

BULLETIN

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY
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Updates from Rusty Hancock

Moving the Ministry Forward

Our **headquarters in Pasadena** will be **officially closed at the end of April**. It has been our home for the past 15 years and holds many fond memories. It served three main functions: a meeting place for the L.A. area Bible study, an office for me to handle the administrative duties of the Ministry, and a mail center and storage area for leaflets, booklets, and books.

There is little demand for old printed copies of **Seed & Bread** and other publications because we have made virtually every publication available, for free, on the Internet at our website, **www.seedandbread.org**.

As for an office, I took a page out of my grandfather's playbook: I moved it into my own home. As all three of my boys have grown and left the house, I found myself with an empty room looking for a purpose. Its purpose is now the main home of The Word of Truth Ministry.

Radio

With the expense we save by eliminating our lease in Pasadena, we now have finances available for other outlets to rightly divide and proclaim God's word. The Word of Truth Ministry is now sponsoring a weekly radio program "Knowing God in the Word," a half-hour Bible study by Nathan Johnson.

"Knowing God in the Word" airs in the Milwaukee area on JOY 1340AM, Wednesday afternoons at 2:30 Central time. Anyone, anywhere, can listen via the Internet to a live stream on JOY's website, **<http://joy1340.com>**. I listen from my home computer in Southern California.

Starting April 4, "Knowing God in the Word" will be broadcast in the Des Moines area on Praise Radio, Praise 940AM, Saturday mornings at 8:30 Central time (**<http://praise940.com>**). We look to expand and reach even larger markets.

Board of Directors

With the passing last year of our beloved friend, David Hetteema, a vacancy has existed on the Board. There was also a need to expand, as Nathan Johnson's work "Knowing God in the Word" is becoming a subsidiary of The Word of Truth Ministry.

The new Board now consists of Jane Sellers Hancock as the Executive Director. Robert Hammond and Nathan Johnson remain as Board members. I would like everyone to welcome Louis Tonetti and Robert Juneau as Board members.

Milton Hammond volunteered to step aside as a Board member to allow the entrance of Louis Tonetti and Robert Juneau. Milt is not going anywhere though; he will still be very active with the Ministry through his teaching, writing, and study. Milt's knowledge and love of God's truth is unparalleled. He and David Hetteema have been my primary Bible teachers for the past 22 years. For that I am eternally grateful.

Conference

We will be hosting a Bible Conference in Milwaukee on September 12 and 13 at the **Holiday Inn Express Milwaukee Airport**. The theme: **What Is Man; What Is His Destiny?** I hope you can attend. I would be honored to meet and study with you around the pages of God's book. My mother (Jane Hancock) and I will be arriving in Milwaukee (WI) on Friday, September 11, and staying until Monday, September 14. Rooms at the Holiday Inn Express will be \$79 per night.

Evenings will be open for fellowship during dinner and afterwards for additional Bible discussions, a look into the future of the Ministry, or the telling of stories from past Conferences with OQS. (Yes, I love old stories about my grandparents.)

Internet

Another outlet to reach new believers is the Internet. We are looking to improve and expand our website. We are in the process of adding additional written teachings by other Bible teachers who studied with Otis Q. Sellers. All of these are made available for free on the Internet.

Steps are also being taken to have additional audio Bible lessons placed on the site. These are primarily past Sunday morning Bible classes taught by David Hetteema and Milton Hammond.

Please visit our website at **www.seedandbread.org**. Also view Nathan Johnson's radio program website at **www.knowinggodintheword.org**.



THE REDEEMED'S RESCUE

By Andrew Brown

Entertainment often captures our attention with a HERO who defies chance, breaks fortresses, and rescues the helpless. Those heroes are only feeble representations of what Christ has done for His redeemed. The Lord performed the greatest act of rescue by laying down His life for His would-be redeemed EVEN WHEN we were objects of wrath. *“For while we were still enemies of Christ, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8, NASB throughout unless otherwise noted)*. Having then drawn us to Himself, He romanced and exalted us. Let us talk about the Hero of Heroes.

At the darkest moment in history, broad daylight rightfully experienced a miracle of darkness. Mankind had never stooped so low as when crucifying the Author of Life. For no sin of His own, the Hero hung dead on a cross, but in a glorious reversal, God accepted His sacrifice. Death could not hold Christ down, the tomb's stone was rolled away, and the burial site lay empty. The Lord had risen from the dead! *"I am...the living One: and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore"* (Rev. 1:18).

This heroic, awful, amazing sacrifice on the cross reversed it all for us. We were captives of sin doomed to death yet Christ led captive a host of captives making them living slaves of righteousness. All those who are identified with the Messiah were on that cross. *"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death"* (Rom. 6:3). There is no water in this baptism. This baptism is of a life once marred by sin irrevocably linked to Christ so that when Christ died so did this life and as Christ is alive forevermore so one lives. *By His wounds we are healed* (Isa. 53:5). Revel in this life-giving truth.

Our mentality should parallel what we could suppose Isaac's outlook to have been after Abraham's offering of him. *"Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son"* (Gen. 22:9-10). Lying on the altar, the knife poised to end his life, Isaac was fully aware that death was imminent. God stopped Abraham, but Isaac must have been changed. Could he look at life the same way? This captive dead man was allowed to live. Our rescued life also has great purpose. God not only rescued us from death and captivity to sin, but like Isaac, God has exalted us to be His sons (representatives)! We need to remember who we WERE as well as who we are NOW.

After Paul reveals all the amazing benefits for those who are being and believing in Christ Jesus in Ephesians 1, he brings back his audience to our everyday struggles in chapter 2. *"Even you, being dead to your offenses and sins"* (Eph. 2:1 TRV). We are no longer sinners dead IN sins, we are redeemed and those sins are dead TO (dative case in Greek) us. They are not our masters. Unfortunately, although believers are dead TO sin, they still participate in the deeds of darkness. *"In which, you, at some time or other walk according to the eon of this world, according to the ruler who is the authority of this atmosphere, the spirit now operating in the sons of disobedience"* (Eph. 2:2 TRV). The whole system and flow we live in is contrary to God. A flood of wickedness, a river, pulls forcibly toward sin. As we dwell among evildoers waxing worse and worse, we are all affected negatively. At some point we get carried away in Satan's flowing current and participate in the same deeds as children of wrath. *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loves us, we also being dead to the offenses, makes us alive together in Christ Jesus, in grace are you saved"* (Eph. 2:4, 5 TRV). Although we were rescued from sin and death, Christ also continues to rescue us from our daily struggles. Even the toughest of swimmers will get worn down in Satan's strong current. Christ rescues us even *after salvation*. Christ has not left us to fight Satan alone; He stands ready to save with a lifejacket. Let the believer stand firm with the strength our Savior provides. *"The Lord is near"* (Phil. 4:5) willing to help in our time of need.

The life of the Redeemed is not perfection and sinlessness. *"The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day"* (Prov. 4:18). The believer should be on an upward path in reflecting Christ. Christ acts in grace toward us as we

are being sanctified. This is why we can be actively terminating our own sinful aspects as Colossians 3:5 teaches. *“For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).*

Jesus, the Hero of Heroes, continually rescues and restores us even when we fall short as believers. *“Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me” (Mic. 7:8).* We should press into the Lord for help in our attempt to live up to the perfection that He has imputed to us, being certain to procure the lifejacket that He offers. At any time while we are being caught away, He is mighty to save us. What an awesome, loving God we serve! What motivation to live a worthy walk! *“For there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).* We can stand and praise our Hero for rescuing us in the past, in the present, and in the future.



JUDGING BEFORE THE TIME

By Nathan C. Johnson

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23; New King James Version throughout unless otherwise noted).

This is the straightforward teaching of Scripture regarding the ultimate destiny of man. It is not, as many insist, the difference between spending eternal life either in heaven or hell, but instead the difference between life itself and death. The wages (payment or natural outcome) of sin is death, the eventual lot of all, as Hebrews 9:27 declares: *It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.* In judgment, some will receive God’s gift of life.

How is the gift of eternal (eonian) life received? It is given by God to those whom He judges worthy to live in the eon of His glorious government on earth. *I charge you therefore before God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall make a determination concerning the living and the dead at His blazing forth, even His kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1, The Resultant Version).* We can receive this gift through faith, which in our dispensation must be in the record God has given of His Son.

What of those who are judged unworthy of life in that great eon? They must remain in death, only to be removed from it to be judged at the final resurrection. *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books (Rev. 20:12).* The Hebrew phrase “small and great” means “every last one of them.” (See Genesis 19:11 and 1 Samuel 5:9.) Every last one of the dead not raised previously are raised and then judged or set in order, which might mean punishment, blessing, or a combination of the two. They are judged by means of two books: one in which their works are written, and the Book of Life.

The Book of Life is the crucial element: *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).* Thus those whose names are written there will not be cast into the lake of fire. *He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Rev. 3:5).* The lake of fire is not, as is traditionally supposed, a means of

eternal conscious torment, but is rather the final enactment of the wages of sin (death) upon those who have been resurrected. *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death (Rev. 20:14).*

How does one's name get into the Book of Life? The Bible does not tell us how, but does speak of a name being blotted out. In Revelation 3:5, Christ promises not to blot the names of the over-comers out of the Book of Life. If we may assume that the same One Who can blot out of the Book of Life can also write a name there in the first place, we conclude that the names in the Book of Life are written there by God Himself: *But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 21:27).* If it is the Lamb's (Christ's) book, it follows that He is the One Who both writes and blots out names from It.

How does the Book of Life interact with the books which contain a record of the works of every man raised during the resurrection of the dead? The works of those relegated to the lake of fire can only justify their assignment to this final punishment. Yet some of those raised in the final resurrection must have their names in the Book of Life, or why even consult it at all? This judgment is not a show trial having nothing to do with the final fate of those involved in it. The books must be meant to set in order, either to blessing or punishment, those whose names are written in the Book of Life. The possibility of the second death being removed, they are then set in order based on their works.

It seems to me that many are eager to prejudge as many people as possible into the second death. 1 Corinthians 4:5 says, *Therefore judge nothing before the time.* This is advice we should heed. David once said of his son whom God had condemned to death, *I said, "Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?" (2 Sam. 12:22).* In this case, the Lord was not gracious and the child did die, yet David's attitude was humble. He understood that it is unwise to ever count God's grace out of the equation. Yet this is exactly what many do regarding the final resurrection. "There will be no surprises at the judgment, for everyone whom He possibly can, the Lord will condemn to the second death," they insist. Yet is this not both judging before the time and counting out God's grace? We would be better off leaving this all in the hands of the One Who holds the Book of Life. We must hold out to men the glories of living in His future kingdom and warn them of judgment to come and the danger of experiencing the second death. But we should leave the actual assigning of people to that second death up to the Lord. After all, is there any specific case in which we cannot say, "Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious"? We will not know who is written in the Book of Life until it is opened. Let us judge nothing before the time.



A STUDY ON THE WORD 'SALVATION'

By Joanne L.H. Johnson

Our salvation in Christ is essential. And knowing the interpretation of the word "salvation" is equally important. In the *King James Version* of the Bible we will find and study five key mistranslations of the word "salvation," which in the Greek is *soterion*. Otis Q. Sellers

identified and translated those passages to see what they mean and we will go over them in detail.

First, we need some background on the word “salvation.” Sellers explained the meaning of “salvation” in **Seed & Bread** No. 8, *What Does Soterion Mean?* “. . . This word literally means *saving*, even as we would use it in speaking of ‘saving grace’ or ‘the saving work of Christ,’ and it is also clear that in four of the five occurrences in the New Testament is substantivized; that is, it is used as if it were a noun. Nevertheless, . . . it is an adjective, and there is one fixed rule about adjectives that cannot be altered; they never stand alone. If they seem to stand alone, as they do in the five passages cited . . . then the noun which they qualify must be found in the context. . . . The *King James Version* came very near to the true meaning of this word in Titus 2:11 where it was translated by using three words ‘that bringeth salvation,’ for the technical meaning of *soterion* is ‘salvation-bringing.’”

Here are the five mistranslations from the *KJV*:

- 1) Luke 2:30: “*For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation (saving power).*”
- 2) Luke 3:6: “*And all flesh shall see the salvation (saving work) of God.*”
- 3) Acts 28:28: “*Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*”
- 4) Eph. 6:17: “*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*”
- 5) Titus 2:11: “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.*”

Second, we show the analyses, translations and comments of Sellers of the five mistranslated verses mentioned above:

1) Used the word “Messiah”: “*For my eyes have seen Your salvation-bringing Messiah.*” Simeon was an aged man, who served in the temple, who had been promised by God before he died that he would see the long-awaited Savior, the Messiah.

2) Furnished the noun “glory”: “*And all flesh shall see the salvation-bringing glory of God.*” John the Baptist quoted this verse from the book of Isaiah.

3) Supplied a noun “message,” coming up with the more sensible phrase: “salvation-bringing message”: “*Let it then be known to you that the salvation-bringing message of God has been authorized (made freely available) to the nations and they will hear it.*” In **Seed & Bread** No. 8, Sellers noted that the great change that took place at Acts 28:28 was declared in the words “has been authorized to the nations.” He states: “In the words ‘they will hear it’ we have a pledge and guarantee from God made by His agent and spokesman, Paul. These words actually mean that it will get through to the nations for their benefit.”

4) Translated similar to the verse above, in **Seed & Bread** No. 63, *Ephesians - Chapter 6, The Resultant Version, True to the Greek and True to the Truth*: “*Also receive the helmet of the salvation-bringing message, even the sword of the Spirit which is God’s utterance.*”

5) Changed the words around. From Milton B. Hammond’s Bible notes: “*The salvation-bringing grace of God has intervened favorably on behalf of all mankind.*”

This word “salvation” is definitely needed for understanding our faith in God. We hunger for what salvation actually amounts to. In Ephesians 2:6 salvation is the result of grace and in that

grace God through the Holy Spirit gives us the faith to believe. When we receive that faith, salvation is in our hearts. The Word and the Spirit act in conjunction with God's love: *"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him"* (1 John 4:16, TRV).

The five verses we have examined, translated as shown, are tied together with the idea that the salvation-bringing message no longer comes from a priest in the synagogue or an apostle (a man appointed by God), but from the Bible itself. The Gospel of John is that "salvation-bringing message," and when you read it, the Spirit of God gives you the faith to believe the written Word of God. Scripture says that *"God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). The Bible is the source of that truth.

