

You're of no earthly value unless you're...

# Heavenly Minded

Vol 5 Iss 5

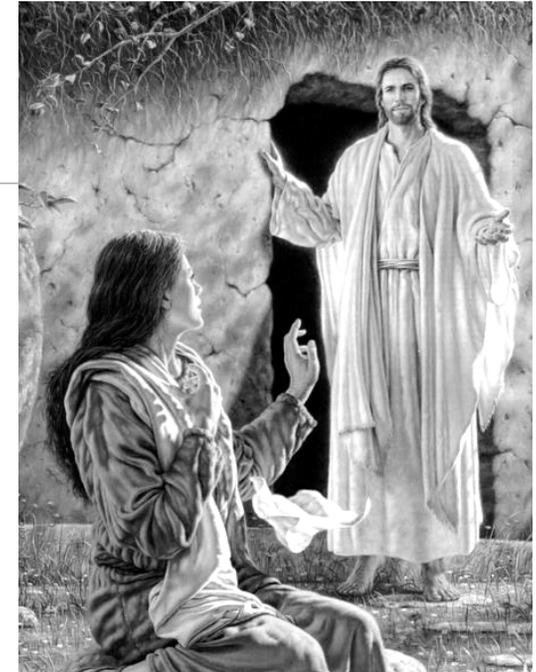


**Dear Friends,**

With each passing day, we draw closer to the return of our Lord, yet our inclination is to esteem each day alike. Like dear Martha, we are confident that the resurrection will come someday, but we can easily fail to embrace the startling reality of Christ's great "I am" statement – "I am the resurrection and the life." The problem is that a 'Someday Savior' is a philosophical ideal rather than the 'real deal'; it's simply religion. On the other hand, our sense of liberty, hope and desire for Jesus is directly influenced by our honest acceptance of this truth for in it is life and love. It's in the Person of Christ and it's power is present tense. What He said is absolutely true – "He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

May God bless each of us with a fuller realization of Who this man Jesus is now and forever and may His presence in us overflow!

*In Christ's Love,  
John and Darlene Dickey*



*"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death.*

*O Death,*

*I will be your plagues!*

*O Grave,*

*I will be your destruction!"*

*Hosea 13:14*

Art: My Redeemer Liveth  
by Roger Loveless

**Heavenly Minded** is distributed free of charge. To add a name to our distribution list for either the hardcopy or electronic PDF version, simply contact us at : [jdickey@heavenlyminded.com](mailto:jdickey@heavenlyminded.com). Or visit our website for news, Bible study tools and more.

The goal of HM is to encourage our readers to "Set your affection on things above..." and thereby to be the greater and more effective witness to Christ. Articles may be shared freely and reproduced but only in their entirety. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. GBY!

Cover Art by Simon Dewey

See [www.heavenlyminded.com](http://www.heavenlyminded.com) for this issue and much more!

## ***In this issue...***

Turned or Taught Life and Love Resurrection Bodies Fullness of the Gentiles

# Turned or Taught

## John 6

It was a set up, really. Jesus had a message, a critical lesson to convey and He prepped the class, if you would, with a couple of miracles. John penned it to the early (mostly Jewish) church to encourage their belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. In order to understand, we need to step back from our story in John chapter six about 1280 years.

In Exodus, the Hebrew people were terrified by the thunderous voice, the fire and smoke coming from the mountain – the ground quaked, knees knocked and teeth rattled. Basically, they told Moses, “Y-y-you go and speak with God. W-w-we’ll wait right here.” Probably, more from overwhelming fear than anything else, the people who gathered at the base of Mt. Horeb recognized that they needed an intercessor and an intermediary with God, and they were right. As a group, they said, *“Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God nor let me see this great fire anymore lest I die.”*

Moses later spoke of this in Deut 18. He recorded God’s response, *“What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and I will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.”* (Deut 18:18,19)

Now, over the centuries that followed, many prophets came and spoke God’s words to the people.

Many confirmed their messages with signs and wonders. But none were like Moses. You see, God answered Moses’ prayers and did, among other things, two miraculous signs for the people – He ‘split the sea’ and he ‘brought the bread’. Apart from recording the law, these were the two signs most closely associated with Moses in the minds of the Jews.

Thus, in John six, when the host of thousands surrounded Jesus in the wilderness, He *“knew what He would do.”* First, he miraculously fed them – five loaves and two small fish sated some 10,000 – 15,000 people and resulted in 12 baskets full of leftovers. Second, He walked on water, crossing the sea of Galilee.

In the minds of the hungry hoards, the first sign was enough to generate the notion that Jesus was indeed “that Prophet like unto Moses.” But the message wasn’t going to be received by the masses. Jesus knew they were less interested in what He had to say than in what free food He might offer.

His mastery over the sea was witnessed only by those in the boat – His disciples. These were the men He was intent upon instructing. These were the ones who would hear God’s words.

In fact, when the people He’d fed caught up with Jesus, He said, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”* (John 6:26,27)

As you might expect, the conversation quickly turned to Moses and manna. You see, the whole

point of the miracles was to demonstrate that Jesus was indeed “that Prophet like Moses.” However, He didn’t just rain manna down like dew on the grass then make the people gather and cook it; He had them sit down on the grass and served them a banquet of barley loaves and fish. He didn’t just split the sea with a mighty wind; He walked over it in spite of the wind. (In fact, He didn’t just record the law; He fulfilled it.) He was like Moses yet He outdid Moses. For what purpose? To generate o-o-o’s and ah’s? To fan the flames of popularity? To sell books on church growth? No way!

What did Moses relay? ‘The Prophet like me will come,’ he said, ‘and He will speak God’s words to you, so listen to Him!’ (my paraphrase). As dull as the disciples seemed to be at times, the 12 (or rather 11 of the 12) seemed to get this. For when Jesus followed up with His ‘eat My flesh and drink My blood’ sermon, the would be king-makers from the earlier feast lost their appetite and split the scene. Jesus then turned to His disciples, knowing that even some of them were murmuring and said, *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.”* (Jn 6:63) Not ‘hearing’ and not submitting, many of them exited as well and walked no more with Him.

Turning to the 12, He said, *“Do you also want to go away?”* to which Peter gave the response, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also, we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

As Moses foretold, Christ’s ministry leading up to the cross wasn’t about

miracles, not fundamentally. It was about the message – God’s words. The miracles He performed set the stage for, or were in themselves a portrayal of “the words of eternal life.” As marvelous as the miracles were (and are), they are servants to the message.

And these words are sometimes quite difficult. If you don’t hear them spiritually, if you are set to accept only what is ‘acceptable’ or logical or popular, it’s quite possible you’ll turn away.

We are living in the age spoken of by the apostle – *“For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap up teachers to themselves* (other than the Lord) *according to their own lusts, tickling the ear. And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will be turned to myths.”* (2Tim 4:3,4)

John’s goal in relating this series of events to us was to clarify to those who would follow Jesus that like at Mt. Horeb, there is sometimes a terrifying power in the voice of God’s word – the truth generally first makes us painfully uncomfortable. There are times when the Lord would indeed flunk our ‘seeker sensitive’ protocols. Some of His message is a “hard saying” because it is fundamentally unappealing to the carnal nature. In fact, it’s down right repulsive to the fleshly mind. Yet, we must hear Him.

As Peter proclaimed, no one else has the words of eternal life – no swami, no guru, no mullah, no politician, no media mogul or movie star, no well-meaning shrink, no best selling author, not even Coulter or O’Reilly. Only Christ is faithful to say, “all that [God] commands.” He

is the everlasting intermediary between God and man – faithful to speak the truth to us even when it's hard. And yet He's also faithful to intercede on our behalf to the Father for He knows our frail frame and has paid the full price for our failures.

Will you turn or will you be taught? Will you truly accept what He has to say about you, about this world, about love and grace, about righteousness and judgment, about heaven and hell? Everything the world so to speak throws at us is intended to cause us to turn, to turn away from the truth. Generally, it is not a rebellious turning but rather a deceptive, seductive, gradual turn. Either way, the consequences are so serious:

*As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways,*

*The LORD shall lead them away  
With the workers of iniquity.*

Psa 125:5

*See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,...*

Heb 12:25

*And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.* Deut 18:19

And so, Solomon, guided by the Holy Spirit wrote,

*He also taught me, and said to me:  
"Let your heart retain my words;  
Keep my commands, and live.  
Get wisdom! Get understanding!  
Do not forget, nor turn away from  
the words of my mouth." Pro 4:4,5*

And Isaiah the prophet recorded,  
*The Lord GOD has given Me  
The tongue of the learned,*

*That I should know how to speak  
A word in season to him who is  
weary.*

*He awakens Me morning by morning,  
He awakens My ear  
To hear as the learned.  
The Lord GOD has opened My ear;  
And I was not rebellious,  
Nor did I turn away. Isa 50:4,5*

Now, I don't believe or suggest that as a sincerely born again believer, if you have a hard time with a hard truth that you endanger your salvation. However, if you will follow Jesus, be prepared to listen in the Spirit, to accept and submit to some 'hard sayings' from time to time – it's for your benefit, for your health, eternal welfare and freedom. Read His Word and hear His voice. He wants to teach you His ways:

*O God, You have taught me from  
my youth; And to this day I declare  
Your wondrous works. Psalm 71:17  
I have not departed from Your  
judgments, For You Yourself have  
taught me. Psalm 119:102*

*He also taught me, and said to me:  
"Let your heart retain my words; Keep  
my commands, and live.  
Proverbs 4:4*

*It is written in the prophets, "And  
they shall all be taught by God."  
Therefore everyone who has heard  
and learned from the Father comes to  
Me. John 6:45*

*But you have not so learned  
Christ, if indeed you have heard Him  
and have been taught by Him, as the  
truth is in Jesus: that you put off,  
concerning your former conduct, the  
old man which grows corrupt  
according to the deceitful lusts,  
Eph 4:20-22*

He knows you perfectly. He loves you intensely. Let Him teach you and train you in His wonderful way. Don't ever be offended or turn away.

## *Life and Love*

### **John 11**

The seventh sign which the apostle John recorded for us in his gospel is clearly the most powerful. In fact, as you examine the 'trend' of the signs John picked to nurture our faith, they lead us up a spiritual mountain and with this chapter we are nearing the summit. Each sign has stretched our hearts to embrace an increasingly impressive Savior. Like Abraham with his son Isaac ascending Mt. Moriah, we can sense the approaching lesson, the impending decision point. We are being guided toward the apex of belief a step at a time.

A careful study of Genesis chapters one and two shows that the first statement God made to Adam dealt with death. (Gen 2:15-17) And, since Paul wrote, "*The last enemy that will be destroyed is death,*" like bookends, you can consider it as the first and last enemy of mankind. (See 1 Cor 15:26). We all must deal with death – our own and the death of those we love.

Thus, as we make the trek up this spiritual mount so to speak, the panoramic vista is not revealed until we reach the top. There, the breath-taking scene is revealed -- the ultimate plan and purposes of God. Unless you take these next steps of faith concerning life and love, your faith will be frail. Whether 'the hike' has left you hopeful or heavy of heart, hang in there. This sign will usher you in to a whole new perspective.

*Now a certain man was sick,  
Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary  
and her sister Martha. It was that  
Mary who anointed the Lord with*

*fragrant oil and wiped His feet with  
her hair, whose brother Lazarus  
was sick. Therefore the sisters sent  
to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he  
whom **You love** is sick."*

*When Jesus heard that, He said,  
"This sickness is not unto death, but  
for the glory of God, that the Son of  
God may be glorified through it."*

The first thing John wanted us to understand is that there was a wonderful, personal, even intimate and worshipful relationship between this little trio and Jesus. In fact, it is emphasized that Jesus loved Lazarus. Their words and conduct lead us to assume that the siblings loved Christ as well, but the critical point that John, by the Spirit, communicated was Jesus' love.

This is vital to keep in view, for we often tend to think that God responds to us, to our need, to our plight because we love Him and that isn't so. God loves you. His response to your pleas is not based upon the condition of your sometimes wayward heart. It is based upon His relentless, compelling love for you and His Son. It is a love that doesn't change. It is vast and never ending.

The Lord's message, likely carried back to the family, spoke of God the Father and God the Son being glorified through the circumstance. Specifically, He said that His beloved friend's illness would not end in death. What a difficult thing it must have been for Mary and Martha to hear that and yet witness their brother's dieing and being entombed. Can you relate to that? Have you ever felt let down by the Lord based upon something you

thought you understood from His Word or that you thought you received in prayer?

Now **Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."**

Now, lest you think, after those first verses, that Jesus loved Lazarus and Mary, since she was known for her worship of the Lord, but less so Martha, the Spirit turned around the order and clarified that Jesus truly loved Martha (and, oh, her sister too). This is to dispel the notion that God only loves the 'spiritual' folks, the really worshipful ones. Lazarus was the one in need, Mary was the spiritual celebrity of sorts and Martha, well she was just there to serve. She expressed her love differently than Mary and perhaps the intensity of spiritual matters was a bit much for her. Nevertheless, John emphasized that Jesus loved her. So too, those of you who relate to Martha.

Also, notice that little "So" (or "Therefore" depending on your translation) following the declaration of His love for them. In other words, what He did, He did because He loved them. He stayed two days before making His return. Now, we know that He could have spoken the word and Lazarus would have been healed or even raised up. The trek back to Bethany wasn't necessary for His friend's health. But it all was necessary for a far more consequential purpose – their faith.

Limited by His earthly body, His return came when the man had

been in the tomb for four days. Although it is not our main lesson, I suggest that this whole story is prophetically picturesque as well. We realize from 2Pet 3:8 that a prophetic day represents a 1000 years. Thus, Jesus waiting to return to Bethany (which means House of Misery) for two days could picture Christ waiting two thousand years to return to our miserable planet earth in order to save and resurrect His people. The four days could picture the four thousand years it's been since the calling forth of Abraham and the beginning of the Jewish people until now. And interestingly enough, Lazarus the name means "helped by God", whereas both Mary and Martha's names are rooted in the word for "rebellious" or "rebellion". Remember, this is a word picture and has nothing to do with the specific people. This may be significant in light of Zech 13:7-9 which, referring to the Jewish people in the last days, says,

*Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.  
And it shall come to pass in all the land,"*

*Says the LORD,  
"That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, (the rebellious)  
But one-third shall be left in it:  
I will bring the one-third through the fire, (those 'helped by God')  
Will refine them as silver is refined,  
And test them as gold is tested.  
They will call on My name,  
And I will answer them.  
I will say, "This is My people";  
And each one will say, "The LORD is my God."*

It may also be significant that Jesus will say next, "Our friend Lazarus

*sleeps, but I go that I may wake him."* If indeed Lazarus represents, as his name indicates, the remnant of the Jewish people whom God helps during the tribulation, the following verses which clearly pertain to that time are in line with this prophetic picture:

Your dead shall live; *(the remnant who will be saved)*  
Together with my dead body *(Jesus)* they shall arise.  
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;  
For your dew is like the dew of herbs,  
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Come, my people, enter your chambers, *(in the wilderness during the tribulation?)*

And shut your doors behind you;  
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,  
Until the indignation is past.  
For behold, the LORD comes out of His place

To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;  
The earth will also disclose her blood,  
And will no more cover her slain.  
Isaiah 26:19-21

Awake, awake!  
Put on your strength, O Zion;  
Put on your beautiful garments, *(robes of righteousness?)*  
O Jerusalem, the holy city!  
For the uncircumcised and the unclean  
Shall no longer come to you.  
Isaiah 52:1

At that time Michael shall stand up,

*The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;  
And there shall be a time of trouble, (Jacob's Trouble – the tribulation)*

*Such as never was since there was a nation,  
Even to that time.  
And at that time your people (the Jewish remnant) shall be delivered,  
Every one who is found written in the book.  
And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,  
Dan 12:1,2*

Be that as it may, Jesus waited because He loved them. Likewise, God will wait until the time is right concerning you and I as well. Not because He doesn't care but just the opposite, because He does. If Jesus had responded immediately as the sisters (and Lazarus!) desired, the healing would have taken place and yet the far greater miracle would have been missed. And as a result, the people's belief in Jesus as the Christ would have been static and less potent.

*The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"  
Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."*

*Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."*

However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

This last verse grabs me. He said that He was glad He wasn't there so that they would believe. Believe what? Again, we are reminded that John has presented this specifically to help us to believe that Jesus is the Christ (See John 20:30,31). However, they had already confessed that they believed He was the Messiah back in chapter Six when Peter said, "You alone have the words of life." But, as with Martha in the coming verses, I suggest that their faith in Christ was not yet full. Likewise, our faith in Christ grows; we often believe in a Christ Who first changes our direction in life, Who then provides for us, Who heals our maladies and does miracles, Who teaches and comforts us, Who leads us in our pilgrimage and then Who ultimately goes with us through the valley of the shadow of death and resurrects us to eternal life.

Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

You gotta love Thomas. Church history indicates that he may have been called the Twin because he so closely resembled Jesus. In any case, he was willing to die with the Lord. Perhaps this was why he was bitterly defiant in accepting the resurrection, feeling shunned and left out when Jesus at first appeared

to everyone else but him. Perhaps he felt like his love was unreciprocated. Ever feel that way? Like Thomas, when we do, we need to consider His scars.

So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Notice how she skirted the answer? Now, she was grieving and perhaps deeply disappointed in Jesus. The Lord had said her brother wouldn't die and yet ... he died. She called for His help and He had seemed to turn a cold shoulder. She wanted to believe. She gave Him the best answer she could at the time. Perhaps, "the Christ, the Son of God" meant to her an anointed teacher or healer or great

leader, someone with influence in the heavenlies. This was what it meant to the disciples at this point. Yet, Jesus wanted her to believe something far more powerful; He wanted her and His disciples to believe a pinnacle principle of Christian faith – "I am the resurrection and the life." Notice that this potent faith is in the person of Jesus and that it is in the present tense – not something He was or will be but something He is forever.

And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Mary's statement, echoing Martha's, was true. That's exactly why He'd waited. But she didn't understand that yet any more than her sister. Martha probably used the name "Rabbi" when she said "the Teacher". In any case, that description is a long ways from what we should think of when we hear the title, Son of God. Whether or not she ever held a more noble concept of Jesus, at this point He was just a Teacher.

The bitterness of disappointment can do that to our concept of the Lord. We may publicly confess that we think

of Him as "the Christ, the Son of God" and yet privately consider Him "the Teacher". Indeed, Jesus was the Teacher but He was/is far, far more.

Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how **He loved him!**"

Many have proposed reasons for Christ's tears here. The wording though points back to His seeing Mary weeping as well as those with her. What this tells me is that despite His divine power and foreknowledge, Jesus and God the Father completely know and even share our sadness. The Greeks thought of divinity as being stoic, that is, unfeeling. However, Jesus, seeing the sorrow of His dearly loved friend wept with her. (See Romans 12:15) As He walks with us through the deepest, darkest times of our lives, He's not there 'in name only' but rather as a participant, One Who knows the way because He's traveled it before and now along with you.

And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

Fundamentally, this expression, "groaning in Himself" means to be moved with anger. Was He angry at their lack of faith? Perhaps. Martha still didn't get it. No one present got it. They simply DIDN'T know who Jesus really is. And so, this was to be a wake up call for everyone including Lazarus.

*Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

Like Mary and Martha, the death of a loved one can sorely test our faith in Christ. We can allow our grief to relegate Him to the role of the 'Someday Savior' – because we don't understand His ways. The whole situation then stinks and whether like Mary we fall weeping at His feet or like Martha simply run away from the spiritual intensity, our feeble perception of Christ is wrongly based upon our seeing Him as late or missing or utterly disappointing. Meanwhile, He weeps with us.

Like Lazarus, we have all been wrapped in the grave clothes of sin and doubt. But Jesus loves us. Coming forth from the tomb in

response the call of Christ is a wonderful picture of salvation. But even in such a state – new life – we need to be 'unwrapped' and Jesus gives that job to those who love us.

Like everyone in the story, Jesus wants us to know, to truly know, that He is the Resurrection and the Life. It's not just someday in the 'sweet bye and bye'. It's in Him and it's now – life and love.

Climbing this pilgrimage trail, the dark horizon that has drawn your attention downward suddenly gives way as you reach the summit. There, the splendor and magnificence of the heavenly view lifts your tired, broken heart into excitement, cascading joy, a perfect peace. You are filled with astonishment at Who this Man really is. 'What was I thinking??' your heart sings and laughs. He is so much more than I ever thought. And He's led me here because He loves me. How difficult the journey can be, but it is truly unworthy to be compared to what awaits us who love Him. Now, I know God sent You. Hallelujah!

## *Our Resurrection Bodies*

By Lambert Dolphin

*(The following notes on the characteristics of our heavenly bodies are taken from Lambert's Library which you can find at [www.Idolphin.org](http://www.Idolphin.org))*

1. We will be able to recognize Jesus as He is now and has been for the past 2000 years. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2)

2. We will recognize our friends and loved ones.

3. We can eat food, we can be touched and we will have our usual senses of sight, smell, taste, smell, etc.

4. We can, apparently enter and leave the physical world from the invisible realm of the heavenly places.

5. Our new bodies do not wear out and are imperishable. We are no longer subject to sickness, pain or grief.

6. We will be incapable of sin by nature. Thus the quality of all relationships with our fellow saints will be immensely improved.

7. Marriage will have ceased as an institution for us. We will not be sexless, nor will the differences between the sexes be eliminated, rather they will be amplified and extended. We will probably lack reproductive organs. However, our participation in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb implies an intimate unity not only with our Lord Jesus, but also with all the rest of God's people.

8. Because of the absence of sin, pleasure and enjoyment without fear

of failure, inhibition or restriction will be greatly expanded. Any two believers can enjoy intimate fellowship of the highest quality." At the right hand are pleasures for evermore."

9. Our resurrection bodies will be equipped to be in tune with the spiritual world, the heavenly places, therefore time and space travel is a likely capability of these marvelous new bodies.

10. Based on our walk with God in this present life believers will possess varying capacity to contain God in heaven. The quality of time, and the quality of eternal life which each of us experiences will be greater for those whose lives have been lived out on earth is a closer walk with the Lord and obeyed Him most faithfully.

11. We should consider our present selves as mere smudges of greasy smoke, largely shadowy and transparent. The residents of heaven, on the other hand are "solid people." The best description of this state of affairs I know of is given by C.S. Lewis in his wonderful (fictional account) of a visit from the outskirts of hell to the gates on heaven in his perennially valuable book "*The Great Divorce*".

12. Resurrection bodies are not the same identical bodies which were laid in the grave which were then reconstituted. The new body is related to the former body, yet different.

## **"FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES"**

Jack Kinsella - Omega Letter Editor

By every measurable historical standard, the city of Jerusalem should have fallen into oblivion centuries ago. The city was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans and its founders and traditional inhabitants were killed or fled into exile in foreign lands.

It has no natural wealth. It has no coastline. It sits inconveniently upon a mountain. It overlooks nothing of strategic military value.

It is on no ancient trade route. The King's Highway of David's time ran north and south through modern Jordan. Jerusalem was well off the beaten path -- folks didn't pass through Jerusalem on their way to somewhere else -- Jerusalem was the end of the line.

Like other historical 'end of the line' cities, once its reason to exist was extinguished by the destruction of its native population, so should its history.

The once-great city of Babylon, for example, is little more than a living museum, devoid of influence or even much interest outside scholarly circles.

Over the centuries, it has been fought over by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Ptolemies, Seleucids, Romans, Byzantines, Persians, Arabs, Seljuks, Crusaders, Mongols, Mamelukes, by the Turks, the British, Jordan and most recently, by those Jordanians who became 'Palestinians' after Jordan's defeat in the 1967 War.

Jerusalem remains one of the most contested cities on earth to this day. That list doesn't include the approximately two hundred million

Islamic fundamentalists or Islamic states like Iran or Saudi Arabia who have conducted a decades-long shadow war to 'liberate' the city from Jewish control.

Despite two thousand years of war aimed at destroying the Jews and seizing their city, in this generation, the Jews again inhabit an undivided Jerusalem.

*"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* (Luke 21:24)

Jesus' sweeping prophecy concerning the future of city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants was fulfilled to the letter throughout history, including its restoration to Jewish hands. Note that its restoration signals the fulfillment of the 'times of the Gentiles'.

The Apostle Paul called himself the 'apostle of the Gentiles' (Rom 11:13) but Paul had formerly been known as Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee (lawyer) and Jewish religious leader. Paul explains that the Church is a 'graft' from the original tree (Judaism), saying,...

*"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."* (Rom 11:25)

Here we find the same phraseology that was employed by Jesus that was employed by Jesus concerning the 'times of the Gentiles'. Jesus referred to the times of the Gentiles as being 'fulfilled'. Paul speaks of the 'fullness of the Gentiles'.

Paul says that, following the 'fullness of the Gentiles',

*"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."* (Rom 11:27)

Paul notes that, during the Church Age, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes," but Paul cautions; "but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes."

Then Paul wraps it all together by saying, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom 11:29)

This is one of the great mysteries of Scripture. The Jews are enemies of the Gospel for 'our sakes'. What does that mean?

Jesus taught that His mission was to come first to the Jews. When approached by the Samaritan woman begging Him to help her daughter, Jesus told her, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Mat 15:24)

To the Jews He prophesied, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (John 5:43)

If the Jews had accepted their Messiah at His First Advent, there would have been no Church Age and the Lord would have set up the Millennial Kingdom right then and there.

Jesus prophesied that because of their rejection of Him, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." His prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the beginning of the 'Times of the Gentiles.'

The usurper who comes in his own name and is received as the Messiah

comes after the 'fullness of the Gentiles' is come in.

Jeremiah calls it the 'Time of Jacob's Trouble' (Jer 30:7). Jesus calls it the 'Tribulation' (Mat 24:29). The prophet Daniel outlines the Tribulation's six-fold purpose, from the perspective of Israel;

*"(1) to finish the transgression, and (2) to make an end of sins, and (3) to make reconciliation for iniquity, and (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, and (5) to seal up the vision and prophecy, and (6) to anoint the most Holy."* (Daniel 9:24)

Let's connect the dots and see how the Big Picture develops here. Jesus said that the restoration of Jerusalem to Jewish control would signal that the 'fullness of the Gentiles be come in'.

Jesus said of the generation on earth at that time, "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." (Luke 21:32)

Paul says that the Jews, as an institution, rejected Jesus so that the Gentiles would have a chance at salvation. He said that God would not return His attention to Israel until 'the fullness of the Gentiles be come in'. The 'fullness of the Gentiles' indicates a finite number -- a 'quota', so to speak -- of Gentiles who will come to know Christ during the Church Age.

Once that quota -- the Church Age 'elect' have been gathered, God returns His attention to the Jews, "And so all Israel shall be saved" -- because "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

That Jesus offered salvation first to Israel is confirmed by His own Words as recorded by John.

The 'Time of Jacob's Trouble' is so-called because of its purpose as outlined by Daniel -- the six-fold purpose that culminates with the 'anointment of the most Holy' as Messiah and the beginning of the Millennial Reign from Jerusalem.

Note how clearly the two Dispensations are divided. Until the Crucifixion, God's attention was focused on Israel. Until the 'fullness of the Gentiles be come in' God's attention is focused on the Church.

The Church, as the 'Bride of Christ' serves no role in Daniel's six-point outline for the Tribulation Period. Take another look at Daniel 9:24 before we go on.

The transgression was finished at the Cross. The Blood of Christ takes away all sin. (1 John 1:7) His death and resurrection reconciled the Church to God.

*"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Cor 5:18-19)*

To the saved believer reconciled to God by the Blood of Christ, 'everlasting righteousness' is a gift of grace through faith, 'sealing' the vision and prophecy of the Old Covenant and introducing the New Covenant with the Church.

The believer knows that Jesus is ALREADY anointed King of King and Lord of Lords and is awaiting His return at the end of the Church Age.

There is no role for the Church Age during the Time of Jacob's Trouble -- it doesn't begin until after the 'fullness of the Gentiles' is come

in. And this is the generation in which Jerusalem was recovered from Gentile control, signaling the approach of the fullness of the Gentiles'.

The Tribulation serves two main purposes; the first is the judgment of God on a Christ-rejecting world. The second is the nation redemption of Israel. By definition, Church-Age believers have NOT rejected Christ, and need no further redemption.

The Bible says that, before the unfolding of the Time of Jacob's Trouble, there will come an ingathering of Church Age believers:

*"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev 3:10)*

Jerusalem is the signal that this is the generation that will see the 'fullness of the Gentiles be come in'. It was of that generation that Paul promised:

*"For this we say unto you BY THE WORD OF THE LORD, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall . . . be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thes 4:15,17b)*

The time is short. Don't let anybody steal your victory. Jesus is coming soon for His Church, and *"THEN shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."* (2 Thes 2:8)

Get excited! The time is short, the fullness of the Gentiles is at hand; the Lord IS coming soon!

*"Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (2 Thes 4:18)*

*Excerpted from the Omega Letter Daily Intelligence Digest, Volume 44, Issue 12*



*Sacred Grove by Greg Olsen*

*Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, And glorified Himself in Israel. Isaiah 44:23*