing** that should keep you from making the decision to receive God's Only Begotten Son for your personal saviour. In Mark 9:43-48 the Bible says there is **nothing** in this life to be compared to an eternal torment of being cast away from Jehovah God our creator. In Revelation 20:14-15 it says there is **nothing** that can keep you from that lake of fire except having your name written in God's book of life. There are some blessed **nothings** in the Bible as well. Romans 8:38-39 says there is **nothing** that can separate the saved from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. John 10:27-30 says **nothing** can take away our eternal life nor pluck us from God's hand. In a Christian's proper walk the Bible says in Psalm 119:165 **nothing** can offend us; in Psalm 23:1 **nothing** is our want; in 2Peter 1:5-8 **nothing** can make us barren nor unfruitful; and in Jude 1:24 **nothing** can remove our exceeding joy. The Bible says in 1Corinthians 15:55-57 that death and the grave have **nothing** on the born-again believer. Do they have anything on you?

Msg #834 Satan, Tyrus, and US

In chapter 26 of God's prophecy through Ezekiel, God stands on a precipice of time and looks down on the waves crashing against the shores of Tyrus. There, in mankind, He sees both the shadow of Satan himself and the rebellious, materialistic, prideful heart foreshadowing US. These words are not just history, they are 'His Story' They do not just tell us what happened, they tells us 'What Happens.' In this instance Tyrus was looking for an opportunity to step in on God's territory and lift themselves up against Him and take advantage. *Because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, "Aha, she is broken" ...* God said, *"I am against thee, O Tyrus. ... and will destroy thee."* (Ezek 26) Man has not learned better than to say 'Aha' against God. Psalm 35:21 says *"Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it."* Psalm 40:15 says *"Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha."* We have said in our churches and schools "Aha, God did not create everything in 6 days like He said." We have said in our courts "Aha, it's OK to kill for convenience if the victim is still unborn." We have said in our homes and now in our churches "Aha, it's OK for women to rule over men." We have said in our public square "Aha, queer behavior is just an alternate lifestyle, let them marry." God called all these 'Aha, Ahas' SIN, and says *"Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha."* (Psalm 70:3) Micah 5:8 says we should *"Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, ... JEHOVAH is his name ..."* Jesus, his Son's name.

Msg #835 Egypt's Pride and US

In Ezekiel God reveals why he judges nations. Chapters 29-32 give insight into Egypt's prideful opinion that they were spontaneously generated and then evolved to higher order beings to become the gods of this world. God hated the pride of this nation who said of the Nile river, *“My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.”* (Ezek 29:3) In chapter 29 God said he would flop them into the wilderness like a fish out of water and a year later he did just what he said. They sound pretty haughty, but since O'Hair and ACLU kicked God's Bible from our schools, children are taught that God is a liar, that we spontaneously generated without Him, and that we evolved to a higher order beings which must save the planet. It is just as haughty, or more so. In Ezek 31 God says to the Pharaoh *“Who do you think you are?”* He then asks him to learn from history and see what happened to the greater kingdom of Assyria who filled with pride and thought themselves self made. If there is one thing we learn from history, it is that we don't learn from history. Pharaoh and all Egypt were brought to humility because God judges those who lift themselves up and deny their Creator. Our 'conventions' thumb their nose at Jehovah and deny their divine Creator but He still beacons *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”* (Isa 1:18) He pleads with you, as well, *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”* (John 3:17) Be saved today.

Msg #836 A Loving Father's Corporal Punishment

Three Old Testament prophets wrote down God's messages after the Babylonian captivity and none is so tender as Zechariah. In the Rice households there was a practice of starting and ending child discipline with a candid discussion and a word of prayer. The initial discussion and prayer would never eliminate the 'whipping' that had already been bought and paid for, but the one that followed was always intimate, reconciliatory and productive. The initial assured that the offender knew the purpose and intended result of the corporal punishment, and the latter assured that the punishment had achieved its goal. (Those who will not use corporal punishment in child rearing, or practice such an approach, God promises that their methods are wrong, and I'd sooner believe Him!) Zechariah is God's intimate, reconciliatory and productive discussion and prayer after the corporal punishment against His chosen people Israel. As in life, it reveals the tender heart of the father as it plots out a new direction for the punished child. The first 6 introductory verses alone are worth the effort it takes to find the book in a Bible. The ten visions in the first half of the book will take Bible study effort on your part and the 2nd half paints a picture in time from 500 BC to the still upcoming 1000 year Kingdom Age of the Lord Jesus Christ, the 'King, the LORD of hosts.' The 14 chapters are worth your reading in one sitting. Those who say the God of the Old Testament is 'harsh' and the God of the New Testament is 'love' do not know God, nor his precious Book. God's promise in Zechariah's third verse is for you. God sent His 'Carpenter' to fix anything that you have broken or messed up. Give it to Him today.

Msg #837 Waiting for His Coming

In Matthew 25 Jesus likens the coming kingdom of

heaven to a long drawn out wait for the coming of a bridegroom to a wedding. This parable is not fully portrayed in American weddings, but then in Israel before he would come and take his bride, the groom would make full physical and financial preparations of a stable home. Only then would the bridegroom go to initiate the wedding ceremony and celebrations. Then as now, eager bride's maids would wait and attend the bride for the glorious coming celebration. Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to these brides maids waiting for the coming groom and explains the main comparison thus "*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh*" (Matt 25:13) On the outside the 5 foolish bride maids looked and acted just like the 5 wise ones. They all had their lamps all trimmed and in hand; the naked eye could not discern the prepared from the unprepared in looks or acts. Just so Christians today wait for the coming of the bride groom, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' parable indicates that half are not fully prepared, for they are lacking the oil, i.e. the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God that comes with an authentic new birth. This illustration is not for pretenders not real enough to watch for His coming, nor hypocrites and modernists who deny and castigate the accuracy of God's Word. Here the foolish were believing, and sincere, and busy, ... but lost, ... sincere, but not born again. Don't just test your sincerity, test authenticity. "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ... The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*" (Rom 8)

Msg #838 Investing Wisely

In Matthew 25 the second illustration that Jesus gave to conclude the 'Olivet Discourse' is often called the parable of the 10 talents. A sojourning man left 'talents', representative of his resources, with three servants. These talents were given out *“according to (a servants) several ability,”* (Matt 25:15) and there was a gain expected for every invested resource. A servant here, is not to represent a Christian as much as it is to represent humanity. God, your Creator, has given you His resources, a working brain, and the air that you breath. Some He has given even more resources. He is ever expecting a gain on His investment. The very least gain acceptable for any is the believing and accepting of the redeeming act of the Creator's only begotten Son. Without that much gain you are headed for outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth as recorded in verse 30. The wicked and slothful servant hid his master's 'talent' in the earth. Where have you placed your Creator's investment? The first and greatest commandment is that *“thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.”* (Mar 12:29) You only have your heart and mind for a little while. There is a day of reckoning coming soon, and He is expecting a return on His investment. We all can do something for the Glory of God. Your Creator wants a gain from the breath of life that He gave you. Be a good steward of the simplest resource that God has entrusted to us. He gave us life, invest that in Him, and he gives us eternal life, and just like the 'good and faithful' servants we double that resource He entrusted to us.

Msg #839 Jesus, The Life Giver

The Gospel According to Saint John is the first book recommended for reading to new believers. In it the Word is made flesh, ch1; the miracles begin, ch2; and the new birth is expounded, ch3. Christ is the living water, ch4; the quickener, ch5; and the bread of life, ch6. In today's English the 'quickener' often needs additional consideration. Made quick is not the sense of this old English word. Indeed the definition is best taken from Scripture and in John 5:21 it says "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." To be quickened is to be made alive, or brought back from the dead, and here Jesus said this power is His, that He "quickeneth whom he will." With that profound explanation Jesus gives two profound truths. First, Jesus, the Son is to be honored as God, loved as God and worshiped as God. (vr. 23) Cults and 'isms' stumble horribly at this truth, but Christians do not. Charles Taze Russel, founder of the JW's, and Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism rejected the deity of Christ and the trinity of God. The Unitarians in the Bible Societies reject the deity of Christ and rip His name from their bibles but Christians can not. Second, Jesus explains that he alone can give eternal life to mortal man. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." (vr 25) Got life? Praise God. Praise Jesus.

Msg #840 Sheep or Goat?

Twice in Matthew 25 Jesus portrays the Kingdom of Heaven in parable then he closes, by telling of pending judgment “when the Son of man shall come in his glory.” Christians look for and long for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ but when he comes “then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:” (vr 31) and judge the nations as it says here. Some consider this a judgment of works, for humanity to care for the poor and treat each other equitably; it is not. Notice herein that the sheep and the goats were separated before the 'works' were brought up.

Righteousness is a state of being not a work of entry. Either you are a sheep, righteous and justified, or a goat, in iniquity and condemnation (John 3:18) “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph 2:8-9) There are no works that you could do, or sacraments to incubate, to receive a new life in Christ. It is a free gift! Here the works are the fruit of the righteous, for “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” (Matt 7:16) Fruits do not produce righteousness; His righteousness in us, produces fruit. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2Cor 5:21) Sheep or goat is determined not by works, but by birth; there is still time for your new birth, but do not put it off, the judge will be returning any day now, and the Bible says “behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.” (2Cor 6:2)

Msg #841 Rapture

The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be as a thief in the night (1Thes 5). The world will be overdue God's wrath as it was in the days of Noah "when the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;" (Luke 17:26, Gen 6) and as it was in the days of Lot when "the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." (Luke 17:28, Gen 19) Sodom was living a lifestyle of sodomy. America is thereby well qualified for His coming "as a thief" to steal away his saints who will be "caught up together ... in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:" (1Thes 4:16) When addressing the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the Bible says he will come to take out his saints "as a thief in the night" and yet come as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords;" where "every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him;" it says He will come "for His saints" and yet it says He will come "with his saints;" "in the clouds" and "with the clouds." Jesus was not sloppy with prepositions, as are modern translators, not believing in verbal inspiration or pre-tribulation rapture. He indeed will come first "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:" (1Cor 15) to take a prepared people to a prepared place. If the trumpet sounds today, the saints will be 'caught up and transported to heaven' (or in Latin 'raptured.')

The unprepared will be 'left behind.' Only "He that hath the Son, hath life." (1John 5:12) and He is first coming for his own.

Msg #842 A Seven Tribulation

Jesus tells of the tribulation that will come upon this world and starts dead center in the middle when the 'abomination of desolation' stands in Jerusalem. (Matt 24:15-22) This event is also dead center in the middle of the Revelation of Jesus Christ in chapter 13, where this man is likened to a multi-headed beast and given a number of 666. This horrendous tribulation is prophesied in Daniel 9 where in the 'midst of that week,' or the 7 year period, the 'anti-Christ' rises to power, kills God's two witnesses (Rev 11:3-12) who were indestructible for 1260 days (3 ½ years), and treads under foot the holy city for 42 months. (or second 3 ½ years, 11:2) He receives his power from Satan and is worshiped by the whole world (13:4) as he aggressively tries to annihilate Israel for 1260 days (12:6) who is protected by God for the 'time, and times, and half a time' or 3 ½ years. (12:14) In this last 3 ½ years a false prophet does many 'signs and wonders' that are more real than Benny Hinn's or other TV charlatans, (13:11-14) and causes all to worship the dragon-Satan, and this anti-Christ-beast. (13:11-14, 16:13, 19:20) This 7 year period is real, true, and sure. (Rev 22:6) All the world will follow false teachers and false gods after Christ raptures his true Church out of here. Don't be left behind. Jesus said "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25) Remember, only "He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1John 5:12)

Msg #843 Armageddon is Coming

Bible prophecy tells of 3 more world wars coming. All three center around a hatred toward Israel and in the one ending the 7 year tribulation God draws together all nations “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” (Rev 16:16) Satan will have deceived all the nations of the world, placed them in a new world order and caused that there be a one world religion. (Rev 13) When one hears talk like “We all worship the same god”, or sees the growth of pluralism, or the liberal progressive 'new world order' they should shudder for the direction of our nation. The left turn it took to follow along Satan's deceit is disguised in a liberal progressive platform that never talks about it's planks, only about it's personalities. It steadily mocks and eventually hushes Evangelical Christianity into a subdued Laodicean silence. I encourage Christians to “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:...Who made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.” A fundamentalist Christian is a *servant* centered on the love of Christ. (John 3:16) A fundamentalist Muslim is a *warrior* centered on killing Jews and infidels. (Koran 2:190-, Hadith 1:13, Sura 9:5) Yet, in making a recent endorsement Colin Powell said it is right in his eyes that a Muslim be our president, and Jimmy Carter said in Tolerance Magazine that Fundamental Christians are the culprits thwarting tolerance in America. God warns about this left turn when He says “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; ... Therefore ... their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have ... despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.” (Isa 5:20-24)

Msg #844 The Coming Messiah

God has made some promises to the Jews. Israel shall have a Messiah to sit on the throne of David and rule and reign this world as His kingdom, and He is the one that had his hands, his feet and his side pierced for you and for me. Zechariah 12:10 says “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, “ (Zech 12:10) And The Revelation of Jesus Christ matches that prophecy with “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” (Rev 1:7) Catholicism, and then Protestant theologians, taught that they would usher in this kingdom for the Christ (the Greek word for 'Messiah', משיח, 'mashiyach') Jesus was explicit, he was the Christ, he would return as the King of Kings, he would fulfill the promises to the Jews. He will not accomplish this through his Church, we are here only as His witnesses. As He told his apostles “But ye shall receive power, ... and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Students of Biblical Prophecy know that Christ will open a door in heaven and call to his Church saints 'come up hither' (Rev 4, 1Thes 4) and that when He next opens heaven and comes on a white horse, as the promised Messiah to the Jews, as King of Kings, He comes WITH those saints. (Rev 19) Be a saint, be a student.

Msg #845 Christian Temperance

Paul, writing his first epistle, emphasizes the pure grace that brings wisdom and change into a Christian's life. He puts this outline before the Galatian churches as they struggle against legalism, it shows up in each of his other epistles, and it includes what one used to 'walk', contrasted with what one is now to 'walk'. Remember the 'walk' talks and the 'talk' talks, but the 'walk' talks louder than the 'talk' talks. Before conversion one walks in the lusts of the flesh categorized and listed in Galatians 5:19-21 with four selfish-sex sins, nine selfish-religion sins, and four selfish-self sins. If you got off a selfish path it was because wise parents whipped you off, usually literally. After being born again your new Lord brings new fruit into the new life that you have in Christ. For those following the command "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh," these new fruits are categorized in three groups of three. Three for your soul emotions; love, joy, and peace. Three for your relationships with others; longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness. And three for your walk; faith, meekness, and temperance. The latter of these fruits relates directly to that most noble inner struggle to be self-less instead of self-ish. All of child-rearing has to do with instilling a selflessness over and above ones natural selfishness. All the list of lusts of the flesh have to do with selfishness, but temperance has to do with the restraining of the flesh and telling it NO. A Christian has this power, or fruit, given to them by their Lord, as they walk in His Spirit. How's your temperance? How's your fruit? How's your walk? If you're born again you should have all three.

Msg #846 No Left Turn

What is a Christian to do when the world around him votes to take a hard left turn away from following after godliness? God's command to Joshua as he headed into the promised land was "Only be thou strong and very courageous, ... observe to do according to all the law, ... turn not from it to the right hand or to the left." (Josh 1:) As America clearly voted against the holy sanctity of life, marriage and home Christians should make an extra effort to keep their eyes on their Lord. In Isaiah 6: the disturbing change in his nations leadership gave the prophet a better focus on the Lord's throne. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." As we do the same, we should also utter his responses "Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:" and concerning his witness he said "Here *am* I; send me." Christians are always to bear witness of Jesus Christ their Saviour. As America turns left, denying the Creator and embracing godless evolution, Christians should not be in league with them. Jehoshaphat's compromise in 1Kings 22 cost his children the kingdom of Judah. Don't jump into compromise like a 'Jumping Jehoshaphat.' And as America takes this turn toward socialism, the Thessalonians, in similar circumstance were told "this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2Thes 3:10) Be an example, get a job. It is a pretty sorry Christian that prays to his government for his daily bread. As America turns away from Godliness, Christians need to portray His righteousness with greater resound.

Msg #847 A First Plank of Godliness

The Bible says “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” (Gen 1:1) and “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion ... So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them,” (Gen 1:) further stating “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen 2:7) The very first plank in a Christian's platform is the sanctity of human life. Every human life is holy; it is not your own, not owned by humans, not owned by humanity; it is given by Jehovah God, and owned by Him. Human life is very different from animal life in this regard, and ANY teaching that God's humans are just animals or ANY teaching that God's humans have evolved from mere animals is in direct rebellion to the revealed Word of God and in direct rebellion to this principle of the sanctity of human life. Further, the whole act of human procreation is holy; God forms and owns the human life in the womb at conception (Psalm 22:9-10, Psalm 139:13) and even the seeds of that act before conception. (Jeremiah 1:5) It seems 52% of Americans believe German biologist Haeckel, who before 1900 imagined a scheme for Darwin whereby human embryos evolve like animals from amphibian, to chicken, to pig, to monkey, to finally become human-like after birth. This 100 year old fabricated lie is still taught as science to our school children, so too, they teach man was once monkey. A Christian does not believe the evolutionist but the Bible, holding firmly to the sanctity of human life. No human is or ever was an animal.

Msg #848 Christians Thanksgiving

The Bible says to Christian's "In every thing give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Like many things that are expected of Christians this is not in our nature but it is in His nature, and now expected of us. Given our Christian heritage it is not surprising that Abraham Lincoln established a national day of Thanksgiving. As our nation moves from Godliness to evolutionary atheism it does its best to deal with this national day. True Christians, with His nature of thanksgiving implanted within, should lead the way when it comes to thanksgiving. The Psalmist says "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works." Innocency is an ingredient for true thanksgiving and it is only attained with your sin's penalty paid by the Lord Jesus Christ on the old rugged cross. In Psalm 50, 107 and 116 God puts thanksgiving on equal footing with physical offerings saying "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:" And in Psalm 69 thanksgiving magnifies God: "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving." In Psalm 95 it is an ingredient for coming into God's presence and in Psalm 100 and Psalm 147 it is part and parcel with our joyful noise, sometimes called singing. Every Psalmist's mention of thanksgiving is just the starting point for a Christian's thankfulness. This year your thanksgiving to Jehovah God should be seen by others. Sure its proper for everyone to be thankful, but a Christian giving thanks to his Creator and Saviour can show forth His glory in a country that needs to see it.

Msg #849 A Christian's Planks

Three planks of a Christian's world view are the sanctity of human life (Gen 2:7), of marriage (Gen 2:23-24, 1Peter 3) and of the home (Deut 6:4-7, Prov 13:24, 19:18, 22:15, 23:13,14, 29:15,17, Eph 6:1-4). The latter two are built upon the first in that God designed a stable wholesome environment whereby new life could be brought into this world to propagate the human race. God's design for the humans that He created in His image is that a male have an appropriate helper beside him for his mature life. The human specifically designed and constructed to be that help 'meet' is called woman, the female of our species. God ordained this union and established its order, character, longevity, purity and fidelity. This union is designed by God to be the secure, loving, significance giving platform, indeed a taste of paradise on Earth, where children are to be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. When Adam by disobedience entered into his sinful nature he passed on to us a nature of ineptness, or the inability to do God's design, a nature of unwillingness to follow God's instructions, and a nature of rebellion against the authority of God to tell him what to do. In that state marriages fail, children are malformed and society lands where America is today. When one is born again into the kingdom of God he is given a new nature whereby rebellion is dissolved into Godly selfless love, unwillingness is overcome by submission and ineptness is overpowered with "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil 4:13) Christians are now free to move about within God's design, make marriage a taste of paradise and rear children God's way. So which nature are you operating in today?

Msg #850 The Glorious Announcement

From Genesis to Malachi the Bible reveals and promises the coming of an 'Anointed One', in Hebrew 'Messiah', in Greek 'Christ.' From Matthew to Revelation the Bible reveals that Jesus was the Christ, and that he fulfilled, or will soon fulfill, every previous revelation. The world's modernist scholars accuse power mongering 'Church-Fathers' of making 'Jesus' the 'Christ' with fables and exaggeration. They strive against the Christmas message that "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Indeed every one of the 39 books of the Old Testament contains some revelation about the coming Messiah. The Christmas Advent was thus first penned by thirty Jewish writers over a three thousand year period. Jesus is the promised seed of Genesis, the Passover Lamb of Exodus, the five offerings in Leviticus, the serpent on the pole in Numbers 21, and the Promised Prophet in Deuteronomy 18. Jesus is the Kinsman Redeemer of Ruth, the Daysman and Redeemer of Job, and the Messiah of the 16 Prophetical books. This Christmas pay no heed to those unbelieving 'scholars', the Bible says Jesus is not only the promised Christ, he is "The mighty God" and "The Everlasting Father." (Isa 9) For a Christian the miracle in Bethlehem is still that God was "made flesh and dwelt among us", that "He was in the world, and the world was made by him" and especially that "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Keep a hold of that and you will have a Merry Christmas, get a hold of that and you will have your first Merry Christmas.

Msg #851 Wise Men Still Seek Him

The wise men who came from the east to worship a king of the Jews at his birth knew more about this Hebrew Messiah than was revealed by His star. (Matt 2:) Five hundred years prior to their diligent quest God's Hebrews were captives in their homeland. Throughout the Babylonian captivity the Jews maintained their Holy Scriptures and books were there penned. Wise men studying just the book of Daniel, written in the east, partly in Arabic for their benefit, would reveal that the Hebrew Messiah was to be the "stone cut out without hands," (Dan 2:34, 45) "the Ancient of Days," (Dan 7:9,13,22) and though He would reign forever, he would come and die 483 years after the return of these Hebrews, (Dan 9:25-26) Thus they brought gold that was ransacked from the Jewish temple, frankincense for its golden altar of incense, and myrrh that was used to embalm the Jewish dead. It is curious how those closer to the truth are often farther from it. For a dollar you could purchase an accurate English King James translation of all ancient Scriptures that the wise men of Matthew 2 had only partial access to, and all 66 books speak of this Messiah who said "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) You are not far from the truth. The Messiah (Greek "Christ") said to the Jewish Sadducees "Do ye not err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?" (Matt 12:24) That Messiah also said "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke 12:48) The whole truth is near at hand, and wise men will still search it out, and so worship the Ancient of Days, the Hebrew Messiah.

Msg #852 Named The Might God

The miraculous report which angels heralded to shepherds two thousand years ago is every bit as exciting today for those echoing a shepherds words “The Lord is my Shepherd.” (Psalm 23) The ruddy boy who composed those words in the 23rd Psalm, a thousand years before the angelic announcement of the Lord's birth, was David, the shepherd boy, giant slayer and king. Messiah was born seed and lineage of King David. Angels announcing the birth of Christ to shepherds during lambing season is all the more fitting when this newborn Shepherd was to be the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) The Apostle Peter says of those who receive him as their Lord, “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” Receiving this Jewish Messiah as Lord and Saviour makes one say anew and afresh “The Lord IS my Shepherd, I shall not want.” The Apostle John reports “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:) When celebrating Christmas and starting a new year only leaves you, and your wallet, hollow and empty, you need to get in touch with this Shepherd of souls. That ruddy lad wrote “I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging for bread.” (Psalm 37:25) And if you have not received him, I echo the words of the Apostle Paul “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” With a Shepherd for your soul you are guaranteed a joy filled New Year.

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