



# ***TOWARD THE MARK***

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE  
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”  
PHILIPPIANS 3:14***

***A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS  
OF ALL AGES***

**July 2022  
Vol. 21 No. 3**

July 2022

Dear Reader,

**“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10).**

The phrase “do not fear” or “fear not” appears about 143 times in the Bible. Our fear results from what we are planting in our hearts, suggesting that we reap what we have sown. Today we can find fear at every turn—inflation, soaring gas prices, a resurgence of a pandemic, war, and rumors of war and violence that are increasing in every country of the world, whether rich or poor.

**I think the soil for our seeds of fear may well be doubt. If we begin to doubt what God has planned for us, fear begins to creep in and will take over unless we overcome our doubt.**

So, what is our alternative? To remember that we are His: “But now, this is what the Lord says, He who is your Creator, and He who formed you, ‘Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.’” (Isaiah 43:1). And from the Lord Jesus’ prayer for us: “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (John 17:9–11).

**Now, if we are His, will He not take care of us? are His power and His love not enough, and are His promises to be doubted? “Do not fear, for I am with you.”**

**May the Lord increase our faith in these last days before His soon coming.**

I trust that you will enjoy the articles in this issue during the summer months. It is our prayer that the Lord would use them for building you up on your most holy faith and help you to be established.

**Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement. Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on *Toward the Mark*.**

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

*Emil S. Nashed*

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# TOWARD THE MARK

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***Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or the J.N. Darby translation.***

## MILK

*"The truth shall make you free"*

### PEACE AND JOY IN TIME OF TRIALS

#### **The Purpose of Trials**

Trials teach us submission to the Lord and deliver us from our own ways. They are God's way of developing patience in us. About the purpose of trials in our lives, James wrote: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4).

If everything went just the way we wanted, we would have nothing to be patient about. Patience requires setting aside our own will. Therefore, trials show just how much we are willing to give up our own will to accept God's will for us.

#### **What God Allows**

We must never forget that whatever our circumstances, God has allowed them for our good. God's choice for us sometimes seems very hard to bear. But this is because we are not fully surrendered to Him or because we lack confidence in His love and wisdom. God is either choosing the very best for us in what He allows in our lives, or else He deliberately chooses for us what He knows is not in our best interest. Would we dare charge God with the latter? Never!

In His providential dealings with us He either orders or allows all that comes into our lives. He has the almighty power to prevent anything from happening, so if it happens, He has allowed it. Therefore, complaining is the same as saying that we know what is best for us better than God does, or else that God does not care enough to give us what is best. One is pure pride; the other is distrust of His motives.

#### **Who's in Charge?**

We sometimes think, "Doesn't the devil also have a hand in what happens to us?" That is very true, as we see in Job's case. But we also see how the devil could not go beyond what God allowed (Job 1:12;

Job 2:6); and what He allowed He used for even richer blessing in Job's life than before.

The devil is powerless to do anything without God allowing it. He is only a creature, as are all his hosts of demons. God is above them, no matter how mighty they may be. So even if we see the devil's hand in what happens, we must not forget to see God's hand above the devil's. God only allows him to go as far as it suits His sovereign purposes, to turn it into blessing for His people.

### **The Long View**

“All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28), and that includes even what the devil is allowed to do. Do not forget that God is working with a view to our eternal good and not simply with regard to this present time.

We so often look at things from a “here and now” perspective while God works with eternal results in view. God may choose a hard road for us, not because He delights in our suffering hardship along the way, but because of the eternal blessing it will bring us.

“Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress” (Psalm 4:1). Distress is not sent from God for the sake of suffering but for the sake of enlargement. In times of distress, God sympathizes with His own. Paul referred to Him as “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation” (2 Corinthians 1:3–4). And Paul's troubles were not light, for he says, “We were burdened beyond measure—so that we despaired even of life” (2 Corinthians 4:8). However, with eternity in view, he refers to them as light afflictions “working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

### **Five Necessary Things**

Five things are necessary to have peace and joy in time of trial:

1. Keep your mind on the Lord: “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3).

2. Keep in touch with God by prayer: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7).
3. Meditate upon the Word: “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).
4. Yield your will to God: “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Hebrews 12:11).
5. Know that the Lord will sustain you: Last, but not least, let us not forget that even though our trials or circumstances may continue for a long time, the Lord says, “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9). He will sustain the soul that submits to Him and leaves all in His hands.

### **A Cause for Rejoicing**

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love” (1 Peter 1:6–8)

E. C. Hadley

### **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!**

1. Who said that he had gone 20 years without a decent sleep?
2. What was Haman’s wife’s name?
3. Who heard a voice that said, “Write down what you see”?

## MEAT

*"Sanctify them by the truth"*

## CHRISTIAN SACRIFICES

Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:15–16; 1 Peter 2:5

**All believers now are priests. During the Jewish dispensation, in the Old Testament, the priesthood was confined to one family, and no one outside of that divinely-described circle dared to penetrate into it. But Aaron and his sons were a figure of the whole Church as a priestly family, of the Church as a priestly family in association with Christ; for blessed as is the place into which believers are now brought, and precious as are the privileges with which they are invested, all these things are only enjoyed in connection with Christ. All alike, therefore, are priests, and all alike have access into the holiest of all into the immediate presence of God. (See Hebrews 10:19–22; 1 Peter 2:5–9.) This dignity and this access pertain to them solely on the ground of the priesthood of Christ and the everlasting virtue of His one sacrifice for sins.**

As priests we have an altar (Hebrews 13:10), and on that altar we have continually to offer our sacrifices to God.

**What are the sacrifices of Christian priests?**

**They are twofold in character. First, there is “the sacrifice of praise”;** that is, as the Spirit of God Himself explains, “the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15.) With this will correspond the “spiritual sacrifices” in Peter’s epistle. From this we gather that all true worship, thanksgiving, and praise are sacrifices; and this again will help us to determine what true worship, thanksgiving, or praise is. We read of our blessed Lord that, through the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot to God. (Hebrews 9:14). All true worship, therefore, must be characterized by three things. It must be presented in the power of the Holy Spirit (compare John 4:24; Philippians 3:3), Christ is the medium through which it must be presented (for He indeed is the Christian’s altar), and it must be offered to God. The psalmist, when meditating upon the beauty of the

tabernacles of the Lord of hosts, cries, “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee” (Psalm 84:4.) This blessedness belongs now to every saint of God; nay, we are ourselves built up a spiritual house, and as a holy priesthood it is our privilege to offer perpetual praise. God was said to inhabit—that is, to be surrounded with, to dwell in the midst of—the praises of Israel. Much more should it be so now when in His infinite grace, and through the efficacy of the work of Christ, He has brought us to Himself, and delights Himself in the adoration of our hearts.

**Secondly, there are sacrifices of another sort that we are called upon, or rather that it is our privilege, to offer. These are connected with ministration to the needs of the saints of God.** We read thus in the Hebrews, “To do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Again, in the Philippians, the apostle speaks of the gift that had been sent to him through Epaphroditus as “an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.” It constituted, to borrow language from the Old Testament, a sweet savor offering. How grateful to God then is ministry, sacrifices of this kind! But it must be remembered that mere giving—giving, for example, reluctantly, or only because of importunity—would not make the gift a sacrifice. As in the sacrifice of praise, the gift must be presented through Christ, to God, in the power of the Spirit. It is only of such gifts that it could be said that they are “an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.”

The application of these principles can easily be made by those who desire to test the character of their worship and of their benefactions; and while the application cannot fail to humble the most of us, by showing how much of our service is really worthless before God, it will surely be productive of blessing if it leads us in every exercise of our priesthood to judge ourselves as in the light of the presence of God.

**In Romans 12 we read of another sacrifice, which, though not connected in this scripture with our priesthood, may yet be briefly explained.** The apostle says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable” (or intelligent)



“service” (v. 1). This exhortation connects itself, as its ground of appeal, with the close of Romans 8, and, as to its subject-matter, with Romans 6; that is, the mercies of God are all the mercies which have been expressed, in the grace of God, in our redemption—as traced out in Romans 1–8—and the appeal as to our bodies flows from the truth stated in Romans 6. Delivered from the power of sin through death with Christ, sin is no longer to reign in our mortal body, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof (Romans 6:12). No; our bodies are to be yielded up henceforward to God, that as they had been before the instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, so now our members are to be instruments of righteousness unto God.

**Coming then to Romans 12, we learn the character of the presentation of our bodies to God. They are to be presented “a living sacrifice”; not as a slain animal, a dead sacrifice, laid on the altar, but because our bodies are not dead, and sin is in us, they are always to be kept under the power of death (“always bearing about in the body the ‘putting to death’ of Jesus”), and thus, presented to God as a living sacrifice. They are presented to Him for His service, that, instead of their being governed as they had always been, by our own wills for our own ends, He in His wondrous grace might henceforward use them as organs for the expression of Christ. Such a yielding up of our bodies to God, let it be again stated, involves the constant application of the power of death, and consequently it becomes a living sacrifice. Christ being in us, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. And such a sacrifice, as it is, on the one hand, holy and acceptable to God, so it is, on the other, our intelligent service—a service suitable to the claims which God has upon us on account of redemption, and one, it may be added, which should be joyfully as well as intelligently rendered. One more remark may be made. It will be observed that in this case also the sacrifice is presented to God (to whom else could it be offered?) on the ground of redemption; that is, through Christ; and it is also true that it can only be accomplished in the power of the Holy Ghost. It follows then that we are to live priestly lives; that whether we are occupied in praise and adoration, or engaged in ministering to the needs of others, or in the busy activities of our callings (see 1 Peter 2:9), we are to behave ourselves as priests at the altar in the presence of God.**

E. Dennett

## EXERCISE

*"Exercise thyself unto piety"*

### HOW TO BE A MAN OF GOD

#### PART 2

“But thou [Timothy], O man of God...pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit. Strive earnestly in the good conflict of faith. Lay hold of eternal life, to which thou hast been called, and hast confessed the good confession before many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:11–12).

#### **5. David: Desiring order in the House of God—1 Timothy 3:1–16**

1 Timothy 3 deals with the matter of order in the house of God, which is described as “the assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,” and David is the Old Testament man of God who exhibits this feature of the man of God.

In this section Paul deals with the matter of elders, men who exercise spiritual oversight in the house of God, and deacons, whose responsibilities relate to the secular or temporal affairs of the assembly, and outlines the qualities necessary for both the man and his wife if such work is to be done according to God’s pleasure, for a faithful home life is a prerequisite for a corresponding work to be taken up in the assembly (see v. 5).

In 2 Chronicles 8:14 Solomon in instituting God’s order in the newly-built Temple set out the divisions or courses of the priests’ roles according to the order laid down before his death by David, who, in this respect, is called “the man of God.” David, perhaps more so than any other man before or after him, had a deep desire for God’s house. Consider his words in 2 Samuel 7:3 and see how he longed for the ark of God to have a permanent resting place, and even though he was forbidden to build it himself as God said he was the man of war and not the man of peace, he dedicated the remaining years of his life to gathering together all the materials that were needed for his son Solomon to build it and even set out the order of the priests and services to be conducted there.

Again, God has highlighted the best example of a man with such an intense desire for His order to be maintained in His house by declaring David to be a man of God in connection with this matter, and Paul would draw our attention to it also by addressing this matter of godly order in God’s house in his first epistle to Timothy. This appears to have been the central reason for his writing the epistle; he desired to go to Ephesus and speak with Timothy face to face about it, but so important was this matter that it could not wait, and he felt impelled to write to him (vv. 14–15) and to remind him of the central testimony that the church is to bear, the mystery of piety—“God has been manifested in flesh, has been justified in the Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among the nations, has been believed on in the world, has been received up in glory” (v. 16). The man of God is deeply exercised that this mystery of piety be seen in the assembly through its godly order.

## **6. Shemaiah: Relying upon God’s faithfulness in a day of breakdown—1 Timothy 4:1–16**

In chapter 4, Paul detailed what the Spirit expressly said concerning “the latter times.” Having spoken previously of the order in the assembly according to the thoughts of God, he now spoke of the departure that would come in as a result of man’s failure to maintain this order; and after addressing what apostate teachers would bring in, he continued with Timothy’s responsibilities in light of this failure. Teaching was to be very prominent in Timothy’s actions; he had also to be an example in his own conduct that what he taught be lived out before his hearers.

The man of God who would exhibit what our actions should be in light of the departure from the truth is Shemaiah. He came on the scene at a pivotal moment in Israel’s history. Ten tribes had rebelled against Israel’s rightful (but rather foolish) king—Rehoboam, the son of Solomon—and instead followed Jeroboam. Rehoboam gathered an army to fight against Jeroboam to reclaim the whole kingdom for himself, but God sent a man of God, Shemaiah, to tell Rehoboam to refrain from fighting against Jeroboam, saying, “Thus saith Jehovah: Go not up, nor fight with *your brethren*, the children of Israel; return every man to his house, *for this thing is from me*” (1 Kings 12:24). This is the only verse in Scripture concerning Shemaiah—but what important lessons it brings before us. The ten rebellious tribes were still their brothers. They were so in the eyes of God and ought also to have been in the eyes of Rehoboam. What had occurred had been permitted by God because of Solomon’s unfaithfulness, and this chastening had to be submitted to.

To apply these lessons today, we must see that the outward divisions that have occurred cannot be reversed; we cannot go back to a Pentecostal state of things when all believers were of one mind and God's power was publicly seen (though as 2 Timothy 2:22 makes clear, it is still our responsibility to gather with all those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart). The man of God is to submit to the will of God in this matter. Neither must he lose sight of the fact that the assembly consists of every believer in Christ wherever or with whom they may gather. The body of Christ comprises every believer on earth at any one time, and the man of God is not sectarian in his outlook but, recognising this fact, he is to seek the blessing of every saint whether they gather with him or not. Doing so he will be an example to all, and both save himself and those that hear him (1 Timothy 4:15–16).

### **7. Anonymous men of God: Standing for the truth in a dark day, not overlooking the need of discipline—1 Timothy 5:1–20**

In chapter 5 Paul continued his exhortations for these latter times, dealing with how Timothy was to relate to widows and elders, ensuring that both were not abusing their positions in the assembly. The true positions for both are outlined, and then checks introduced as to how to correct any failure. In doing this Paul drew on lessons that can be learned from the four unnamed men of God.

An anonymous man of God was sent to Eli in 1 Samuel 2 to tell him of God's judgement upon both him and his sons; upon his sons for their ungodly ways and upon Eli for not restraining them and removing them from the priesthood.

A second anonymous man of God was sent to Jeroboam in 1 Kings 13 to pronounce judgement upon his altar at Bethel (not upon Jeroboam personally) and upon his whole idolatrous counterfeit system built in opposition to the altar in the Temple at Jerusalem. How tragic to learn in the next chapter that Jehovah already had a prophet in that very place who was not morally fit to be used by Him, and so He had to send a man of God from Judah to deliver His message.

A third anonymous man of God was sent to Ahab in 1 Kings 20 to pronounce judgement upon the large army of Syrians for their blasphemous words concerning Jehovah and to reassure the ungodly king as to their destruction. God would act for His own glory in the matter at hand.

Finally, a fourth anonymous man of God was sent to Amaziah in 2 Chronicles 25 to reprimand the king of Judah concerning his hiring of mercenaries from the rebellious ten tribes of Israel in their battle against the men of Seir. Such

an allegiance was not only a demonstration of a lack of trust in the Living God but a denial of the defiling association that would result from it.

Studying the words and actions of these four men of God will show that all were active in very dark days when there was a breakdown in discipline amongst the people of God, days when departure from the truth and a lack of separation from ungodly elements marked the people of God and when a message of rebuke was required. These things Paul addressed in 1 Timothy 5 in regard to the local leadership of the elders and the place of widows among the people of God.

We have seen in considering Shemaiah that the man of God submits to the will of God in the matter of the breakdown of the outward unity of the saints, but in considering these four anonymous men of God we see that there is to be no compromise as to the truth in so doing. The rebellion of Jeroboam was a sin, and if Rehoboam was forbidden to go to war with him, God would maintain His rights still and sent His witness to pronounce judgement upon the altar, even if mercy was held out to Jeroboam himself. There is to be no compromise of the truth and no association with things that would defile the saints of God. Thus, the lessons seen in these anonymous men of God perfectly balance the lessons we learn from Shemaiah as to the actions of the man of God in a day of breakdown.

### **8. Samuel: An honourable walk and testimony consistent with God's calling—1 Timothy 5:21–6:10, 17–21**

Finally, from 5:21 to 6:10 Paul deals with the matter of Timothy's own personal conduct; he was to be impartial in all his dealings, pure in his walk, marked by good works, a faithful servant, and marked by godliness with contentment. In all this he was to be a faithful witness of the doctrine that he was told to preach, the doctrine that he had learnt from Paul. As in all Paul's epistles, the doctrine comes first followed by an exhortation to walk accordingly.

The example that Paul drew on here was that of Samuel, called a man of God by the servant of Saul in 1 Samuel 9. Saul's father's donkeys were lost, and Saul had been sent to look for them but without success. Saul was at the point of giving up and returning home but his servant suggested that they go to visit Samuel, who happened to be in a nearby city at that time, saying, "There is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass" (1 Samuel 9:6).

This man of God was marked by his honourable behaviour and his truthful speech, features he himself referred to at a later date when the people rejected his guidance and sought a king “like all the nations” in 1 Samuel 12:3–5; he was an honourable man in contrast to the sons of Eli who had so despised God’s Tabernacle and the priesthood by their actions and brought the judgement of God down upon their heads (1 Samuel 2:12–17, 25) or even Samuel’s own sons who walked not in their father’s ways but took bribes (1 Samuel 8:3). Samuel was a shining light against a very dark background of the failure of the priesthood and the consequent loss of the ark of the covenant in his early days. Yet despite all this, God’s faithfulness to His people was also seen in the provision of Samuel, the man of God, whom all Israel knew was prepared of God to be His prophet from a very young age (1 Samuel 3:20). Again, this is perfectly in keeping with the character of 1 Timothy and a fitting climax to Paul’s exhortations to Timothy.

His final warnings to Timothy concerning material riches in 6:9–10 and also 6:17–19 drew upon the good example of the contentedness and heavenly-mindedness of the man of God and the bad example of the greed of his own sons. The man of God’s walk is honourable and his speech trustworthy.

### **An Appeal to Timothy to be a Man of God—1 Timothy 6:11–16**

*“But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit. Strive earnestly in the good conflict of faith. Lay hold of eternal life, to which thou hast been called, and hast confessed the good confession before many witnesses. I enjoin thee before God who preserves all things in life, and Christ Jesus who witnessed before the good confession, that thou keep the commandment spotless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in its own time the blessed and only Ruler shall shew, the King of those that reign, and Lord of those that exercise lordship; who only has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see; to whom be honour and eternal might. Amen.”*

Having highlighted eight features that came to light in the Old Testament men of God, Paul closed with a final exhortation. In doing so he addressed Timothy as a man of God also, for he was to walk in a dark day, as do we, and must exhibit these features himself if he was to fulfil Paul’s charge to him. Everything in this epistle builds to this final appeal where Paul urges Timothy to flee from all that is contrary to God’s word (a necessary first step) and then to pursue with purpose of heart righteousness (a feature seen in Samuel), piety (in David), faith (Elisha), love (Shemaiah), endurance (Elijah), and meekness

of spirit (Moses), and to strive earnestly in the good conflict of faith, laying hold of the eternal life to which he had been called (the unnamed men of God). Finally, Paul urged Timothy to keep this commandment spotless and irreproachable until the appearing of Jesus Christ (as was seen by the action of the Rechabites declared in the chamber of the sons of Igdaliah in the Temple). Thus again, even in Paul's final summary, these Old Testament men of God were to be living examples to Timothy of how he, too, must now walk for the glory of God.

**In closing our study of this epistle's section, let us summarise these features that came to light in the actions of the eleven men of God in the Old Testament:**

No.	1 Timothy	Man of God	Lesson
1.	1:3–11	Moses	Seeking the blessing of others
2.	1:12–20	Elisha	Always acting in grace
3.	2:1–8	Elijah	Dependence upon God in prayer
4.	2:9–15	Igdaliah	Being inconspicuous in service, not self-seeking
5.	3:1–16	David	Desiring order in the House of God
6.	4:1–16	Shemaiah	Relying upon God's faithfulness in days of breakdown
7.	5:1–20	Anon. (combined)	Standing for the truth, not overlooking the need of discipline
8.	5:21–6:10, 17–21	Samuel	An honourable walk and testimony consistent with God's calling

## **An Appeal to Us, to Be Men (and Women) of God, Complete, Fully Fitted to Every Good Work—2 Timothy 3:16–17**

*“Every scripture is divinely inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, fully fitted to every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)*

In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul made another appeal, exhorting Timothy to heed the Scriptures that he had known from a child, for they, he said, were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ (vv. 14–15), but then he opened things out, stating that the same Scriptures contain every lesson needed for someone to be a man of God, to enable him to be complete and fully fitted for every good work.

This wording is left intentionally wide, for it is not an appeal to Timothy only but to you and me as well, for Paul did not write “that *you* [Timothy] may be complete, fully fitted to every good work” but “that *the man of God* may be complete, fully fitted to every good work.” God asks you and me to display these features today. And if we feel that these things are only possible for a believer of high standing, or one with a special gift, or one who has been on the Christian pathway for a long time, let us take account to whom Paul addressed these words—not to an apostle or prophet or someone who had been on the Christian pathway for a long time but to a youthful man of timid character. These words of the Holy Spirit are addressed to us all, brother and sister, old and young alike, irrespective of gift or any other feature we may possess; all may (and should) display these features that Paul had highlighted concerning the men of God in the Scriptures. So may we, too, be encouraged as a result of meditating upon Paul’s epistles to Timothy and the men of God that are drawn attention to therein, to be complete and fully fitted to every good work, as men (and women) of God in our own day, exhibiting every one of these features of the Old Testament men of God for His Name’s sake.

A. Langham

## **ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE SEARCH!**

1. Jacob (Genesis 31:38, 40)
2. Zeresh (Esther 5:10)
3. The apostle John (Revelation 1:10)



## REST

*"Shall I not seek rest for thee that it may be well with thee?"*

## WAITING FOR CHRIST

What a strengthening thing is the waiting for Christ! I do not think much of an uncomfortable inn (hotel), if I know that I am only to be there for two or three days on the way. Perhaps I might wish it were better, but I do not trouble much about it. Because I am not going to live there. I am not living in this world; I am dying here. My life is hidden with Christ in God. I am waiting for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son from Heaven, Who is going to take us there to an incorruptible inheritance that fadeth not away. All that we pass through here is merely exercise of heart that God sees to be needed to bring us there. There is nothing more practically important for everyday work and service than our waiting for God's Son from Heaven. If you want to know what this world is and to get comfort for your soul, you will be waiting for Him. If I belong to the world, I cannot have comfort. If we are getting ease in it, we shall find His discipline.

But the moment I am waiting for God's Son from Heaven, my life is but the dealings of God with the object, that it should be to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Here I am passing through in heaviness because of manifold temptations, but He will come and take me out of it to Himself; or would it surprise you, finding you with a number of things to be left behind. Where is your heart with respect to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Would that find you with much to throw overboard or with the feeling that here is an end of all exercise of heart!

**But He for whom I have been waiting will take me to Himself. If my whole life is founded on His will being the motive and spring of it, I shall find the exercises and the needed trials.**

**But He is coming to take me to Himself.**

J. N. Darby

## **IS THIS YOUR LAST DAY?**

**On the day of your death, do you think you will wake up knowing that it is your last day? No matter how much we try to extend our lives with regular exercise, a nutritious diet, and the best medical care; no matter who you are, even the prime minister of Japan, or where you are: in a shopping mall in Denmark, or in a little town near Chicago watching a parade, or in a school in Texas, or in a supermarket in New York, or in a war area in Africa or Ukraine, the “last day” will still come, and often without warning! How many people, minutes before a fatal crash, can even imagine what the moments ahead will contain? And for those who stare death in the face for a second or two before it comes, how many do you suppose have time to turn their thoughts to God for salvation?**

Tragedy most often strikes unexpectedly, without warning. It comes as a shock, abruptly cutting off pleasure and comfort, and shatters the normal course of life. “As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:12). Tragedy “cometh suddenly at an instant” (Isaiah 30:13).

**When that day comes for you, will you be ready for eternity? God in His mercy has not left us without warning concerning our eternal destiny: “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).**

**He pleads with sinners to turn to Him for salvation: “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezekiel 33:11); “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7); “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).**

You only live today. The past is gone, and the future is unknown, making the present the only time you are sure to have. If you are ever to turn to God from your sin it will not be tomorrow, for tomorrow may never come. Now is the only time you have! “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1); “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

**Do you imagine that one day you will wake up and say, “Today is the day I’ll die. It’s time to get right with God”? No, you wake up each day going about your normal activities, never considering the end of life. It is a dangerous thing to put off the question of your responsibility for your sins. There is “a time to be born, and a time to die” (Ecclesiastes 3:2). “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:27–28). You will stand before God!**

**God has patiently given you time, but He is calling you to recognize your need of forgiveness and turn to Him now. “The Lord is...longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Will you put Him off?**

Dear reader, this may be the last day that you have to accept God’s free, loving offer of forgiveness and salvation. Call out to Jesus Christ who died for you and is risen again. Trust Him to save your soul. Do it now, before it is too late! “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. 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” (John 3:16–18).