

# Virtual Christian Magazine

Hope And Encouragement  
For The Real World

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*"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."—Psalm 23:4*

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Volume 11 Number 3

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## Why Love Darkness?

By Robert Berendt

Page 3

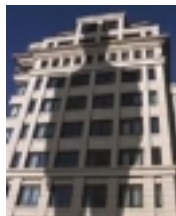


*Darkness pervades the world today, but God offers us a ray of hope with the world tomorrow.*

## A Big Shadow

By Sharon VanSchuyver

Page 6



*We all have a bigger shadow to stand in. Is that a good or a bad thing?*

## If the Milky Way

By George S. Carter

Page 8



*If God moved at the speed of light, would anything really get accomplished?*

## Is Saving Grace the Only Grace?

By Graemme Marshall

Page 10



*Many Protestant churches teach a doctrine of grace that is not only too narrow—it is largely wrong!*

## The Wonderful World Beyond Today: A New Way of Thinking

By Mike Bennett

Page 13



*What do you do if everyone in the world needs a heart transplant?*

## Letters to the Editor

Page 16

---

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## Why Love Darkness?

By Robert Berendt

*Darkness pervades the world today, but God offers us a ray of hope with the world tomorrow.*



**I**N THE NONPHYSICAL REALM, darkness symbolizes several things: falsehoods, lies, a cloak for wickedness, ignorance, a place where the influence of evil is dominant, and the absence of understanding.



The symbol is a good one because all of us have probably experienced trying to get around in a dark room. I can recall being deep in an underground cave with a group of teenagers on a spelunking activity. We doused all the lights and were completely still for a few minutes. The blackness was so intense that we began to get nervous. It was not possible (in fact, it was dangerous!) to try to make a move. We did not enjoy that experience of darkness.

Why then, do people seem to seek darkness in knowledge and understanding (John 3:19)? Why choose ignorance when knowledge opens so many doors?

There often seems to be an unseen force or power that entices the human mind. We have a strong inner desire to stand on our own two feet—to come to our own conclusions—to try various new things whether right or wrong. We are driven by curiosity—a desire to look over the edge—or get as close to the edge as possible. Some find it hard to accept the values of those who have lived before them unless they are forced to. Some people are born into caste systems and are trained from birth to remain as they are and avoid seeking other ways.

Others, however, have come to the realization that darkness is a terrible hindrance. Darkness—that is, ignorance—makes life far less than it could be.

### Israel's experience with darkness

Israel saw a great light through Moses, but it seems they loved the darkness of Egypt. Amos 5:25-27 tells us Israel carried the idols of Egypt for the full 40 years in the wilderness.

Why is it so difficult to give up a system that afflicts you and causes you to be a servant? Why desire to return to a nation that made life difficult and killed your firstborn sons? Why remain in a condition of slavery when freedom beckons?

God took Israel out of Egypt with tremendous miracles and wonders. He literally ripped them from the grasp of Pharaoh. The crossing of the Red Sea alone ought to have been enough for them to change their ways. Forty years of bread from heaven and their clothes not wearing out should have shown the benefits of following this new way. But Israel only made a few feeble attempts to use the light that God offered.




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*God took Israel out of Egypt with tremendous miracles and wonders.*

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God offered wealth, self respect, the benefits of His blessings and the praise of other nations if they would conform to His way of life. In some ways, we all conform to something, and the choices can be boiled down to only two: God's way or Satan's way.

C.S. Lewis wrote: "There are only two kinds of people in the end—those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'"

Paul wrote about this in Romans 6:16-18. We are either slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness. Sin offers only sorrow, misery and death while righteousness offers happiness, joy and eternal life. How can humans be so blind? Yet unless God opens one's eyes, we truly are blind to this difference and easily drawn back into the path of sorrow as Israel was.

### The light will counteract the darkness

John 3:19-21 tells us that when Jesus Christ (who was the "light") came into the world, people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. All who practice evil hate the light, and only those who live by the truth enjoy the light because they want their deeds or resistance to evil to be seen by God. It seems we learn to naturally cover up our errors and sins from the time we are quite small. We hide our mistakes in darkness and hope people will forget that we have done something wrong.

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*God did not permit Israel to return to Egypt in the physical sense, but He did allow them to bask in the evils of Egypt wherever they were.*

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God did not permit Israel to return to Egypt in the physical sense, but He did allow them to bask in the evils of Egypt wherever they were. God allows freedom of choice, but He always remains in

control. Choosing evil or sin cuts us off from the blessings of God and from walking with Him (Isaiah 59:2).

Just as Jesus Christ was the “light” to this world (John 1:4-5, 9-10) and was rejected by most people, so, too, the continuation of this truth goes on and all too often is rejected. People did not recognize the light or its significance. John 1:12 tells us that receiving that “light” gives us the right to become children of God. The “light” is blinding in one sense. We may not be able to recognize the huge benefits of learning to walk in that light and may once again fade away into darkness. Romans 8:16-18 reveals Paul’s conclusion as inspired by God. He understood he could become a child of God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ and be filled with glory. He felt that no darkness, no matter how enticing in this world, was as worthwhile as that.

God allows this world to remain in darkness for the present time. Revelation 21:23-24 tells us that there will be no need of a sun or moon when Almighty God dwells with men. His light will be so bright that there will be no night. Revelation 22:5 again states that there will be no night when God is with His creation. Darkness, which represents the thoughts and actions of Satan, will be erased for all time. The law of God will be taught everywhere (Isaiah 2:2-3), and His truth will fill the minds of mankind. Humans will learn to love the light because they will understand that their evil deeds can be forgiven through Jesus Christ, and they no longer have any need to hide them. People will be reminded of the afflictions they have been brought out of, and for all eternity they will not want to go that way again.

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*Without the shield and protection God offers, we do not have any chance against the ruler of darkness.*

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The forces of darkness are still actively trying to win the minds of humans. Without the shield and protection God offers, we do not have any chance against the ruler of darkness (Ephesians 6:13-16). But God does not leave us defenseless or without help. He loves those who freely and joyfully serve and obey Him. Part of the plan of God is to develop character within His children such that they will always choose His way and reject sin. If we resist Satan he *must* flee from us (James 4:7). This is the boundary God has placed on him.

The sooner we realize that God already knows our thoughts, the sooner we can learn to be open with Him. We will love the light and hate the darkness. The influence of darkness will no longer drive our actions and we will love light—His light.

### Recommended reading

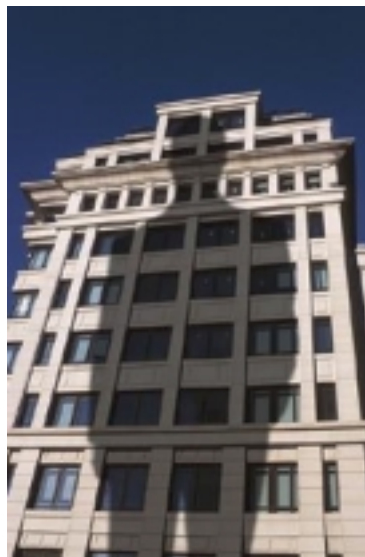
To learn more about the light of God’s truth, request our free booklet [\*The Gospel of the Kingdom\*](#).

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## A Big Shadow

By Sharon VanSchuyver

*We all have a bigger shadow to stand in. Is that a good or a bad thing?*



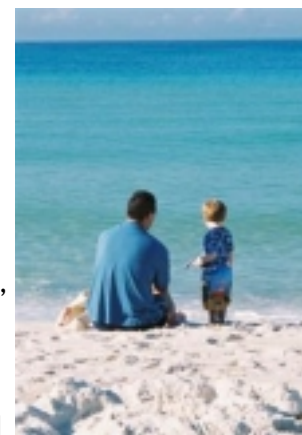
**S**OMETIME BEFORE THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES this last year, I purchased the latest *Rocky* movie, titled *Rocky Balboa*. Needless to say, the actor that plays Rocky is not as young as he used to be, so this particular film was more about relationships than knockouts. In the story, Rocky's wife had died of cancer a few years earlier, and he was struggling to maintain a relationship with his adult son. The son resented his father's notoriety, and in one particular scene he tells his dad, "You throw a big shadow."

That phrase is one that stuck with me, because it was very profound. It not only summed up his son's feelings of not wanting to live in his father's shadow, but also emphasized the fact that he really wanted to be his own man and earn his own merit. I empathized with the son, as he was allowing his father's fame to define who he was, by accentuating his feelings of insignificance in life.

### A shadow of protection

That movie line came to mind this Feast, as my very fair-skinned three-year-old played on the beach with my husband. Every day I slathered our little guy up with the strongest SPF suntan lotion I could find. When I expressed my concern at how much time he was spending in the sun, my husband assured me that he was strategically placing himself between our baby and the strong rays of the sun, so he could play in his shadow. My husband (standing over 6 feet 5 inches) casts a big shadow—but in this case, it was one of protection and care.

That scenario made me think about our relationship with God the Father. What kind of shadow does God cast? More importantly, how do we respond



to that shadow? Is it with angst and resistance, or is it with an appreciation for the safety and protection it provides?

### A father's love

In this day and age, it is not always instinctive for fathers to embrace and shelter their children. Sadly, animals often exhibit these fatherly characteristics in a much healthier and natural fashion than many humans.



Take the daddy penguin, for example. After the female penguin lays her solitary egg, she leaves for the open sea. The father penguin carries the egg around on his feet for several months, bracing through cruel winds, icy temperatures and blinding storms. He balances the egg on his feet, while covering it with his brood pouch, which is a very warm layer of feathered skin. During these months, he does not eat anything himself. His offspring's first food is that which has been stored in his craw for three months, which he has refrained from eating. The father penguin literally does not eat for four months, so that his newborn baby can have the food that will tide him over until the mother returns with more food from the sea.

Obviously, this is due to instinct, but if some fathers had even a bit of this sort of self-sacrificing attitude, it would be so much better for their families. In this example, it is the father's instinctive duty to keep his offspring safe at all times, until it is big enough to fend for itself.

On a spiritual level, I believe that God is very much the same way, keeping us close and protected in His shadow. Just as the baby penguins have to trust that their father will protect them from dangers that they cannot even fully comprehend, we must have that same resounding faith in God.

The book of Psalms is full of praises to God the Father and addresses His protection of us in Psalm 17:8-9. It reads, "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings from the wicked who assail me, from my mortal enemies who surround me" (New International Version throughout). Psalm 18:2-3 goes on to say, "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

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*While existing in the shadow of another may seem stifling at times, it is actually a priceless gift when their sole motive is to protect, keep and shield.*

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So while existing in the shadow of another may seem stifling at times, it is actually a priceless gift when their sole motive is to protect, keep and shield. Consequently, I can't think of one place I would rather take solace than in my Father's shadow.

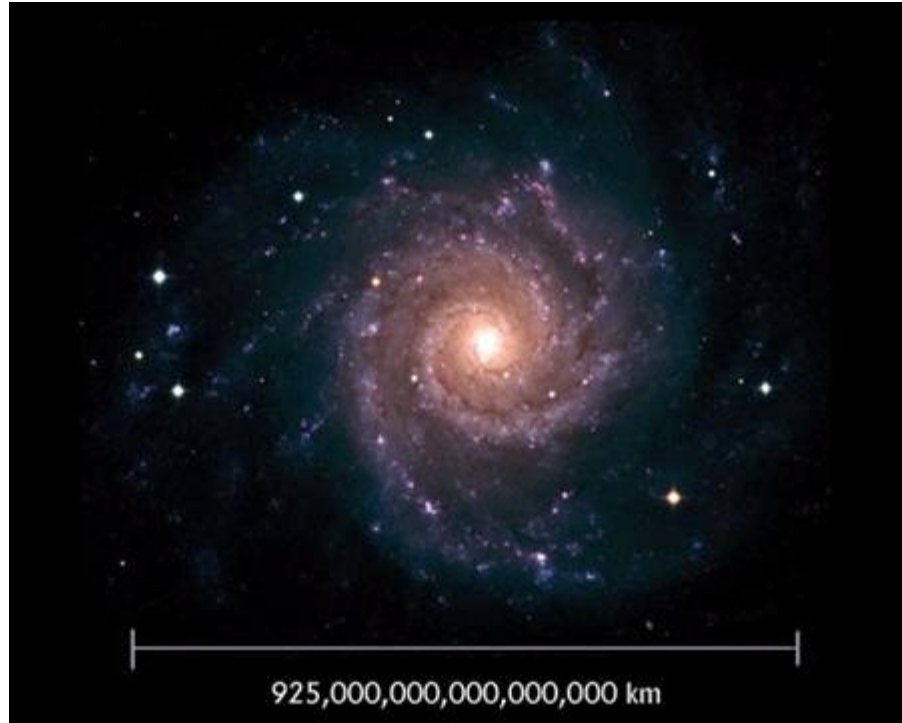
### Recommended reading

For more reading about family or the Feast of Tabernacles request our booklets [God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind](#) and [Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension](#).

## If the Milky Way

By George S. Carter

*If God moved at the speed of light, would anything really get accomplished?*



**L**ONG, LONG AGO IN A GALAXY FAR AWAY, the forces of the dark side were finally overcome and hopes of a brilliant future beat afresh in the hearts of men. Did mankind subsequently get from there to here? Technology back then was so much more advanced than ours on earth today, was it not? But no, that was just fiction brilliantly brought to the silver screen by George Lucas and a superb crew of technicians, providing background for a stellar cast in the *Star Wars* series.



Man's imagination is a wonderful thing—it can transport him to the far reaches of the universe or compel him to at least make some preparations for life beyond the confines of planet earth. Man has already walked on the moon and now plans that a few people might soon live for a month or so on Mars. But can we realistically hope to travel to other galaxies?

Our own Milky Way galaxy is 100,000 light-years across and about 1,000 light-years thick. It contains at least 200 billion stars (perhaps twice that many), but we really aren't quite sure. Ours is only one of 50 galaxies in this little corner of the universe, each pinwheel disc rotating at 600 kilometers a second (360 miles per second), which is the preferred estimate, and it means that the earth is traveling around the galaxy at something over 50 million kilometers a day, or 19 billion kilometers a year.



All of these numbers put a transit of the Milky Way ridiculously far beyond the reach of mankind. We are never likely to visit even our closest neighbor in this local group of galaxies, at least not as we are today. Something must first be changed—must, indeed, be *drastically* changed.

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If the Milky Way is 100,000 light-years across, it would take 2,500 generations of mankind to cross it at the speed of light (assuming 40 years per generation); and that sort of *Star Trek* becomes practically useless.

Now science fiction can take us into the universe at “warp speed” by means of some faster-than-light propulsion that ignores the laws of physics. Imagination is a wonderful thing, but the idea of warp speed seems to be a physical impossibility for any space vehicle and its crew, unless we can reduce them all to a beam of photons to be reassembled, complete with life and intelligence, at the proposed destination. Don’t hold your breath, as they say.

And yet, as one of my old college masters used to observe laconically, “God doesn’t poke around at the speed of light.” If there be a God, how else would He traverse this far-flung universe wherein there are galaxies without number, indiscernible to human eyes, but spotted by our best telescopes only as milky droplets in the vast stygian darkness of space? Would God take uncountable eons of time to get from place to place in the universe? To think so makes little sense, but we don’t know what time is anyway. All mankind’s history is contained in a brief span encompassing less than 10 millennia. What went before the story of man began is of little consequence, but what lies ahead is of paramount importance. We cannot be forever contained within these mortal frames, but must be released if ever the glories of the heavens are to be explored.



We measure time on earth in years, months and days, and project it onto the cosmos at 186,000 miles per second, but that relates to energy and light as we see it, and we cannot see beyond our limited physical framework.

What is the speed of thought? Is that God’s speed? Does thought have substance—“I think, therefore I am,” as René Descartes observed? That reaches into the realms of philosophy, but what is the reality?

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*God doesn’t poke around at the speed of light.*

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One thing is absolutely certain—that God is! The wonderful all-inclusive name of God is I AM, and it encompasses all that there is in time and space. If indeed, we are to become as He is (1 John 3:2), we must study the Bible and *then* we will understand. We must become faster to ever understand God’s neighborhood. Then we may travel beyond the Milky Way, and intergalactic journeys will probably not occupy light-years of our time.

Request our free booklets [Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?](#) and [Who Is God?](#)

## Is Saving Grace the Only Grace?

By Graemme Marshall

*Many Protestant churches teach a doctrine of grace that is not only too narrow—it is largely wrong!*



**A** SIGN IN A FARMER'S FIELD near our village proclaims: "By grace are you saved." And it is true that we receive conversion and salvation by God's grace. Yet the concept of grace is horribly distorted within the Christian world. The doctrine of grace accepted by many teaches that God readily forgives sins—not only past but also future sins—so there is no longer any requirement to obey God's laws. Because of its corrupted meaning, we may view it mostly as unmerited pardon. But grace is much more. Let's understand the broad biblical truth of God's grace!

### Grace has rich meanings

The richness of the meaning of grace increases our appreciation of how blessed we are by God. God clearly establishes how our human righteousness cannot gain us salvation (Deuteronomy 9:4-6; Daniel 9:18-19). Bible dictionaries reveal that in the Old Testament the Hebrew word *chen* (Strong's #2580) is most often used and means "graciousness, kindness, or favor."

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Similarly, in the New Testament the Greek word for "grace" is *charis* (Strong's #5485). Overall, it means graciousness, divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in life, gratitude, benefit, favor, gift, joy, pleasure and thanks.

As always, the context of how the word is used provides proper meaning. "Grace" is a dominant New Testament theme. And we know from Scripture that salvation is by grace, not by any works on our part (Romans 11:5-6; Ephesians 2:4-5).

## A sample of meanings

There are different, meaningful ways the people of God are under God's grace:

### 1. Grace, as a word, is used for letter introductions and endings.

For instance, Paul in 1 Timothy 1:2 wrote, "Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father," and in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 he wrote, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father." In chapter 5, verse 28 Paul used the word in an ending: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." The apostle John wrote a similar ending in Revelation 22:21. These instances show different applications for the use of the word.

### 2. Grace delivers from the effect of lawlessness.

On the religious argument that grace delivers us from keeping the law, Genesis 6:5-8 says it differently. Noah found grace in God's eyes. But God's gaze had already seen that the world was lawless and so decreed a flood to drown everyone, all except eight who observed His law. If Noah were lawless, he would also have perished. Striving to keep the law resulted in God's grace (favor), which saved them. Noah also had righteous works to fulfill in building the ark.

### 3. Human destiny is explained in God's grace.

Job recognized that personal existence lay in the hands of an invisible Creator. "Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity; yet You would destroy me. Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay" (Job 10:8-9). Jeremiah, too, echoed this about God's people: "How they are regarded as clay pots, the work of the hands of the potter!" (Lamentations 4:2). In the hands of God as Master Potter, we as clay must be malleable, pliable, adaptable and flexible. As spiritual clay, we must be able to be pressed into shape without breaking or cracking. For transformation to happen, we must be yielded to His purpose.



### 4. The firstfruit calling is by God's grace.

It is by God's grace that we are called. Paul shows us this in Galatians 1:15-16 and 2 Timothy 1:1, 9. Christ's gracious personal prayer to the Father was to keep those called from the evil one (John 17:11-12, 15). It is by God's grace that we can be Christlike in mind and character; be called sons and daughters of God, and do a work on His behalf (Philippians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Ephesians 3:16; Psalm 94:16-19).

The unfolding, unfinished story of His working in those called by Him can make us ponder how few we are compared to what we were. Even 15 years ago, in a world of 6 billion, the number was still small. There is an important lesson for us in how God whittled down the size of Gideon's army. Their "work" then was throwing off Midianite oppression. Originally 32,000, the size of the army was reduced to 300—or 1 of every 106! The reason was vital

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for their attitude—so they could not claim that victory was by their strength! The lesson of Gideon should not be lost on us in the end-time Church (Judges 7:7, 14, 22).

#### 5. Forgiveness is part of our grace.

While we strive to keep the law, it is by God's grace that we are forgiven. Paul explains that it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4; 5:15-21; Titus 3:4-7). In the universally publicized statements of some Holocaust survivors we read, "I'll never forgive what they did to me." Such statements reflect this hugely difficult thing of forgiveness. But God has it all in hand. A resurrection will confront all perpetrators of evil with an opportunity for individual repentance of what they did to others.

#### 6. By God's grace we share spiritual gifts.



Paul enumerates some of these in 1 Corinthians 1:4-8 and Ephesians 4:7-8. The apostle Peter does similarly in 1 Peter 4:10-11. Today we find some members stand out in special ways. With the added influence of God's Holy Spirit, a natural or learned talent becomes more valuable in service to the Church. Some have empathy for the sick beyond what others feel, and there are those who are especially hospitable when others are not as sociable. We are grateful to those

who are dedicated to Church hall setup and cleanup. They are first to arrive, and the last to leave when everyone else has long since gone their way.

Among the ordained, there are special speaking, teaching, counseling, organizational and editorial skills. Abilities can be strengthened by God's Spirit for service to His Church.

#### 7. The gospel is free by God's grace.

It was Christ's instruction to the disciples, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). God's grace is to do a work in which our magazine *The Good News* and other literature always goes out free.

It takes belief in God's promises to trust for strength when needed. Daniel was left "speechless" at his vision of end-time events. The visual impression drained him, left him overwhelmed and without energy (Daniel 10:14-17).

When the angel touched him, he was supernaturally strengthened and revived. Consider our situation. We live daily with real events every single day. This daily media diet of disaster and evil enervates and pains us. We frequently need implore God for the strength to carry on day by day. This, too, was Peter's and David's prayers (1 Peter 5:10; Psalm 138:3).

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To summarize:

- Under God's grace we go from strength to strength (Psalm 84:5, 7).
- Spiritual character built through God's grace will shine ever brighter (Proverbs 4:18).
- It is under the grace of God that we have the confidence that God will complete what He has begun in us (Philippians 1:6, 9-11).

- By the grace of God, we receive His Spirit to increase in godly knowledge and discernment (Colossians 1:10-11).
- Aided by God's Spirit, we are to grow in grace. And it has a much larger scope in our lives than that singularly championed by religion (2 Peter 1:2; 3:18).

### Recommended reading

Read [The Good News](#) magazine. And for additional reading, request a copy of [You Can Have Living Faith](#).

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## The Wonderful World Beyond Today: A New Way of Thinking

By Mike Bennett

*What do you do if everyone in the world needs a heart transplant?*



“**M**EN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME have sought peace... Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed; leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. *The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character* that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature and all material and cultural development of the past two thousand years. *It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh*”— Gen. Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) at the World War II surrender ceremony on the U.S.S. *Missouri*, Sept. 2, 1945 (emphasis added).

God promises a world of peace and prosperity will come (Micah 4:1-4)! It's what everyone has always wanted, but mankind has never been able to achieve. Why? Science and technology haven't brought it. All the experiments in various government and economic systems haven't moved us closer to peace, but seem to draw us ever nearer to destruction. Education should be a key to the kind of world we want. As God said, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”

(Hosea 4:6). But the kind of knowledge funneled into students' minds today doesn't seem to produce lasting happiness or to have brought the world closer to peace.



Hosea makes it clear the missing knowledge is about God and His laws (Hosea 4:6-10). Modern education ignores and ridicules spiritual knowledge and belief in a Creator God. When humans are seen as evolving animals, and survival of the fittest is considered the overarching principle of the universe, how can we expect anything but selfishness and warmongering? When information about the physical universe is seen as the highest knowledge, how can we expect anything more than greed and materialism?

But, some would counter, has religion done any better? Haven't many bloody wars, atrocities and acts of terrorism been perpetrated in the name of religion? The truth is, sadly, the major religions of the world do not fully follow the precepts of the Bible. They, too, have rejected or not known the way of peace. God's way has never been fully tried in this world. But it will be!

### Source of evil removed

The Bible describes an evil being who has literally deceived the whole world from the Garden of Eden until now (Revelation 12:9). He is the enemy of God, and fights to prevent humans from understanding and following God's ways. But at Christ's return, John in a vision saw an angel who, "laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:2-3).

Satan's "broadcast" (Ephesians 2:2) of negative attitudes and emotions will be ended! Finally, mankind will be freed from slavery to Satan and sin! No more will religious deception be spread. Materialistic and humanistic education will be replaced with true education of the whole person—heart, mind and spirit. However, even without Satan's active presence, our human minds have been programmed throughout our lives to think the way Satan thinks. It will take time for God's way of thinking to sink in. The traditions, ideologies and thought patterns that come naturally today will eventually be seen for what they are—harmful and self-destructive. In the meantime, God's educational system will spread around the world, sometimes meeting pockets of resistance.

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Interestingly, the Holy Days of God described in Leviticus 23 and reflected in many New Testament passages provide an outline of God's plan. (For more on this, download or request our free booklet [God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind](#).) The Bible tells us they will eventually be universally celebrated in God's Kingdom: "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16). But even this wonderful festival will be met with resistance. Zechariah records that God will need to encourage nations to come by withholding rain from them (verses 17-19). To overcome the influences held over from the "present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), this will be a necessary step.

God knows such encouragement and coercion are not the ultimate solution. For people to become good citizens of His Kingdom, they must individually choose to make changes.

### Changing hearts and minds

The author of Hebrews, most likely the apostle Paul, makes clear the changes needed to transform humans from the selfish and self-destructive beings of today to the giving, peacemaking and joyful citizens of God's Kingdom. For without changes to the human heart, we would soon revert to the evils of today rather than sustaining the beautiful world tomorrow: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel [and eventually with all people—Romans 2:29; 10:11-13; 1 Timothy 2:4] after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Hebrews 8:10, quoted from Jeremiah 31:33).



The problems of the world can ultimately be traced back to breaking God's eternal law of love. He has revealed that law in the Bible through the Ten Commandments, the first four of which show how to love God the way He wants to be loved, and the last six show how to love our neighbor as ourselves (Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:37-40). These principles are explained and expanded throughout the Bible in every word of God.

*It will take time for God's way of thinking to sink in.* But even the people God revealed these laws to did not keep them. As Hebrews records, the fault with the first covenant was "with them," not with the perfect laws (Hebrews 8:7-8). When Israel agreed to obey God's laws, He told Moses wistfully, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Breaking those eternal laws required the death penalty. God's gracious plan included the incredible sacrifice of Jesus Christ to pay that penalty in our place, so that the perfectly just and righteous God could also be perfectly merciful. Because Christ willingly took our place, He said, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12).

### A heart transplant

God's graciousness doesn't end there. He also made it possible for us to have a new heart—one capable of living His way of love, obeying His laws: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

The apostle Paul outlines this process in Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” The Bible describes this process as including repentance—not only seeing the need for forgiveness and conversion, but deeply, humbly seeking God’s mercy and fully committing to a life of change. It includes belief in God and acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice to pay our penalty for sin. This is followed by baptism, symbolizing burying the old way of life. Then comes the gift of God’s Holy Spirit that makes it possible to truly become like God (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:37-38; Romans 6:3-7). Many scriptures on this vital subject are summarized in the helpful, free booklet [Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion](#).

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*All magnificent buildings will pale in comparison to the “wonders” described in Galatians 5:22-23.*

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### **The wonders of the world beyond today**

You’ve heard of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and some have tried to list the buildings and monuments that could be considered the wonders of the modern world. But what will the wonders of God’s Kingdom be?

All magnificent buildings will pale in comparison to the “wonders” described in Galatians 5:22-23. These nine fruits of God’s Spirit are building blocks in producing God’s heart and mind within us. Imagine a world where the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21 no longer prevail. Better yet, imagine a world where these fruits of the Spirit are growing and spreading: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

Imagine having a neighbor like that. Imagine having a teacher, a boss, a police officer and a mayor treat you that way—God’s way! What a wonderful world that will be! What an incredible future is ahead!

### **Recommended reading**

To learn more about this wonderful future, please request a free subscription to the [Good News](#) magazine.

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## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Volume 4, Issue 2**

Thanks for this!!! It had a lot of me in it.

— M. Pollard

### **“Speaking of Marriage”**

Thank you, Katherine, for an excellent article. I agree with all of the principles you mentioned and have tried to apply them in my almost 50 years of marriage.

— Tom Peine

Some feedback messages are edited for space and/or clarity