

# Virtual Christian Magazine

Hope And Encouragement  
For The Real World

*"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"—Revelation 11:15*

Volume 8 Number 9

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## Biblical Holy Days Offer Wealth of Long-Lost Knowledge

By Larry J. Walker

Page 3



*What my "Lost Adams" treasure hunt taught me about even more valuable riches.*

## To Prevail Against the Enemy

By Jim Smith

Page 5



*People today don't believe Satan exists or don't take him seriously. But he is a real enemy, and we need real armor to overcome him.*

## Bomb Squad: Removing War's Deadly Aftermath

By Mike Bennett

Page 9



*Long after wars end, land mines continue to kill and maim innocent victims. How will this world be cleared of this deadly scourge?*

## **Deciphering the Rosetta Stone**

By Robert Berendt

Page 11



*For hundreds of years, Egyptian hieroglyphics were a mystery, even to language experts. Finally someone discovered the key to decoding them—on the Rosetta stone. Is there a “Rosetta stone” for understanding another mystery—the Bible?*

## **To Soar Like Eagles**

By Randy Vild

Page 14



*The majestic eagle can teach us much about rising above the storms of life and learning to soar.*

## **Preparing for Pregnancy: Participating in a Miracle**

By Nancy Capo

Page 17



*Bringing a human life into the world is an incredible, and daunting, endeavor. How can parents prepare for this miracle?*

## **Depression: Is There a Cure?**

By Daniel Fitzpatrick

Page 21



*Even people in the Bible experienced depression. God was there for them, and He is there for us. Never give up hope!*

## Letters to the Editor

Page 24

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## **Biblical Holy Days Offer Wealth of Long-Lost Knowledge**

By Larry J. Walker

*What my “Lost Adams” treasure hunt taught me about even more valuable riches.*



“**I** KNOW WHERE IT IS!” exclaimed the man in an excited voice. My wife puzzled over this strange phone call. “It has to be there!” he continued, and asked that I return his call as soon as possible. I had mailed him treasure magazines with articles on the famous “Lost Adams diggings”—a rich vein of gold discovered by a man named Adams, whose entire mining party was massacred by Indians before they could haul out the riches.



As a result of reading these articles, my friend became convinced that he knew where to find this long-lost source of great wealth. However, since he was confined to a wheelchair, he was unable to get to it. Because my magazines led to his conclusion, he offered me the opportunity to split the booty in exchange for driving him to the location and trekking up to retrieve the gold.

After listening to him speak in considerable detail and at great length on the subject, it became obvious that his theory was based on a very credible source of information and that he had thoroughly researched the subject.

What should I do? I pondered the matter for some time, wondering whether to invest the time and money to check out his story. Some months later, I read an article claiming that the site had been discovered. Can you imagine my reaction, thinking that I had missed out on, literally, a golden opportunity! I immediately called the man

back, and he assured me that the article was a false alarm. After heaving a sigh of relief, I decided to make plans for the trip without further delay.

I wish that I could tell you that we found the gold. We did not. But I do not regret making the trip, because the experience taught me valuable lessons about the spiritual riches that God offers us.

### Uncovering spiritual riches

“Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold,” says Proverbs 3:13-14.

We must value these spiritual riches enough to invest the time and effort to seek them. Jesus says in Matthew 13:44 (New Living Translation), “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field—and to get the treasure, too!”



Adams died in 1886 never having relocated the gold, despite several unsuccessful trips and considerable investment of time and money. But God promises success to anyone who diligently seeks to recover the true riches, “If you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Proverbs 2:3-5).

## The long-lost biblical Holy Days

Long before my “Lost Adams” adventure, I discovered vast spiritual riches in the biblical Holy Days that were forsaken by mainstream Christianity centuries ago. I have been working the claim for more than 40 years and have mined untold riches of knowledge leading to more thorough understanding on such core issues as the past, present and future roles of Jesus Christ in the plan of God; the gospel of the Kingdom of God and our eternal destiny.

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*God promises success to anyone who diligently seeks to recover the true riches.*

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Many lost mines and hidden treasures have never been found due to the greed of those who kept these secrets to themselves to the day of their death. Unlike the limited supply and value of material wealth, the riches of God are abundant enough for all to share.

### Recommended reading

Some of you have read articles we have written about the biblical Holy Days for several years. Isn't it time to learn more about them, to discover when they occur and to explore their important meanings for your life today? Our free booklet [God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind](#) can help. A commitment of time and effort is necessary to dig out the nuggets of truth embedded in the Holy Days, so request or download your copy today.

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## To Prevail Against the Enemy

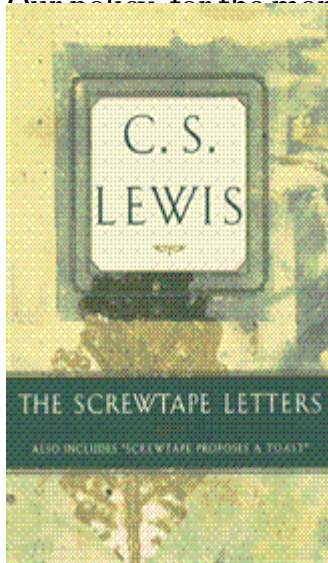
By Jim Smith

*People today don't believe Satan exists or don't take him seriously. But he is a real enemy, and we need real armor to overcome him.*



**H**AVE YOU EVER READ the book *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis? In this satire Lewis fictionalized an ongoing correspondence between a rather inexperienced demon named Wormwood and his mentor, Uncle Screwtape.

On pages 32 and 33 Screwtape counsels Wormwood on an important strategy Wormwood was using to lead a Christian astray: “My Dear Wormwood, I am amazed that you should ask me whether it is essential to keep the Christian in ignorance of our existence. That question, at least for the present phase of the struggle, has been answered for us by the Master Himself [Satan]. Our policy, for the moment, is to conceal ourselves...



“I do not think you will have much difficulty in keeping the patient in the dark. The fact that ‘devils’ are predominantly comic figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that, he therefore cannot believe in you.”

We need to expose the devil for who he really is. This knowledge can give us the backbone to stand up to the devil and his schemes designed to rob us of our reward.

No enemy can be resisted effectively unless we focus on what power he actually has and does not have. Three common errors concerning the devil are: (1) people do not believe he exists, and that is a mistake; (2) people do not take him seriously, and that is a mistake; or (3) they surrender to his control and that is the worst mistake. To get him in focus, let's first look at what he isn't, and then examine what he is.

### What the devil is not

The devil is not a nobody. He exists and is engaged in an aggressive strategy of persuasion. He also is not a comic character. He is not an imp with horns and a pitchfork, dressed in red tights.

Furthermore, he is not all-powerful. His power is formidable, but God limits his power. His influence is pervasive but not omnipresent.

### What he is

Satan truly is alive and hard at work on planet earth. He is invisible, deceptive, very experienced and shrewder than any human. Serving under him is a power structure of demons ready to do his bidding. His work is wicked. His strategy is to lead into disaster those humans who can be persuaded to follow him. But although he is the god of this world, he is limited in his authority. And as Christians, we have no reason to feel afraid, victimized or intimidated as long as we remain close to our Protector—God (1 John 4:3-4).

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In Mark 5 we see one of the most vivid and gripping portraits of evil in the entire Bible. The first person we meet in the opening verses of this chapter is the devil's prisoner (Mark 5:1-5). This graphic picture is hard to look at. The man was demon-possessed—hopelessly and helplessly under the domination of demonic powers. His body was so controlled by satanic influences that it was merely a base of operation for the demons. Even his vocal chords were under their control (Mark 5:6-13).

It is interesting to note how much these demons knew. They knew that Jesus was the Son of the Most High God and that His power was greater than theirs. They knew their final destiny (the abyss, Luke 8:31 and Revelation 20:2-3) and when they were to be sentenced to that place (Matthew 8:29). That proves that understanding and belief do not make one righteous. “Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:19-20).

### Strategy for standing firm

Ephesians 6:10-18 gives us an excellent strategy for standing firm against the schemes of Satan. “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). Even if only one piece of armor is missing, Satan will see where you are vulnerable and attack at that place.

To overcome the enemy, we first need to put on the full armor of God. That armor includes truth to help us withstand Satan’s deceptions, which lead to sin, to misplaced priorities and to disbelieving God. Truth, found through studying the Holy Bible, refocuses us and motivates us. The belt of truth also reminds Christians to live lives of honesty and integrity.



Next God’s armor includes the breastplate of righteousness. Doing the right things we learn from God’s Word protects our hearts and consciences from being seared by habitual sin, one of Satan’s strongest traps.

The armor also includes the sturdy shoes of the gospel of peace. The good news of God’s plan provides a firm foundation and motivation to spread the gospel and share it with others—an important step in God’s plan to defeat Satan’s kingdom.

The shield of faith protects against Satan’s fiery darts of doubt and confusion, and the helmet of salvation focuses our minds on the goal we are headed toward. This protects us from the detours and traps Satan sets up for us.

The sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—is the only offensive weapon. It provides the ammunition we need in each situation, if we keep it sharp through constant use.

*The devil is not an imp with horns and a pitchfork, dressed in red tights.*

After putting on all this armor, we need to resist the enemy through the power of God. Peter tells us to cast “all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:7-9).

Thirdly, we need to walk in faith by the Spirit of God. Paul described this in Galatians 5:16-25. By avoiding the works of the flesh and growing the fruits of the Spirit, we can walk in Jesus’ steps.

## A winnable war

I will close with a final word from Uncle Screwtape, which should encourage us to remember that we are fighting a winnable war.

“Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human no longer desires but still intends to do our Enemy’s will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys” (page 40).

And that is what Job said: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15). That may seem “irrational,” but that is the way we need to be because present physical circumstances are a poor indicator of what we should do in a severe temptation.

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*“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*

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We need to ask God to help us be more like Jesus, with the ability to quote Scripture when we are under temptations (Matthew 4:1-11). Then ask God to help us develop a good set of spiritual armor, without which we cannot stand against such an adversary as the devil. And pray for the day when Satan will be removed “so that he should deceive the nations no more” (Revelation 20:3).

## Recommended reading

To learn more about our adversary and how to defend against him, request or download the booklet [\*Is There Really a Devil?\*](#)

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## Bomb Squad: Removing War's Deadly Aftermath

By Mike Bennett

*Long after wars end, land mines continue to kill and maim innocent victims. How will this world be cleared of this deadly scourge?*



**W**AR IS VICIOUS AND DEADLY—and not just to the armies and not just while it is going on. The inhuman inventiveness of man has produced many cruel devices that are the gravest risk for innocent children and can keep killing and maiming for years after any peace treaty is signed.

It is estimated there are 110 million land mines deployed in more than 70 countries around the world. The United Nations estimates someone is killed by a land mine every 20 minutes. Over 80 percent of the 15,000 to 20,000 victims are civilians and at least one in five is a child.



In Cambodia, for example, one out of every 250 people is an amputee because of land mines.

Many people are trying to do something today to get rid of this scourge. Actually, 100,000 land mines are being removed each year! The problem is 20 times that are being placed each year. Consider that land mines only cost \$3 to \$15 to produce, but at least \$1,000 to remove! One estimate is it would take \$33 billion and 1,100 years to clear all of the land mines in the world.

Thankfully, the Bible foretells a time when all implements of war, including these evil land mines, will be removed. Perhaps some of you reading this will be involved in getting rid of this scourge from the earth.

### Ancient tools of terror

Land mines aren't mentioned in the Bible per se, but there are many mentions of stealthy and fearful forerunners—snares and traps. Lamentations 3:47 talks about “fear and a snare have come upon us, desolation and destruction.” Those descriptions definitely apply to the effects of land mines today. The New International Version uses the word *terror* in this verse, and that certainly applies, as well.



In Psalm 141:9, David prayed that God would keep him “from the snares they have laid for me, and from the traps of the workers of iniquity.” Land mines, like snares and traps, are designed to be hidden, deceptive and insidious. The enemy you can't see is more terrifying and demoralizing than the enemy and the weapon you can see.

The Bible tells us that all this terror, all these weapons of war and destruction, will be removed.

### “He makes wars cease”

A number of prophecies predict the time when God will take charge and end man's binge of self-destruction. “He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire” (Psalm 46:9). A God like that will be a real refuge to those who seek Him (verse 11). I'm sure one of the first orders of business in every place, as His Kingdom expands, will be the removal of land mines.

How will this be done? God, of course, could just miraculously remove them or explode them safely. However, so many times in the Bible and in prophecy, God gives His people a part in the work He is doing.



Will you be a part of the bomb squad to go out and remove these land mines? Will one of you invent a new process for detecting land mines? Right now the clean-up process is very expensive and dangerous. We don't want to lose any lives in the clean-up, and we certainly don't want it to take 1,100 years, as some predict!

Micah also describes the time when Jesus Christ will return and bring real peace: “He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Micah 4:3).

The end result will be peace and God's way of life—the way of give—being taught and lived. This is described in the next verse: “But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken” (Micah 4:4).

Today land mines are a frightening and destructive evil. Hundreds of children are being killed every year. But in God's Kingdom, they will be cleaned up. Then there will be nothing to fear! God speed that day!

### Recommended reading

To learn more about the prophesied future, request or download our full-color brochure [You Can Understand Bible Prophecy](#).

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## Deciphering the Rosetta Stone

By Robert Berendt

*For hundreds of years, Egyptian hieroglyphics were a mystery, even to language experts. Finally someone discovered the key to decoding them—on the Rosetta stone. Is there a “Rosetta stone” for understanding another mystery—the Bible?*



**A** LITTLE OVER 200 YEARS AGO, an officer in the army of Napoleon Bonaparte was searching for things of value in the Nile delta town of Rosetta in Egypt (today named Rashid). He found a stone that seemed very interesting to him, though he could not understand what he saw.

In time this stone fell into British hands and ended up in the British Museum in 1802. The stone remained as an object of curiosity until 1822 when the mystery was solved. A man named J.F. Champollion had realized the true value of this remarkable rock.



He realized the picture signs of the Egyptian writing system we call hieroglyphics (which in his day were still a mystery even to linguistic specialists) could be deciphered with the help of the Rosetta stone! This remarkable stone has the same message carved in three languages—hieroglyphic (suitable for a priestly decree), demotic (a simpler Egyptian script used for daily purposes) and Greek (the language of administration).

This stone, carved about 200 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, is the key to “reading” the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt. For those studying the ancient history of Egypt, the find was invaluable.

Egypt has many stones with messages in hieroglyphic script. It must have been a source of great frustration for the archaeologists who could not “read” what was written and

therefore a huge sense of relief and excitement when the ancient script could actually be read. An exciting door has been opened and excavations taking place even now yield far more understandable treasures of the ancient past because the language is clearer.

### Another mystery

God tells us the Bible is written in a “language” people cannot understand. His Holy Spirit is the “Rosetta stone” that helps those whom He chooses to understand His Word. Isaiah 29:10-14 informs us that because humans do not honor God, He has closed their understanding. Isaiah 28:9-13 tells us God speaks with words that are not understood.

It is as though human beings have been staring at hieroglyphics for hundreds of years and have no idea what we are actually seeing.

Luke 24:27, 32 and 44-45 relates the story of Jesus explaining the true understanding of the Scriptures to men who had studied those same words daily. The Bible is a book many study, but few understand. Saying this angers many people—but it is only through the direct help God gives that the “language” of the Scriptures can be understood.

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Jesus explained and taught many truths to His followers. John 14:26 explains that the Holy Spirit is our Helper to understanding. It is through His Holy Spirit that God the Father and Jesus Christ live within us (verse 23). Until that point, the Bible is a closed book for humans. God opens the understanding to whomever He pleases, at the time of His choosing. His criteria for calling us include humility and obedience.

### The response of humility

We humans are in need of humility toward God. When we learn that valuable lesson, we have taken the first steps to deciphering His code.

There are many attempts to decipher and explain the Scriptures. Deep and sometimes bitter arguments have resulted when conflicting positions have been taken. The attitude of contention alone ought to tell us that God is not giving everyone true understanding (1 Corinthians 3:3). His truth sets us free—it does not shackle us (John 8:32).

We humans have enormous problems understanding one another, even when we speak the same language. Many of our problems are due to the inability to listen carefully and the hindrances we have in expressing our meaning clearly and fighting our biases. Communication is a major source of troubles among people and between people and Almighty God.

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God is willing to do His part to help us decipher His Word. Our part is to learn. A humble and obedient spirit He will not despise (Psalm 51:17).

Let us have another look at His Word with humility and seek the understanding God gives through His “Rosetta stone,” the Holy Spirit. In this gift there is life—life everlasting.

### **Recommended reading**

For further reading on this vital subject, request or download the free booklet [\*How to Understand the Bible\*](#).

## To Soar Like Eagles

By Randy Vild

*The majestic eagle can teach us much about rising above the storms of life and learning to soar.*



**A** LONG TIME AGO when the world was new, God made all the birds on the fifth day. When doing so, He colored their feathers like an exquisite bouquet of flowers. He then gave many of them a distinctive song to sing. At this point, God instructed these wonderful creatures to greet each new day with a chorus of songs. And their voices announce the morning to this very day.

Each of the birds is special, but to me the eagle is extraordinary. It possesses great beauty as well as tremendous strength and skill. The eagle is also highly respected by man. For Americans, this bird is the symbol of our country. Its image is engraved on our national seal. Additionally, when we lay our eyes upon this creature we can't help but be amazed. Its flight is nothing short of dramatic. Each of these great birds seems to just glide on the air with movements that are more elegant than a waltz.

But is there something we can learn from this majestic creature? Are there lessons that God wants us to understand? Consider how the eagle is made.

### An eagle's eye

Did you know that eagles are capable of seeing fish swimming from several hundred feet above the water? Since most fish are counter-shaded, meaning they are darker on top and thus harder to see from above, this is quite an extraordinary feat. Ask any fisherman how difficult it is to see a fish swim just below the surface from a boat deck, let alone from several hundred feet.

Eagles, like all birds, have color vision. Their eyes are almost as large as a human's, but their sharpness is at least four times that of a person with perfect vision. The eagle can identify a rabbit moving almost a mile away. That means that an eagle flying at an altitude of 1,000 feet over open country could spot prey over an area of almost 3 square miles from a fixed position. Incredible is the vision of an eagle!

## Eagles in a storm

Did you know that an eagle can detect when a storm is approaching long before it breaks? It will actually fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm.

Isn't that remarkable? While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above. It does not escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm. What an extraordinary way to deal with adversity!



There is a wonderful lesson for God's children to learn from the way an eagle approaches a storm. When the storms of life come upon us, we, too, can rise above them. We can lift ourselves above adversity by setting our minds and our hearts toward God. The storms do not have to overcome us any more than they overcome the eagle. We can allow God's power to lift us above them.

Furthermore, the storms (or trials) of life can actually help us in our walk of faith. This is because they build something in us that will be a part of our lives forever. Notice what Paul wrote to the congregation at Corinth. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

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Here is something to think about. When the eagle flies above the storm, he is in a sense overcoming it. But he does so in a most interesting way. He uses the strength of the storm to rise above it.

That is one of the things God wants us to do. We can use adversity for gain. We need to learn from trials—to grow from the experience and be made better (James 1:2-3). Sometimes we should "escape" trials (1 Corinthians 10:13). Sometimes we should "flee" (Matthew 10:23). And at other times, trials are to be confronted and endured (2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 12:7). We must face the things that challenge us and grow in virtue because of the challenge.

God is looking for overcomers. And He has a wonderful promise for them. "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21).

## An eagle's story

*Faith in the Night Seasons* by Chuck and Nancy Missler begins with a story about a wounded eaglet that was rescued by a kind farmer. He found the bird in one of his fields and so took him home, tended to his wounds and then placed him outside in the barnyard to recover.

Strangely enough, the young eaglet soon adapted to the habits of all the barnyard chickens. He learned to walk and cluck like them. He learned to drink from a trough and peck the dirt for food, and for many years he peacefully resigned himself to this new life on the ground.

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*God's children were  
born to fly. They  
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But then one day, one of the farmer's friends spotted the eagle and asked, "Why in the world is that bird acting like a chicken?" The farmer explained what had happened. Even so, the man could hardly accept the situation.

"It's just not right," said the friend. "The Creator made that bird to soar in the heavens, not scavenge in the barnyard!" So he picked up the unsuspecting eagle, climbed onto a nearby fence post, and tossed him into the air. But the confused bird just fell back to earth and searched for his feathered friends.

Undaunted, the man then grabbed the eagle and climbed to the top of the barn. As he heaved him off the roof, the bird made a few halfhearted squawks and flaps before falling into a bale of hay. After shaking his head a few times, the eagle then made himself comfortable and began mindlessly pecking at pieces of straw.

The friend went home that night dejected and could barely sleep as he remembered the sight of those powerful talons caked with barnyard mud. He couldn't bear the thought, so the very next day, he headed back to the farm for another try. This time he carried the eagle to the top of a nearby mountain where the sky unfolded in a limitless horizon.



He looked into the eagle's eyes and cried out, "Don't you understand? You weren't made to live like a chicken! Why would you want to stay down here when you were born for the sky?" As the man held the confused bird, he made sure the eagle was facing into the brilliant light of the setting sun. Then he powerfully heaved the bird into the sky, and this time the eagle opened his wings, looked at the sun, caught the updraft rising from the valley and disappeared into the clouds of heaven.

God's children were born to fly. They were created by a loving God to soar. He has called them to live in the heights, yet too many have huddled together in the barnyard and become content and comfortable with crumbs.

Helen Keller once said, "One can never consent to creep when he feels an impulse to soar." God's people need to cultivate and exercise that impulse. If we do, we will one day soar like eagles (Isaiah 40:31).

### **Recommended reading**

To learn more about what God has in store for you, request or download our free booklet [What Is Your Destiny?](#)



## Preparing for Pregnancy: Participating in a Miracle

By Nancy Capo

*Bringing a human life into the world is an incredible, and daunting, endeavor. How can parents prepare for this miracle?*



**I**T MAY BE THE MOST GODLIKE THING you have a chance to do. You get to bring a human life into the world. Nausea, vomiting, varicose veins and hemorrhoids aside, being pregnant can bring a man and a woman face-to-face with a miracle.

When God created the land, sea, sun, moon, plants and animals, He declared it “good.” But when He finished creating man in His own image, male and female, and told them to be fruitful and multiply, He declared His work “very good.”

Humans are pretty special. Our ability to carry our children and give birth gives us a glimpse of the incredible purpose God is working out on earth. (And you thought you were just having a baby!)

Your child is on loan to you, entrusted to your care, for you to nourish toward his or her ultimate goal of eternal life as a king and priest of God. This understanding gives real meaning to the phrase “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” So what are you doing to prepare to be this child’s parent?

## Spiritual preparation

Before conception is an ideal time for both the mother and father to devote some extra attention to prayer and fasting, to make sure your spiritual house is in order. If you are already pregnant, it is not generally wise for a woman to fast, but you could set aside some special prayer time individually and as a couple to ask God to help you be your child's spiritual teacher and to lead you to the people and resources you need to be the best parents possible.

We don't usually think of pregnancy as a time that influences our children's spiritual growth, but the more spiritually prepared and grounded you are now, the better. And what impact could praying out loud or singing songs of praise to God have on your growing baby?

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Boris Brott, conductor of the Hamilton (Ontario) Philharmonic Symphony, stated, "As a young man, I was mystified by this unusual ability I had—to play certain pieces sight unseen. I'd be conducting a score for the first time and, suddenly the cello line would jump out at me... One day, I mentioned this to my mother who is a professional cellist...when she heard what the pieces were, the mystery quickly solved itself. All the scores I knew sight unseen were ones she had played while she was pregnant with me" (*Secret Life of the Unborn Child*, Thomas Verny, M.D., 1981, pp. 22-23).

Perhaps your prayers and songs could plant a seed that will help your child feel familiar and natural in having a relationship with God. We know that at least one baby in biblical history recognized and responded to the influence of God's Holy Spirit. Elizabeth exclaimed that the baby in her womb leaped for joy when she heard the voice of Mary who was pregnant with the Son of God (Luke 1:41-44).

A spiritually healthy mother, demonstrating the fruits of peace and joy, also experiences a positive physical response in her body, producing a healthy environment for the growing baby.

### Mom and Dad—and the two shall be one

After spiritual guidance, the next best gift you can give your child is a strong marriage. After the baby comes, a mother's attention is naturally devoted to caring for the baby. Dads can feel neglected. Moms can feel overwhelmed and unsupported. If there have been any stress fractures in your marriage, having a baby will not heal them; it will only exaggerate them.

Now is the time to draw even closer together, to heal any wounds and extend forgiveness to each other. The strongest families have parents who are inseparably united and reach out to embrace their children together. These are marriage skills you will use your entire life. It is essential that you, your spouse and God become the threefold cord of Ecclesiastes 4:12.



## Ready, set, push!

There are many birth options available to pregnant parents. The best resources in your community are often the independent childbirth educators. They know the scoop on doctors, midwives, doulas, hospitals, birth centers and home births. They are eager to answer your questions about birth methods and can also direct you to the best pregnancy exercise classes, as well as provide prenatal nutrition information. And of course, their classes are designed to prepare you and your spouse for the big day.

Once you decide, based on your personal research, what type of birth location and caregiver is right for you, interview potential caregivers like crazy. One of the biggest mistakes pregnant parents make is choosing a doctor who practices standard obstetric management of birth (which includes induction of labor, routine epidural and 29.1 percent cesarean rate), thinking they will get him or her to act like a midwife during the birth. Where midwifery is the model of care, and doctors are reserved for only high-risk pregnancies, C-sections are reduced to 5 to 10 percent, while reducing risks and improving outcomes for both moms and babies.

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*If there have been any stress fractures in your marriage, having a baby will not heal them; it will only exaggerate them.*

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Not all midwives or doctors practice the same way, however. It's worth your time to meet as many as you can with a list of questions in hand and ask for references from previous clients.



A pregnant woman's attention naturally focuses on the day her baby is born, just like God's attention is on His children and the day we enter into eternal life with Him. God has entrusted women with a very special representation of His labor of love for us.

Many women describe birth itself as a profound spiritual event that pulls them to a complete trust and dependence on God. It can be the hardest thing a woman does, yet one of the most empowering. The mind-set a woman brings to birth can make all the difference in her birth experience.

Remember what God said about His crowning creation: "Behold, it was very good." God didn't goof when He created the female body and the birth process. That becomes abundantly clear when you learn how each detail of labor actually benefits the mom and baby. Educate yourself to replace fear, dread and negativity with a spirit of love, joy, trust, acceptance and confidence. Love got the baby in there; love will get the baby out.

## Recommended reading

An excellent resource for successful family life is [\*Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension\*](#). A free copy is available for you by mail or it can be downloaded to your computer.

*Nancy Capo is a certified childbirth educator and doula since 1984 with the Bradley Method of Natural Childbirth, and has worked as a midwifery apprentice. Nancy is married to James Capo, pastor of the Tucson and Sierra Vista, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas, United Church of God*

congregations. They have three children, all born at home. This article previously appeared in United News, August 2006.

## **Pregnancy Resources**

### **Childbirth Classes:**

- The Bradley Method: [www.bradleybirth.com](http://www.bradleybirth.com), 1-800-4-A-BIRTH.
- International Childbirth Education Association (ICEA): [www.icea.org](http://www.icea.org).

### **Find a Doula:**

- Doulas of North America (DONA): [www.dona.org](http://www.dona.org).

### **Find a Midwife:**

- American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM): [www.midwife.org](http://www.midwife.org).
- MidwifeInfo: [www.midwifeinfo.com](http://www.midwifeinfo.com).

### **Research Sites:**

- International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN): [www.ican-online.org](http://www.ican-online.org).
- Childbirth.Org: [www.childbirth.org](http://www.childbirth.org).
- Midwifery Today: [www.midwiferytoday.com](http://www.midwiferytoday.com).
- Gentle Birth Midwife Archives: [www.gentlebirth.org/archives/](http://www.gentlebirth.org/archives/).
- Waterbirth International: [www.waterbirth.org](http://www.waterbirth.org).

### **Books:**

- *The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth*, by Henci Goer.
- *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*, by Ina May Gaskin.
- *The Birth Book*, by Dr. William Sears.
- *Gentle Birth Choices*, by Barbara Harper and Suzanne Arms.
- *Hearts and Hands*, by Elizabeth Davis.
- *Husband-Coached Childbirth*, by Dr. Robert Bradley.
- *Natural Childbirth the Bradley Way*, by Susan McCutcheon.

## Depression: Is There a Cure?

By Daniel Fitzpatrick

*Even people in the Bible experienced depression. God was there for them, and He is there for us. Never give up hope!*



**H**AVE YOU EVER BEEN DEPRESSED? I mean, really depressed? Sometimes you may feel like you have no idea what is going on. Why me? What is happening? How do I climb out of this hole that I am in? Do you see the hole, or does everyone around you see it and you don't?

### One man's bout with depression

Well, I know exactly how you feel! I was really depressed at one point in my life. There wasn't anything major like a death in the family or someone close to me being really ill, but there was a girl who came in and out of my life. I didn't know what I really wanted to do with my life and I had unresolved issues with my father. Do any of these situations sound familiar?

The kind of depression that I am talking about may not be what you are thinking about. I am talking about what is called *clinical depression*: a psychiatric disorder characterized by an inability to concentrate, insomnia, loss of appetite, anhedonia (the inability to experience pleasure), feelings of extreme sadness, guilt, helplessness and hopelessness and thoughts of death. This is the real thing.

Here are some sobering statistics on depression in the United States:

Approximately 7 million women in the United States are clinically depressed. Though women experience depression at double the rate of men, men are three times as likely to commit suicide as women. Up to 2.5 percent of children in the United States suffer from depression. Up to 8.3 percent of adolescents in the United States suffer from depression. Depression affects about 6 million elderly people. In any given year, about 7 percent—between 13 million and 14 million people—will experience a depressive disorder ([www.add-adhd-help-center.com/Depression/statistics.htm](http://www.add-adhd-help-center.com/Depression/statistics.htm)).

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*Depression is a serious issue. It is a sickness that almost all of us experience at one time or another in our lives.*

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## Depression in the Bible?

Is there something wrong with human beings? Why do so many people experience depression? Do you think depression was ever present in the Bible? I didn't think so. How could God-fearing men and women in the Bible experience depression?

But, *read all about it!* Many prophets, kings and writers of the Bible were depressed at one time or another. You are not alone! And you are in the company of some very faithful servants of God! Let's look at two examples of men who may have been depressed in the Bible.

- **King David.** He had committed adultery with Bathsheba. He was depressed until he finally confessed his sin. "When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah" (Psalm 32:3-4).
- **Elijah.** Even after a great miracle and victory over the false prophets, evil Queen Jezebel made Elijah fear for his life. He felt lonely, fearful, weary and very depressed. "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!' ...I alone am left" (1 Kings 19:4, 10).

## What should you do?

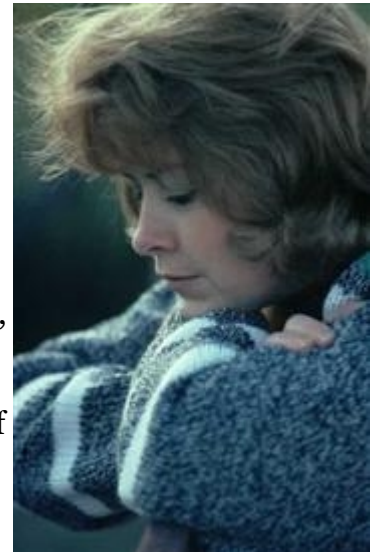
So, what should you do if you are depressed? Should you not listen to others? Should you forget about those who love you? Should you enclose your thoughts and feelings in a fortress so no one can possibly find them?

I discovered the answers to all three of these questions. Remember, I lived through severe depression. I didn't listen to others, forgot about all who loved me and hid all of my thoughts and feelings way deep in the recesses of my mind. I wasn't in the Church of God at the time.

Looking back, I can see that God was helping me. I went to a self-help group that started me on my road to recovery. Then, I went to a social worker who talked with me about my past, present and future. Next, I went to the Peace Corps, where I finally came into contact with the Church of God.

So, what is the first thing you should do when you find yourself severely depressed? *Turn to God.* “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

This step, turning to God, may not seem easy when you are depressed. If you are depressed, you probably think you are feeling that way *because God* is not giving you financial success, a stable family, good health or a strong sense of self-esteem.



It is so easy to blame God for all of our troubles. But remember, from the beginning, God gave man the power of choice. Is it possible that we create many of our own problems, through bad choices that we have made in our own lives?

The second step, after truly connecting with God through prayer and meditation, is to *seek assistance from those who love you.* Listen to what they say.

*You are not alone!  
And you are in the  
company of some  
very faithful  
servants of God!*

I know that in my situation, I was not listening to anyone. I was too busy feeling sorry for myself and thinking that no one understood me. This prevented me from reaching out for help from my family or friends. Talking your problems out with even an anonymous person, like a social worker, or asking help from a minister may help. I know it helped me. I didn't feel like I could share any of my feelings with my family, so having that third party really helped.

Remember, severe depression can be very dangerous. I almost reached that point of no return in my life. I beseech you to get help before it is too late, if you are experiencing depression now or face it in the future.

Depression is a serious issue. It is a sickness that almost all of us experience at one time or another in our lives. There are different levels of depression. But one of the true markers of severe depression is if you are having any kind of suicidal thoughts. I was. I sought help and I recovered. You can too.

God is there for all of us. He will guide you to a proper understanding of what life is all about. Never give up hope.

### **Recommended reading**

For helpful information on this subject, please see our free reprint article [“Depression: Ways to Win the Battle”](#).

## Letters to the Editor

### Head-to-Head and Heart-to-Heart



Thank you for this opportunity to express a handful of words to you and actually to many more, I hope. I assume that you are a Christian and recognize the law of God just as it is and that by obeying it is the only way to happiness and eternal life.

Let's get right to the point. There are plenty of people saying how awful it is that so many unmarried girls are having babies. Girls are no longer taught to keep themselves pure. The parents are so mixed up and full of pollution themselves how can a child understand or discern right from wrong? Children start to go to school and the pressure is so great to be like everyone else that they have no stamina to be different from the others.

But one of the fearful snares of the enemy (Satan) is the abundance of modern immodest fashions. Most people have no shame for sin of any kind. They see it everyday on TV as well as on the streets and in the magazines. Fashion is separating people from God more than anything else. A lot of the fashions now are immodest in some way and are made to emphasize the shapes and curves of the body.

When Adam and Eve first sinned and had to leave the beautiful Garden of Eden, God made coats for them to wear for they no longer had the covering of light God had covered them with. So we see that it was the intention of God for man to have clothes and not to go around in immodest apparel (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

Everywhere in this professing Christian country people are parading around in scanty clothing and they think they belong to Jesus. It was the devil who invented the immodest fashions to put wrong thoughts in the minds of the people, and another thing is that Jesus does not work with the devil. He knows that if a person is wearing scanty dress, it will be easier to get close and do wrong acts. Just plain be bad.

The way a woman dresses can be a real temptation to the man, and the girl can be asking for real trouble. It is no wonder there are so many poor children without parents. I know what it is like, for my granddaughter is fatherless.

The word "love" is not understood properly. What we see around us is infatuation. Jesus said, "If ye love me keep my commandments." So if we are not obeying ALL of the words of Jesus, then we do not love Him. Jesus doesn't write any idle words. He is serious about every one of them. Love is obedience! Teach children to obey the Word of God, and then pray for them.

May the Lord bless each one seeking for light and truth and a way to help others. In the name of Jesus.

— Joyce Weber



[You Raise Me Up, Because You Are Your Brother's Keeper](#)



Great magazine and gift to the community!

Your work has been blessed for I felt the Lord's presence upon your Web site.

I was moved by Janet Treadway's article concerning the plight of our young people and the degradation of society. I'm sure you all know who our enemy is and that the problem is more than merely social in its roots. We and our children are under attack and prayers of deliverance are a big part of the solution.

God bless and thanks for a gloriously beautiful magazine. Job well done.

— R. Harrison

Some feedback messages are edited for space and/or clarity