

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Promise, the Prospect, and the Period

Steve Hulshizer

In John 14 Christ encourages his disciples by declaring that while He was leaving them, He would return. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again*, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3)

The Promise—Every believer in Christ has the promise that the Lord will come again and receive him unto Himself. A reassuring aspect of this promise is the *Person* who made it. It is the Lord Himself who made this promise, “I will come again.” God manifest in the flesh has promised to come again. We can take comfort in this, for we read, “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:” (Heb. 6:18)

It will be the Lord “Himself” who comes for us. The same One who fed the 5,000 with a few loaves and fish. The same One who raised the dead, and made the blind to see. The same One who walked on water, and calmed the raging sea. The same One who walked with the two on the road to Emmaus. The same One man rejected and crucified. “This same Jesus” will come to take us home to be with Himself.

The *purpose* of this promise is stated by the Lord Himself, “that where I am there ye also may be.” He is coming again to take us out of this world to where He is. The bride will be with the Bridegroom. For all eternity we will be where He is.

The Prospect—This promise gives each believer a *prospect*—the certainty of being with the Lord. We can look forward to be taken from this world, whether we are alive and remain at His coming, or whether we have already gone to glory through the gate of death, only to be reunited with our resurrected and changed bodies.

This hope is heavenly. (Col. 1:5) It is a living hope, in that it is in the living One who sits at God’s right hand. (1 Pet. 1:3) This hope is “an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast....” (Heb. 6:19)

One aspect of this prospect is its *intimacy*. It is the Bridegroom coming for His bride. The bride is to be looking for a Person, not an event. Paul said, “We look for the Savior.” (Phil. 3:20) The Thessalonian saints had “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven.” (1 Thess. 1:10) We should be waiting for the Lord as a bride waits for her bridegroom. Not just to be taken from the scene, but to be where He is.

Another aspect of the prospect of His coming is *imminency*.” The Lord can come at any moment. This should keep us from driving our tent pegs deeper and deeper into this world.

The Period—Between the Lord’s promise to come again, and the realization of the prospect set before us is a *period* of time. It is an *indefinite* period of time. There are no “seventy weeks” for the New Testament church. How long this period is no one knows, except God.

The fact that this period is indefinite requires us to *wait patiently*. As in Noah’s day there are some who would question whether the Lord will keep His Word. In similar fashion Israel grew tired of waiting for Moses to return from the mountain and made themselves “other gods.” Idolatry is an ever present danger as we wait “for His Son from heaven” in this indefinite period.

The period is not only indefinite, but one of *increasing darkness, departure, and deception*. This means we must be *watchful*. We must “wait,” and we must “watch.” There is to be an *expectation*. We must not fall asleep as did the ten virgins. The Bright and Morning Star precedes the rising of the sun and will arise in the darkest hour of the day. We must remember the longer the night, the closer the rising of the Sun.

This period will also be marked by *impurity*. We must then *walk* as children of the light. We must flee fornication, and walk as *examples* to the dark world around us.

Indifference will mark this indefinite period of time. This requires the believers to be *working*. So many are entangled in the affairs of life, and are indifferent with regard to the things of the Lord. Worldly events take priority over the gatherings of the local assembly, and personal time in prayer and the reading of God’s Word.

The Provisions—The Lord has not left us without provisions for this indefinite period of time. The following

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The King's Generosity

Keith R. Keyser

In many senses Solomon's reign was the golden age of the Israelite monarchy. Under the king's enlightened rule the economy thrived and the nation achieved prominence in the ancient near east, which was both unprecedented in its past history and unparalleled in its subsequent existence during the remainder of the Old Testament period. The early days of his kingdom are a shadow of the coming glorious Millennial reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords; they prefigure the riches of Christ's grace, bestowed on those who seek the One who is "greater than Solomon." (Luke 11:31) The Queen of Sheba's visit particularly illustrates the generosity, wisdom, and wealth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Treasures Of Wisdom And Knowledge

Solomon was celebrated for his justice flowing from his God-given wisdom. (1 Kings 3:4-15) His intellectual endeavors were interdisciplinary, including botany, biology, zoology, literature, musical composition, and philosophy. (1 Kings 4:32-34) As a modern writer comments, "Solomon was the renaissance man of the ancient world—a naturalist as well as a song-writer, a philosopher as well as a king."¹ Elsewhere he adds: "To this day we can learn from the king's wisdom by reading his wise sayings in the book of Proverbs, or by studying his wise philosophy of life in Ecclesiastes, or by hearing his wisdom about love and romance from the Song of Solomon."² He was a learned ruler in the same vein as Ashoka, Alexander the Great, Marcus Aurelius, or Frederick the Great, and was therefore renowned among the surrounding nations and beyond.

Even more than in his brilliance in academic pursuits, Solomon's wisdom was evidenced in his reverence for the Almighty. As he affirmed: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: But fools despise wisdom and instruction"; and again, "For the Lord giveth wisdom: Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." (Prov. 1:7 and 2:6) Yet all of his spiritual understanding pales in comparison with the Lord Jesus, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3)

The fame of Solomon's knowledge brought dignitaries like the Queen of Sheba to sit at his feet as humble students. As Christ Himself pointed out: "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here." (Matt. 12:42) She traveled a great distance—1,500 miles by some estimates—and yet the majority of the people of Lord Jesus' time refused to heed His instruction when He came among them.³

Giving And Receiving

Befitting her royal station, the Queen arrived with a large number of servants and a treasure-laden caravan. (1 Kings 10:2) Rather than focusing on her own great wealth, she fixates on Solomon's opulence. As J.B. Stoney points out, "She was a very great person, had plenty of natural means and the like, and yet she is absorbed with the things belonging to Solomon. See how often she uses the word 'his'; it was all that belonged to him."⁴ What a refreshing reminder for our narcissistic age! Occupation with Christ, rather than self, is the proper attitude of the believer.

As was customary in such situations, the visiting monarch presented gifts to Solomon. (1 Kings 10:10) Similarly, it is the believer's privilege to give to the Lord Jesus of our time, material possessions, and spiritual gifts. Of course, he only gives to Him what he has first received from Him. The Father has already blessed the saints with every spiritual blessing in Christ, so they give back out of this inexhaustible treasury. (Eph. 1:3) Spurgeon depicts the scene in his inimitable way:

"She lost nothing; she gave all she had, and then Solomon gave her quite as much again, for I will be bound to say King Solomon would not be outdone in generosity, such a noble-hearted prince as he, and so rich. I tell you Jesus Christ will never be in your debt. Oh, it is a great gain to give to Christ; we give him pence and he gives us pounds; we give him years of labor and he gives us an eternity of rest; we give him days of patient endurance and he gives us ages of joyous honor; we give him a little suffering and he gives us great rewards."⁵

The King Blesses Out Of His Limitless Treasury

Although the queen gave Solomon an immense amount of goods and spices, her gifts paled in comparison with his wealth. What is more, when she was about to depart, he gave her gifts that far exceeded her contributions. (1 Kings 10:13) Once again this reminds one of the church's situation. We give out of the treasures that He bestowed upon us; then He turns around and rewards us for our giving. As one writer observes, "No more successful prayer than this has been placed on record, for not only did the desires receive an answer to the full satisfaction of the suppliant, but from the king's bounty she received abundantly more than she asked or thought. It is thus that our exalted Lord would treat us, and it is for the glory of His great name and for our good that He should so treat us, and there is no hindrance on His side."⁶ Henry agrees, writing, "...He will, out of his divine bounty, which infinitely exceeds royal bounty, even Solomon's, do for us more than we are able to ask or think."⁷ *

1 Philip Ryken, *King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 85.

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- 2 Ryken, 54-55.
- 3 Paul House, 1, 2 Kings. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publ., 1995),163.
- 4 J.B. Stoney, "Consecration and Effects," in Steps In Light in Collected Writings, Vol. 1 (1887), 83-84 [Italics original.]
- 5 C. H. Spurgeon, "The Queen of the South, or An Earnest Enquirer," The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons, Vol. 9. (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1863), 563-564.
- 6 J.T. Mawson, "Prevailing Prayer": http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/mawson/magazines/Prevailing_Prayer.html
- 7 Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 495. [Italics original.]

Not Quitting

William MacDonald

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58)

It is not uncommon for a person to become discouraged in his service for the Lord and to quit. I suppose that most of us have faced that temptation at one time or another. Therefore, in today's reading I would like to share four passages that have been a tremendous encouragement to me and that have kept me from quitting.

The first is Isaiah 49:4: "Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." There are moments, fortunately rare, when years of service for the Lord seem to evaporate into nothingness. All our work seems to have been wasted effort. It appears to be another case of "love's labor lost." But not so! Our verse assures us that God's justice will insure that we are royally rewarded. Nothing that is done for Him is ever in vain.

The second passage is Isaiah 55:10, 11: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Those engaged in distributing the living Word of God are assured of success. Results are guaranteed. His Word is irresistible. Just as the armies of the world are powerless to prevent the rain and snow from falling, so all the hosts of demons and of men are unable to stop the Word from going forth and producing revolutions in human lives. We are on the winning side.

Then there is that remarkable encouragement in Matthew 10:40: "He that receiveth you receiveth me and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Have you ever been snubbed because of your Christian testimony? Or os-

tracized? Or mocked? Or abused? Has someone slammed the door in your face? Well, don't take it too personally. In rejecting you, people are really rejecting the Savior. The way people treat you is the way they treat the Lord. How wonderful to be so closely linked with the Son of God!

Then, of course, there is 1 Corinthians 15:58 (quoted at the beginning.). Paul has been setting forth the truth of the resurrection. If this life were all, then our labor would be in vain. However, beyond the grave lies the eternal glory. Everything done in the Lord's Name will be rewarded then. No loving service will have been fruitless or futile.

Christian service is the most glorious of all callings. There is never a valid reason for quitting. The encouragements of God's Word are enough to keep us from turning back. *

Faster Than The Speed of Light

Steve Hulshizer

The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second. How fast is that? If we take the circumference of the earth as 25,000 miles, this means that light, assuming it could bend around such circles, would travel around the earth over seven times in one second, or almost 27,000 revolutions of the earth in one hour. Bringing this down to a more understandable level, light would travel from New York City to Los Angeles in about two one hundreds (2/100) of a second. That would mean you could live in New York and go to an assembly in Los Angeles, and those who live the furthest away from the assembly are usually on time!

Now as fast as light is, prayer is faster! Think of Nehemiah. The king asked him why his countenance was sad, and Nehemiah explained that Jerusalem "lieth waste and the gates are consumed with fire." The king then asked Nehemiah, "For what dost thou make request?" And then Nehemiah writes, "So I prayed to the God of heaven." (Neh. 2:4) *Instantly* his prayer is heard in heaven! No delays, not even two one hundreds of a second, but *instantly* his prayer is heard.

Is it not encouraging to know those little prayers that we render while driving our cars, walking the street, lying in bed, or on our knees, are instantly heard at a throne of grace? It should encourage us "always to pray." (Luke 18:1) *

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Truth And Error

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 1 Cor. 2:12

An important reason for testing and trying the spirits is the evidence provided by the long history of the church of the havoc that has often been wrought in the church because people would not try and test the spirits, because they said, "I have received such a wonderful experience, and therefore I must be right." What we are concerned about is not a matter of sincerity and honesty—we are concerned about truth and error, and truth and error have to be defined.

Is this something only for theologians and professors of theology or for ministers and leaders? Is it only for certain people? The answer is that it is for all. "Beloved"—he is writing to the average church member—"believe not every spirit, but try the spirits" (1 John 4:1). Later on he says, "Ye are of God, little children" (verse 4), and I think he used the expression "little children" deliberately—"you, the ordinary church members, little children—you hear us because you are of the truth."

It is the duty and the business of everyone examining the name Christian to be in a position to try and examine and test the spirits. Indeed, we are given the power to do so—"greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). We have been given this capacity by God through the Holy Spirit; the Spirit dwells in us, and therefore we have this power of discrimination and understanding. The apostle Paul tells us that at great length in 1 Corinthians. For example, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). That is it! *

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are some of those things which we have to encourage and enable us to patiently wait, watch, walk, and work until He comes again.

We have an incorruptible and undefiled *inheritance* reserved for us in heaven. (1 Pet. 1:4) We have the certainty of forever being with the Lord. This fact should keep our eyes forward and encourage our hearts. (Heb. 12:2)

We have an *interceding High Priest* who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. 7:25) One Who has been here and suffered for righteousness sake.

The Lord has given us the *indwelling Holy Spirit* to comfort us along the way. One who will come alongside to strengthen us during this time.

Then there is the *inspired Word of God*. That which never changes is able to guide us through this ever changing world.

We also have the *incense of the Lord's Supper*; that constant remembrance of the One who purchased us at great expense and Who will return to take His bride to be with Himself.

Having this personal promise of the Lord Himself to return for us, let us continue to wait, watch, walk, and work in this indefinite Period between the Promise and the Prospect, making use of all the Provisions He has provided. *

York Bible Study Program

January 9	Bob Spender	Joshua
February 13	Mark Kolchin	Titus & Philemon
March 12	Carl Knott	1 Thessalonians
April 9	Mark Shelley	1 Peter
May 14	Craig Shakarji	2 Thessalonians

10 AM - 3PM, Lunch served.