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Looking Ahead

How do we adequately prepare for what's ahead – either the immediate future or the long-term horizon view? It is without doubt that those who have a Biblically-based broad-brushstroke narrative and trajectory of “certain hope” focused on Jesus are in a good place to pioneer whatever lies ahead.

We believe that we're created in God's image and likeness. We believe that life, therefore, has meaning and purpose. In other words, that suffering also has some kind of larger, transcendent context. We identify as God's offspring - His children. We cherish that we're loved so much, and often marvel that such a great price has been paid for our redemption (in Jesus). We hold dear that Jesus is coming again, in glory, might and power. And from the scriptures, we also become cognizant that His coming will be preceded by a time “that has never happened before nor will ever happen again”.

We can easily become immersed, for example, in the descriptive narrative throughout Matthew 24 and Luke 21, as well as ponder the rich imagery throughout Revelation, each contributing to a broad brushstroke array of the events at the end of this age and the heralding of the new.

The Lord has revealed just enough for us to know and all that we need for today. Of course, none of us particularly relish facing what appear to be increasingly difficult times. Here we're comforted by Jesus words:

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous.”

“In this world you will have tribulation,” says Jesus, “but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.”

The notion of suffering for Christ begins with Jesus' teachings and proceeds throughout the apostolic letters. The question, of course, is how are we ever going to adequately negotiate these times – given that the past 70 or so years in the West at least since World War 2 have been relatively peaceful, abundantly prosperous, full of opportunity, with generally good health services, a stable economy, and parliaments that still affirm the Bible before each session? Many have become complacent, beguiled by ungodly ideologies. Our society that grew from its Judaic-Christian roots is now in the throes of accelerated, declining change.

When Jesus said, “As in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man,” he referred to a previous age known by its extreme violence,

sexual depravity and social malevolence. Thus, “the Days of Noah” are also synonymous with a great “reset”.

God thus simply flushed away all the wickedness, and through this baptism of water, started again. And, at the brightness of Jesus’ coming, begins another “GREAT RESET”: Return, Reset, Resurrection followed by an age of Righteousness. But all this is preceded by “birth pains”.

So, here’s the question: How are you and I (or our children and grandchildren) ever going to be adequately prepared to face all this yet “unwritten” but certain interim future?



The good news is, that as we abide in Christ and His words are intrinsic to our narrative, our future trajectory is not uncertain. We are victors in Christ!

How does this happen? God prepares and equips us over many years and through all kinds of circumstances, like He has done throughout history. For example, Joseph was prepared through unjust and arduous suffering before he attained the pinnacle of leadership in Egypt. Imagine languishing in prison for many years at the behest of a lying, promiscuous woman!

Likewise, Moses was prepared for his life’s calling, first in the courts of Pharaoh, then in the

wilderness for decades, before his life’s mission and purpose became apparent

David the unknown shepherd boy had his first fights with a lion and then a bear, before embracing a calling to leadership, replete with ensuing battles and many epic struggles.

Jesus equipped and mentored his closest followers for over three years to take on the biggest job of all – in the midst of Roman cruelty and oppression. It’s terrifying to contemplate how many crucifixions those disciples may have witnessed before they saw Jesus go that same fate?

God equips us all before he allows us to step into “future history”. Jesus so many times exhibited a stunningly accurate foretelling of the immediate as well as long-term future. He said to Peter with unwavering confidence: “Satan has asked for you. But I have prayed for you and *when* you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

When Jesus called his disciples, he said, “*I will make you...*” There were no shortcuts to what Jesus had in mind. God knows who we’re becoming, and we need to trust His handiwork. It is the Lord’s work and all is of His making. Gold and silver are refined by fire; Jesus is building His church, and he’s not using sticks and straw. Our part is to remain available and faithful – looking indeed to a future that is gloriously brighter than we may dimly envisage today.

Written by Pastor John Klassek

Editor’s note: The photo on the front page is the Spencers Brook Road, near John’s home.



Maintaining Spiritual Health

Five Part Devotional

Keeping physically fit has its rewards: energy, reduced vulnerability to sickness and accident, better maneuverability, enhanced relationships, raised spirits, and sound sleep. Better health improves almost everything else.

Similarly, godly living is enhanced by wholesome spiritual activity. It establishes a relationship with God and assures we are part of eternity. It increases our appetite for what is good and gives eternal purpose to our existence. It makes and keeps us ready. All effort put into spiritual fitness is enhancing; nothing is wasted. Let the wise get started and keep active!

**Please send for the free
booklet**

FASTING – FOR PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Who hasn't had a computer malfunction or failure? And did we really care about the why? We just wanted it fixed – ideally by the computer itself. So, when shaking the mouse and pressing a few random keys doesn't work it's time for some maintenance: from deleting a few redundant files and rebooting the system through to the erasure and reinstallation of the original operating system and software, which gets rid of the corrupted and reinstates the essential.

Likewise, for optimal health our bodies need regular maintenance. And the good news is that the body, having been designed and programmed by God, knows what it needs.

Keep in mind that it is your body, it is your life, and it is up to you. Don't delegate that responsibility to an industry that treats the symptoms of disease but ignores the origin of disease. First remove the cause then the effects of disease will cease.



Our immune system holds the key. If sufficiently strengthened and boosted by natural means, it can resist or surmount an attack by any natural biological organism. Other deadly organisms exist today which are not natural in origin but have been bioengineered in laboratories. These pathogens were intentionally designed to circumvent and cripple the body's immune system. However, with special consideration even these **can be defeated**.

At the heart of our immune system is the appendix¹, closely followed by the digestive system. Until recently, on the basis that 'we don't know what it does', the appendix was thought to be a useless organ. (1 Corinthians 1:20).

FASTING – Activating the immune system.

Short fasts are good for general maintenance of the body and in preventing the onset of disease. Long fasts, three days and longer, are for disease management and in building up the immune system whereby diseased cells, bad bacteria and accumulated toxic waste are eliminated. This natural intervention not only protects the immune system against damage "but also induces immune system regeneration, shifting stem cells from a dormant state to a state of self-renewal" by means of prolonged fasting. In 20 hours stem cells can get regenerated while **fasting for three days can regenerate the entire immune system**.

Prolonged fasting reduces the enzymes IGF-1/PKA to promote hematopoietic stem cell-based regeneration while also reversing immune suppression.² PKA is the key gene that needs to turn off before stem

cells can switch into their regenerative mode. They give the go ahead for stem cells to proliferate and rebuild the entire system while Hematopoiesis is the process by which blood cellular components are formed. It is a unique process that creates all of the different mature blood cell

types³ and tissues.

When you fast your body conserves energy and is quite specific in what it uses for fuel. It breaks down stores of glucose, fat and ketones then diseased tissue. My personal experience with long fasts is that after three days the body accepts that you are not going to eat. It then switches off the trigger which tells the brain you are hunger. This is like when you are sick and the digestion process is switched off to enable the body to concentrate all its energy into fighting the illness.

Just like in the example of our failed computer, prolonged fasting gets rid of the damaged, old and diseased cells. The original operating system and software are reinstalled as in stem cells and a new immune system.

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The best Bible verse never heard.

Most of us have a favorite verse of Scripture and, if asked, could tell why we like that text a lot. Could we also explain how the verses just before and after our favorite impact and help unpack its full meaning?

Without revealing its location yet, I'll tell you my favorite verse for today and walk you through an exercise to help us "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18, another favorite). Here's my never-heard best verse, in New King James English:

... that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him

How do you feel? Did you get a spiritual buzz from reading my favorite? Maybe not. Now read it again, if you will, and out loud if you can. If you know where this verse is in the Bible

(without looking), you're one in a hundred. If you never heard it before, or don't recall hearing it, you're not alone.

'Tens' sections

Did you notice how the verse is divided into three parts of ten words each, plus a two-word ending? Look at it again, count, and think hard about what you just read and heard.

The first ten words link this verse with the previous verse in the text. They continue its thought by telling us *when* God the Father will finally complete His perfect will, His good pleasure, His self-purpose — things He has already made known and begun, as the previous verse says. And when will His perfect will, good pleasure, and self-purpose finally be completed? My favorite verse promises it will happen *in the fullness of time*.

When will that be? The urgent thing now is not to calculate a time in the future when God will declare time to be full. Rather, it's to focus on grasping the core truth of today's verse — its middle clause (read it aloud): "He

might gather together in one all things in Christ"!

Those ten words reveal the essential content of God's perfect will, good pleasure, and self-purpose (of the previous verse), which He will accomplish when time is full. Those ten words are at the heart not only of our verse but also of the Christian gospel. They are good news for a broken world. Good news indeed!

Our verse's third ten-word segment amplifies the "all things" of its main middle section. Check it out, above. And its final two words — *in Him* — reaffirm the main section's 9th and 10th words on *how* this ultimate unification of all things will be achieved: *in Christ*. Got it?

Meaning

Time to review: Read our best-verse-never-heard aloud again (below), emphasizing the middle ten words in italics. Then we'll tell its location:

... that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times *He might gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him (Ephesians 1:10, emphasis added).

What does this remarkable verse by Paul early in Ephesians mean? Think about it before reading the next sentence.

In the context of this epistle and the new covenant, our verse speaks in far-reaching terms about *God's* plan to *reconcile* all persons who are separated from others and alienated from Him by their sin, to *renew* all pieces of the natural order that are polluted and

dying because of our sin, and to do all this by and for His Son, Jesus Christ.

This separation and corruption among people and things are not described in our verse or its near context. Naming a few examples will help make it clear. Jews vs Gentiles, male vs. female, and slave vs. free are among the splits in Scripture. Think also of nation vs. nation, rich vs. poor, white vs. black, and other social, ethnic, gender, religious, and political schisms — the realities of our human condition.

Changed by God's love

What a divided and damaged world we inhabit! Our diversity is not the big problem, but our selfish heart hatred for people unlike us will ultimately divide and destroy us all, if not checked.

The Christian gospel announces that our selfishness and heart hatred *can be* checked — forgiven and transformed by God's love in and through Jesus. As we confess our sin and turn to Christ in faith and fellowship through the written Word and Holy Spirit, love, acceptance, and forgiveness for

others kicks in. Put Him to the test today, and watch reconciliation go to work big time!

Help change today's best verse from *never* heard to *ever* heard. In a hateful and hostile world, people need the marvelous message of reconciliation with God, others, and nature — *now!* And they need the amazing assurance that universal peace will surely come when, in the fullness of time, all things on earth and in heaven will be *reconciled*, gathered together in one body, even in Christ.

We bless the Lord for the spiritual reconciliation we have found in Jesus. In gratitude for our peace with God, we practice life with others now as if the final reunion of all people and things in perfect harmony were a reality. In our hearts and prayers, it already is!

Written by Calvin Burrell

Calvin Burrell is former editor of the Bible Advocate and former director of GC Missions. He retired in 2015 and lives with his wife, Barb in Stayton, Oregon USA. They attend the Marion Oregon church.

Wow!

Not just verse 10, we commend the whole of Ephesians 1 as the Greatest Bible Chapter Never Read. As you read and study the long "Blessed be God" passage (vv. 3-14), underline each gospel truth and bless the Father for it. Note how all the riches of God's grace are *in Christ*, in Him, to the praise of His glory. In the chapter's second half (vv. 15-23), Paul prays that we have clear views of the "exceeding greatness of His mighty power toward us who believe" (vv. 18, 19). The same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead now works His reconciliation (see also Ephesians 2:14-18) through us, and will eventually restore all the divided and decaying pieces of creation into a perfectly reunited whole.

How do you say "Wow!" in your language?

Calvin Burrell

Continued from page three

The period of fasting will differ depending on whether you are currently suffering from a disease and if so, its severity and length. A good starting point though is to start before that happens. Making fasting a regular habit will ensure that your body achieves optimal health.

Written by Richard Todd

Reference notes

1. The appendix produces all the good bacteria essential to feed the digestive tract where nutrients and minerals broken down by the stomach are absorbed into the body.
2. University of Southern California. Cell stem 2014 June 5 14(6) 810-823.
3. Red blood cells (oxygen carrying cells), Lymphocytes (key to the adaptive immunity – T cells, natural killer cells etc) and cells of the myeloid lineage (innate immunity and blood clotting).



Seeking The Holy Spirit's Guidance

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, " Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. Acts 13:2-3

Return To God With Repentance

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, " Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." Joel 2:12



God's Blessings in Nature

While gazing at the snow covered mountains,
It is then I begin to know,
That standing in their splendor,
They reflect a reverent glow.

Then glancing further upward,
Toward the sky graced with blue,
There's no doubt in my mind,
God created this heavenly hue.

Looking down upon earth,
With a view so grand to behold,
All of nature's beauty
Is a story being told.

The trees, flowers, mountains and hills
Are all taking a stand,
Calling to mind that all of God's bounty,
Is created by His blessed Hand.

Teresa C. Hawes

ANSWERS
1. Christ 2. Love 3. Parables 4. Matthew 5. Mark

Youth Corner

Your Security in Christ

In our life there are times when you feel alone, insecure or inadequate. Maybe you feel that you do not fit in with others, so you decline to participate when events or other occasions arise. You are not alone in these situations. We have all felt that way at sometime in our lives!

It is important to remind yourself when you feel that way, you have security through the promises of God's Word. It will bring the security your heart needs to stand firm and be confident in whom you are in Christ.

Here are Bible verses to remind you of your security in Christ.

(Please fill in the blanks)

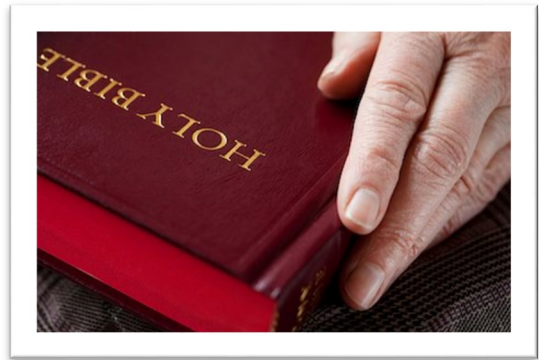
I have the LORD always me; Because He is at my hand I shall be moved. Psalm 16:8

Because you have the LORD, who is my, Even the High, your dwelling place, 10 No evil shall you, Nor shall any come near your; 11 For He shall give His angels over you, To you in all your ways. 12 In their hands they shall you up. Psalm 91:9-12

This we have as an of the soul, both sure and, and which enters the Presence the veil. Hebrews 6:19

Let your be without covetousness; be with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will leave you nor you." Hebrews 13:5

All verses were taken from the New King James Version.



Whose example does Paul say Christians should follow in Chapter 5 of Ephesians?

.....

According to Paul’s formulation in 1 Corinthians, which is the greatest of the imperishable qualities?

.....

According to the Gospels, what is the unique literary genre Jesus employs to preach his message?

.....

Which gospel records the fewest of the miracles performed by Jesus?

.....

In which Gospel did Jesus say and quote: “Everything is possible for one who believes.”?

.....

The Origin and Change of the Sabbath

Do you know how the change in the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday came about?

Do you know when this change occurred?

This booklet demonstrates that the Sabbath heritage originated at Creation, that the seventh-day Sabbath can be identified throughout various periods of human history, and that the Sabbath has never lost its identity or purpose as a day of rest and worship.

Please send for the free booklet.

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