

BULLETIN

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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VOLUME 3, NO. 33

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November 2019

Updates from Rusty Hancock

Probably the most frequently asked question I receive is "How is your mom doing?" And the answer is "Jane Sellers Hancock is doing just fine!" Yes, she's is now 92. Yes, a few years ago she was diagnosed with cancer, multiple myeloma. And yes, she cares for her eldest dependent son who suffers from mental illness. But most of us would be hard pressed to keep up her schedule. She has season tickets to her beloved Los Angeles Dodgers. She also has season passes to the Hollywood Bowl and Pasadena Playhouse. She hosts Writing and Book clubs at her home. Mom is a member of her local Garden Club and is very fond of walking through Descanso Gardens, a local botanical site that offers several displays and exhibits. She has a brand new BMW convertible to add to her long list of convertibles she has driven over the last 60 years. And a year ago she added a St. Charles Cavalier spaniel, Eddie, to her family. This little "exercise machine" gets her out of the house and walking her neighborhood a couple times a day.

Mom hosts our weekly Bible study on Thursday mornings. Our main source of study is to read, re-read, discuss and edit all of the articles submitted for publication as an issue of *Seed & Bread* or an article to be published in the Bulletin. Fact checking, looking up verses, and going over old writings of Otis Q. Sellers that may touch on the same subject keep us motivated, intrigued, and inspired. The knowledge, abilities, insight, and forward thinking of the writers who submit articles to The Word of Truth Ministry is an inspiration.

And now, also because some of you have asked, some news about me! On Thursday, October 24, I left my mom's home in the early afternoon after Bible study. I live about 35 miles away in the northern part of L.A. County. A mountain range, the Angeles National Forest, stands between my mom's house and mine and the freeway takes me along a pass to get over the mountain to my home in Canyon Country. I was only a few miles from mom's home when I could see smoke rising from

my side of the mountain. About five minutes later my wife called; my home was under evacuation orders. (For those of you who follow our California fires, this one was called the "Tick Fire.")

Having lived in fire zones my entire life and as a retired first responder, I knew the drill. What is normally a 45-minute drive home turned into a 1 ½ hour commute. The freeway was shut down and the side streets were jammed. I got to my neighborhood and had to show identification to the Sheriff's Deputies to be allowed in to pack up and evacuate. My wife is extremely self-sufficient and levelheaded under stress. She had all our necessary items packed and was waiting for me to arrive with my truck. (Much like my mom, Kathie drives a two-door convertible sports car. It doesn't hold a lot, especially since we have two dogs, a bird, and a turtle to evacuate too.) Sadly, this wasn't a first for us. In the 34 years I have lived in my home, we have had to evacuate twice before.

Relieved that Kathie had taken care of everything, I then realized I had an additional responsibility: The Word of Truth Ministry which I had moved into my home. The Ministry had to evacuate too. I looked around my office to determine what was mandatory and what was irreplaceable. I had never thought of this, and I had always prided myself on being emergency prepared.

I believe I have an original copy of everything O.Q.S. has ever published, irreplaceable. The Bible that my grandpa gave to my grandma on Christmas 1926, irreplaceable. The original Articles of Incorporation for the Ministry from 1963, Government documents, and legal papers, irreplaceable. And the laptop computer! All fit in two boxes which I placed in the back of my truck.

The fire got within about 100 yards of my home. A water dropping Fire Department helicopter and two fire crews took care of it though. My home was spared. The Ministry stayed in boxes for about five days. I like to believe that God's grace was with me that day. But, since God works in silence, I won't find out until The Kingdom.

The Miracle Working God

By Andrew Brown

When we look around society, it is easy to note many people's conclusions that "God is dead," imaginary, or irrelevant. They do not see proof, therefore determine God is nonexistent. Others assert quite the opposite: that the same manifest miracles of Acts occur today based on "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8 NASB throughout). These conclude since Christ is the same, He must act the same. This generalizing explanation does not consider all the facts. God **does** change the way He deals with mankind. God flooded the globe in Genesis 6 but said He would never do that again. There is no doubt, God is doing far fewer miracles than He performed in the past.

We ask with Gideon's applicable honesty: "*Where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about?*" (Judges 6:13). Our society is asking similar questions and not seeing acts of God that match those He performed in Bible accounts. They conclude God is a myth, and the stories of the Bible are legends or lies. Many abandon God due to His apparent inactivity.

Some believers try to find evidence that the works of Acts have continued. The events they cite as miracles today do not compare with those of Acts. Are God's miracles limited to third world countries in distant lands far away? Location and status did not matter with Paul: "*God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out*" (Acts 19:11, 12). **Everyone** who encountered these objects were healed.

Faith was not always a requirement for a miracle as was the case with many who received healing from Jesus. "*Many followed Him, and He healed them all*" (Matt. 12:15). God was clearly and undoubtedly working before everyone's eyes. The unbelieving Pharisees proclaimed in private council: "*This man is performing many signs*" (John 11:47). When God works manifestly it is evident to more than a select few who seek it.

Are the stories of the Bible true? Or did something drastically change since then? One must investigate the Word for answers and not presume to speak for God. "*Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets*" (Amos 3:7). God must have left answers in His Word for today. Let no one seek a cheap excuse to close the tab of belief in God. One needs to be established in the present truth. Like the men of Issachar who were "*men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do*" (1 Chron. 12:32), we must honestly assess the scene we find

before us. What times do we live in?

When Jesus healed the man born blind, He mentioned a night period: "*We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work*" (John 9:4). In this context, the implication would be there is a "night" time coming where no manifest miracles of healing occur.

The gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were abundant with miracles. But when the chronology of the books of the Bible is methodically analyzed along with the events, a change emerges. It is of great significance that one of the greatest miracle workers of all time, the one whom God worked extraordinary miracles through when regular miracles were commonplace, is NOT recorded performing any miracles in later letters. In fact, evidence shows Paul COULD NOT heal. This was unprecedented in the history of Acts!

Paul could only pray for the healing of Epaphroditus. "*For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow*" (Phil. 2:27). Paul was struggling a great deal with the fact he had lost his ability to heal this fellow soldier for Christ. God did heal Epaphroditus, but not through the mediator Paul. God's part was not obvious. After this, Paul told Timothy to, "*no longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments*" (1 Tim. 5:23). Why not send a handkerchief rather than recommend a medicinal cure? Did Paul not have the means to heal at his disposal anymore? In his last words, Paul confesses he left Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20).

If you examine the numerous, obvious miracles during Acts and then that they dramatically stopped afterwards, you will see this has drastic implications. This is the reason God commands testing the things that carry through (Phil. 1:10). This exact phrasing might not appear in most translations, but it is the meaning behind the Greek word *diaphero* (*dia*= through, (like diameter) and *phero*= carry). Everything needed to be tested to see if it carried through from Acts. This is the beginning of the Bible's answer to the question of manifest miracles.

God exists and the stories of the Bible are true. There is a case with evidence as to why His miraculous works appear to have vanished. This does not mean God does not heal today. Let us pursue greater understanding of God's current works and ways.

Teaching the Nations

By Nathan C. Johnson

Forty-one times in the gospels Jesus Christ is called "Teacher," Greek *didaskalos*. The Lord acted throughout His ministry as a Teacher of His disciples, the crowds, and even the religious leaders who would listen. Yet the Lord's teaching career did not end with His ministry. It will continue in the coming Kingdom of God. Micah 4:2 (NKJV throughout) tells us that the nations will look to the Lord to teach them. *Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

How is it that a NATION seeks teaching? This can only be when its leaders seek it. Today many argue about just what governmental system is the best and just which method of governing will bring the most happiness to the most people. Some claim one form of government and some another, but it seems sadly clear in many cases that what those in government truly desire is their own wealth and power and not the good of the people they represent. But in Micah 4:2 we see leaders turning from their own failed ideas and methods of governing and turning to the Lord to teach them His ways and His methods of governing. They realize that to go to the Lord for such instruction means going to Jerusalem.

What happens to these national leaders when they get to Jerusalem? Psalm 48:2-6 gives us an idea. After telling us of Jerusalem in verse 2, *Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King*, the passage goes on to tell us of the kings of the earth arriving there. *4 For behold, the kings assembled, They passed by together. 5 They saw it, and so they marveled; They were troubled, they hastened away. 6 Fear took hold of them there, And pain, as of a woman in birth pangs.* I believe this tells us that when the eager kings of Micah 4:2 finally arrive at Jerusalem they are so in awe of seeing the "city of the great King" that they are filled with fear and hurry on their way (not away, as the translation seems to suggest). They almost cannot bring themselves to look at the city of God since it is such an awe-inspiring sight.

Yet what awaits these men when they arrive at Jerusalem? Just who shall be their teachers? We gain insight from the Lord Jesus' command to His disciples after His resurrection in Matthew 28:19-20, *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.

The making of disciples involves teaching, but just how does one disciple a nation? Again this can only be done by discipling its leaders. The Lord's disciples never actually did this to nations in the past. Yet these disciples, resurrected and having taken their places in God's Kingdom, will be present in order to teach these kings and national leaders at that time. When they have passed the course and are deemed ready to go back and govern their countries God's way, these nations are then "baptized" or identified in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, indicating that their nation is now a part of God's government.

What will be the response of all these leaders to what they find at Jerusalem? We find in Psalm 48:8 that they are not disappointed. *As we have heard, So we have seen In the city of the LORD of hosts, In the city of our God: God will establish it forever. Selah* Like the Queen of Sheba in Solomon's days, these nations are not disappointed in what they find at Jerusalem. They came expecting to find God's city and they found what they had expected to find. In no way will Jerusalem be a disappointment to them or any less than proclaimed. It will be just as they had heard back in their own countries.

As these leaders prepare to head back home, they are challenged to observe Jerusalem as much as they wish. In Psalm 48:12-13 they are told, *Walk about Zion, And go all around her. Count her towers; Mark well her bulwarks; Consider her palaces; That you may tell it to the generation following.* Nothing is hidden from these kings, no back alleys that God does not want them to see. They are invited to walk around His city and consider it from every angle, that they might tell their children in time to come just how great it was when they saw it.

As these leaders make their various ways back to their home countries, the words of Micah 4:2 will be fulfilled that the law will go forth out of Zion and the Lord's Word from Jerusalem. The results will be an earth like we have never seen before. As Psalm 85:10 describes it, *mercy and truth will meet and righteousness and peace will kiss.*

Why does God stoop to straighten out this poor, troubled earth on which we live? It is not because of the goodness of the nations that He teaches these rulers His ways. As Psalm 25:8 says, *Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.* It is because of His Own goodness that He teaches the world the lessons of His government. It is a lesson this planet sorely needs.

A PIECE OF HIS PEACE

By Candy Davis

We all desire peace in our lives in one form or another. We vow, "I will have peace..... when. When I move away from these annoying neighbors. When my health improves. When I get a better job. A better car. When my VISA is paid off. When I take a vacation. When the kids are grown."

Yet experience proves otherwise. Just when one stressful circumstance is taken care of, look out because here it comes— speeding around the next corner— another truck full of trouble, ready to dump its contents in our laps. Face it. If we depend on circumstances for our peace, we might as well forget it.

WHERE DO WE FIND PEACE?

If peace cannot be found in circumstances, then where? The Lord tells us. *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27)."* This may not be the answer we expected, for we are not told where to find peace, but Whose peace we are to seek. It is His peace. The peace of God (Phil 4:7; Col. 3:15). Peace is not something we conjure up on our own, using methods found in the world: medications, meditations, exercises, retreats, pursuits of wealth and fame, you name it. No. Peace is something possessed by the Lord alone. To have peace, we must acquire a piece of His.

PEACE WITH GOD

First things first. We cannot have the peace of God until we have peace *with* God, so first must come salvation. *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1)."* The Greek word for peace here is *eirene*. Its meaning reaches beyond just a feeling of tranquility, or the absence of conflict or fear. Peace here means to be joined in true union with God, and is made possible by Christ's blood shed on our behalf.

THE PEACE OF GOD

By virtue of being joined in true union with God, we have access to His peace. The way we appropriate this peace is found in Colossians 3. At salvation we are called (positioned) in the body (substance, essence) of Christ (Col. 3:15). Now we can partake of all His substance, of all that He is— like a baby in the womb drawing sustenance from his mother—so that we may

grow to become like Him in measure. We partake of Christ by letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col 3:16). As "dwell" indicates, the Word of Christ should inhabit our hearts. It should move into our hearts, setting up housekeeping as a permanent resident, not just an occasional visitor. To this end, we must endeavor to spend serious time and energy in the Word: reading it, studying it (2 Tim. 2:15 KJV), memorizing it, listening to it, allowing our thoughts to conform to it (Phil 4:8; Rom. 12:2). In this way we come to know Christ and build a relationship with Him. Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is a product of the relationship we build with the Lord through knowledge of Him in His Word (Eph 1:17; Col 1:10).

God never promises exemption from trouble. To the contrary, He declares that in this life we will have tribulation, but that in Him we may have peace (John 16:33). It is this peace—His peace—we draw upon when the inevitable truck full of trouble heads our way. At these times we can count on certain truths that we have built up in our hearts: don't lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, because our inward man is being renewed day by day (2 Cor 4:16); our present trouble is seen by God as a light affliction, which lasts only for a moment but is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17); His grace is sufficient in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9-10); He strengthens us in our inner man (Eph. 3:16); we can be content no matter the circumstances (Phil 4:11-13). When we think on these things in faith (Phil. 4:11) we have His peace.

We need not fall victim to troublesome circumstances, for God makes this promise: *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts [emotions] and minds through Christ Jesus...The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you (Phil. 4:6-7, 9)."*

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