

BULLETIN

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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2020 #3, OCTOBER

Updates from Rusty Hancock

On Thursday, September 17th Jane Sellers Hancock passed away. I wish there were a way to ease the impact of that statement, but there is not. Her glorious "breath of life" is gone. Jane now awaits the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Jane was the only child of Mildred and Otis Q. Sellers. A devoted student of God's word, she followed Otis' path from Baptist minister to independent Bible teacher (1936). The Sellers family endured the joys and hardships of traveling a lonely path in search of God's Truth. Jane has been interred at Forest Lawn Memorial Park – Hollywood Hills. The same cemetery where her parents rest.

My mother was married to Fred Hancock (deceased), and had five sons: Richard, Robert, Randy (deceased), Rusty, and Roger. She had seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. (Another is currently on the way.)

Her lifelong passion, and career, was education. Mom graduated from MacMurray College in Illinois and obtained her master's degree from the University of Southern California. She began teaching at the Victor Valley School District in the Mojave Desert of Southern California in the late 1940's. After marrying Fred, and giving birth to her first four sons, the family moved to Glendale, CA. There Jane taught for decades with the Glendale Unified School District, first at Toll Junior High and then at Hoover High School. She concluded her career at the University of California Los Angeles.

Her interests were many and varied. One of her favorite activities was the annual weekend retreat for writing students in the mountains of the Angeles National Forest. She would host other writing seminars throughout the year. Mom had her book club, her writing club, and her local garden club. She had season passes to the Hollywood Bowl, the Pasadena Playhouse Theater, and enjoyed attending live plays. For her most recent journey to see a play, she traveled with her son Robert to New York City to attend Hamilton on Broadway.

Mom enjoyed traveling. After the passing of her husband, she would travel with her sons and grandkids to South America, Asia, the South Pacific, and all throughout



Jane Sellers Hancock

the United States. One of her most ardent devotions was Los Angeles Dodger baseball. She had season tickets and would attend more than 25 games a year. Her sons would take her to spring training and away games throughout the country each year. One of her goals was to see the Dodgers play in every MLB stadium. Unfortunately, this goal was not achieved.

Always at her parents' side, Jane followed them to Southern California after graduating college. When Otis Sellers founded The Word of Truth Ministry in 1963, Jane was an original member of the Board of Directors. She held this position for 57 years, until her death. For about the past ten years, Jane was the Director of the Ministry. As an English teacher and writer, my mom's efforts and contributions can be felt in each and every issue of Seed & Bread. She read, analyzed, and edited every transcript submitted for publication as Seed & Bread. And she so loved the Bible students that would search out the truth. One of her greatest joys was our annual journey to the Midwest for the Word of Truth Conference. Mom loved the personal connection and fellowship.

I pray for the day that we will all be united in God's glorious Kingdom.

The Throne of God

By Andrew Brown

Do you know who you worship? Who is the supreme being over your life? Who sits on the throne when you picture heaven? Encountering that scene would change our lives. It did for Isaiah who *"saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple"* (Isa. 6:1 NASB throughout). The New Testament explains that Isaiah saw an exalted and glorified Jesus (John 12:41). Within the Bible this idea is repeated: *"The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven"* (Ps. 11:4). David spoke of the LORD (Heb: YHWH) on heaven's throne. *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever"* (Ps. 45:6). The sons of Korah called it God's (Heb: Elohim) throne. *"A throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne"* (Rev. 4:1). The inspired Word employs many names or titles representing Jesus as the central character.

John, the author of Revelation, also saw Jesus reigning: *"glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne"* (Rev. 4:9). Cherubim worshiped *"the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come"* (Rev. 4:8). Their attention, admiration and exaltation are directed to Jesus with Greek titles *Kurios* (Lord) and *Theos* (God). The twenty-four elders join the cherubim who *"fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created'"* (Rev. 4:10-11). Another declaration that Jesus created everything: *"All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being"* (John 1:3). Nothing exists that Jesus did not create, and He is worshiped as Almighty Creator. Jesus is the God (Heb. Elohim) of Genesis 1:1, as well as the LORD (Jehovah, Heb: YHWH) of Isaiah 44:24, which seizes our attention by declaring He created everything **alone**.

Make no mistake, the glorified Jesus is also the humble one: *"found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"* (Phil. 2:8). This Jesus set aside His glory **for a time** and walked the earth as one of us: yet more reason He is to be worshiped! *"At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth"* (Phil. 2:10). Jesus' appearance in Revelation is not like the humble one John walked the earth with; when exalted, Jesus **overwhelmed** John. *"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am*

alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades'" (Rev. 1:17-18). Jesus is the **FIRST** in importance and **LAST** in significance. Both phrases magnify Jesus. He died, but now lives. His sacrifice redeemed mankind. He holds life and death in His hands. He was the perfect Lamb (sacrifice), but also the Lion (reigning King). *"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me'"* (Isa. 44:6). These are descriptive titles, and each testifies of Jesus' deity. Scripture's repeated truth is there is only one God (*Elohim*); the LORD (YHWH) and Jesus are the same.

Many diminish Jesus due to misunderstanding. Jesus is the Son of God, meaning the representative of God (not God's little boy). But unlike other sons in Scripture, Jesus' representation is a complete identity: *"He who has seen [Jesus] has seen the Father"* (John 14:9). In other words: *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation"* (Col. 1:15). The invisible God has a visible representative Who fully expresses Himself. Jesus is God's Expression (Word). *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"* (John 1:1). This Word expresses God because He is the image of God. Jesus is the exact illustration of God. *"And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"* (Heb. 1:3-4). There is only one throne and Jesus is on it. "Right hand" (Gr: *dexios*) is symbolic for power and authority (rights). After humbling Himself to die on the cross He returned to full authority and power. **He is the centerpiece** of heaven (not next to Him).

The ark of the covenant embodies this picture. The earthly tabernacle/temple was *"a copy and shadow of the heavenly things"* so all things were made *"according to the pattern"* (Heb. 8:5). The ark modeled the heavenly reality. God's depiction contained the mercy seat (throne) with the four cherubim around it. **The ark is a metaphor (type) for Jesus Christ**. It was made of earthly wood but covered with gold, a great visual of God becoming a man and then being exalted to His glorified position on the throne. *"O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth"* (Isa. 37:16). Everything centers around the activity of Jesus. Jesus is to be known as He declared Himself to be and deserves His rightful spot in our minds and worship.

Grace Came Through Christ

By Nathan C. Johnson

In John 1:17, we read this glorious truth about our Lord: *“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”* (New King James Version throughout) We all recognize the fact that the law was given by God through the agency of His servant Moses. But this verse assures us that, equivalent to this, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. What does John mean by this profound statement?

First of all, we must recognize that God has always been gracious. In the beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned, God did not bring about their deaths right then, but allowed them to live long enough to have children and propagate the human race. Again, and again after this, God was gracious. Yet if we examine John 1:17 a bit further, we may find just what John meant. The words “grace” and “truth” are joined by the Greek word *kai*, which is translated “and.” Yet *kai* can also join two things that are in apposition or that are the same. In this case, I believe “truth” is defining the kind of grace meant. The meaning is “but the grace, even the true grace, came through Jesus Christ.”

Throughout the Old Testament, grace seemed somehow to be in opposition to justice. Our great God is a God of both grace and government, of both love and justice. Abraham said in Genesis 18:25, *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”* This was a very good question, and we must all answer, “Yes, yes, He will do right.” Yet God’s grace seems to contradict this. If Adam and Eve deserved to die for their sin, how could God in justice stay their sentence, in Adam’s case for over nine hundred years?

There are some cases in Scripture that seem even worse when it comes to justice. For example, God’s justice regarding murder is clear in Exodus 21:12. *“He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.”* The same penalty is true in the case of adultery in Leviticus 20:10. *“The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.”* In the light of these clear statements of justice, how could God, after rightfully charging David with adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, after David’s true confession, “I have sinned against the Lord,” possibly have replied to him, *“The LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die”* (II Samuel 12:13)?

How could the LORD just forgive David’s sin like this? After all, Uriah was still dead, and Bathsheba was still stolen from him and living in David’s household. Justice would seem to cry out against this. David, the murderer, must be

made to pay for his crimes. He and Bathsheba, the adulterers, must be made to pay for their treachery against the innocent and Godly man Uriah. The LORD’s words here seem to put to the lie Abraham’s claim, and prove that the Judge of all the earth did not do right in this case. Certainly Ahithophel, David’s counsellor, Bathsheba’s grandfather, and Uriah’s grandfather-in-law, might have thought so. He worked to the best of his ability to remove the murderer and adulterer from his throne. Was this traitor more just than God? To just people, God’s grace would seem to be greatly at fault in this case.

In David’s day, God’s will won out and Ahithophel and his confederates died. Yet the question of how a just God could forgive a man like David remained unanswered for a thousand years. Yet finally, in Jesus Christ, the answer to this puzzle was revealed. Romans 3:23-26 sets forth the answer to the conundrum. *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”*

Here at last, in Christ, God’s grace is justified. It does freely justify sinners, but it does not do so by injustice, but by Christ Jesus acting as a propitiation by His blood. God’s grace does not violate justice, but it transcends justice by the fact that the LORD Himself, the Judge of all the earth, descends from the judgment seat in order to take the place of the guilty sinner and pay his penalty to the full. David did not have to die for his sin because Jesus Christ, his Son and Lord, died in his place. The same is true of every sinner who puts faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior. In Christ’s death, God’s grace meets His justice and brings both into harmony.

Thus, true grace comes by Jesus Christ. God’s grace no longer appears to be an arbitrary pardoning of the guilty and a crime against justice. Instead, it appears as the triumph of love and grace over justice. Justice no longer makes a claim against the guilty sinner, for his sins have been abundantly paid for. God can pass over sins that were previously committed, yet His righteousness is clearly demonstrated by Christ’s sacrifice. Now, *“Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed,”* Psalm 85:10. In this way, as the law was given through Moses, true grace is revealed through Jesus Christ.

STINKING THINKING— THE BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND

by Candy Davis

I can be my own worst enemy. How often have I said in despair, "I can't believe I did that." Proverbs 23:7 provides an answer. *"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."* In other words, every action begins with a thought in our minds. If our thoughts are self-defeating in nature—stinking thinking—then we can expect self-defeating actions to follow, damaging our personal lives and, moreover, our effectiveness for the Lord. But help is at hand in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NKJV throughout).

WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God" (vs 3-4)

A war is what our passage calls this battle for our minds. Not a physical war fought with tanks and missiles, but a spiritual one in which we find our strength and might through God Himself (MSB #337 A CHINK IN OUR ARMOR).

STRONGHOLDS

"but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds" (v 4)

We are to pull down something called a stronghold. A stronghold is a structure we rely on for protection, like a castle or a fort. Our strongholds are not constructed from wood or stone, of course, but from a lifetime of thoughts, all built up into a protective fortress of thinking patterns. How we view the world and involve ourselves with it, and how we view ourselves and interact with others, all rely upon the nature of the thoughts comprising our strongholds. Two kinds of thoughts are involved: arguments and high things.

ARGUMENTS

"casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God" (v5)

Sometimes the battle for our minds involves our own personal thoughts and memories which Scripture calls arguments (imagination - KJV) These bounce around our heads like pinballs. Thoughts of our mistakes, hurts, regrets, rejections, failures, shame, fears...stinking thinking that produces self-defeating behavior on our part.

HIGH THINGS

Other times the battle entails thoughts and viewpoints—high things—that come from the world outside, a world in complete rebellion against God, and is it any wonder? Satan, being the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), controls the systems of the world...philosophies, theologies, institutions, entertainment...all stinking thinking of the secular humanism kind, blinding people to the truth of God (Col. 2:8). Just read Romans 1:18-31 for an ugly recap of how these humanistic viewpoints and philosophies are playing out in our world today.

BRING EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE

"bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (v5)

I am reminded of an episode on "The Andy Griffith Show" where Gomer Pyle, catching Deputy Barney Fife making an illegal U-turn, yells "Citizen's arrest! Citizen's arrest!" in his hillbilly drawl. In a similar way, we must be alert for ungodly thoughts, those that pop into our heads as well as those that bombard us from the world outside. Each thought or viewpoint must be stopped in its tracks ("Citizen's Arrest!") and judged based upon the standard of God's Word.

CASTING DOWN

"casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God" (v5)

Once we identify a thought as being contrary to our identity in Christ or to the Truth of God, we are to cast it down. Reject it! Tear it down! Destroy it!

As kids our backyard held a playhouse renovated from an old chicken coop our folks purchased for a dollar. It provided 30 years of fun until the day the rotting floor gave way, trapping the legs of a grandson. The playhouse had to go. Mom took a claw hammer to the thing and tore it down board by rotten board, piling it all in a heap for the dump. This is precisely how we need to deal with the rotten thoughts in our heads. Take a claw hammer (Sword of the Spirit, Eph. 6:17) to our stinking thinking and cast it down thought by thought.

When you hear in your head, "Why can't you be like your sister/brother?" cast it down. Your identity is now in Christ who loved you and gave himself for you (Gal 2:20). When a sin from your past haunts you, even after trying to make it right, cast it down. You have been forgiven all your sins (Eph. 4:32). There is no place for condemnation (Rom. 8:1). When immorality or blasphemy appears on your television, cast it down. Click it off (Eph. 5:11-12). When politics and issues of society begin to suck you in, cast them down. Do not engage or become entangled with the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2:4). *And turn off the News.*

RENEW YOUR MIND

Like the chicken coop renovated into a backyard playhouse, we believers must renovate our minds. This we do by replacing our stinking thinking with thoughts that are in line with the truth of God. *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).* Read, study and meditate upon the Bible (Col. 3:16), BELIEVING every word (1 Thess. 2:13). In this way we build new strongholds of thinking, ones in harmony with the Word and the will of God which in turn produces changed behaviors. We need not be our own worst enemies. With renewed thinking, we can *"walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10).*

No stinking thinking about it.

The Word of Truth Ministry

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10/11/20

Dear friends of the Word of Truth Ministry,

I don't know about you, but I want to go to a County Fair. I want to go to a movie theater. I want to go to a Dodger baseball game. But most of all, I want to attend a Word of Truth Ministry Conference. Thankfully, the Conference has been rescheduled, and should return to normal next year, 2021. We have made reservations for the 2021 Word of Truth Conference to be held on August 21st and 22nd (Saturday and Sunday). Please mark your calendars now so we may all get together again for a weekend of wonderful Bible study and fellowship. It will be held at what was supposed to be this year's location, The Crowne Plaza Aire Hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota.

Another drawback of our current state of affairs (COVID19), is that local Bible study groups have been canceled to comply with "social distancing". I get e-mails and letters from folks who are missing out on fellowship and study that is so near, and dear, to their hearts. There is a way to fill this void though. Nathan Johnson holds an internet Bible Study every Tuesday evening at 6:30pm CST. (That would be 4:30pm PST for me in Southern California.) The Study sessions are two hours long.

The study group is coordinated by Nathan's father, Steven Johnson. The meetings are held on the internet video teleconferencing platform, Skype. The messages are generally structured by Nathan, but there is plenty of opportunity for anyone to participate and ask questions or make comments. Any, and all, Word of Truth followers are encouraged to participate. If this interests you, please Email me at RustyWofT@aol.com, and I can provide you with the necessary information to join our weekly Bible study group.

To further your Bible study, log into the Word of Truth website, www.seedandbread.org, the radio ministry, <http://www.knowinggodintheword.org/>, or Nathan Johnson's webpage, <https://precepts.wordpress.com/>. Videos from past Conference seminars can be viewed on our YouTube channel. The channel name on YouTube is: Seed_and Bread. (Yes, there is an underscore after Seed.)

Your friend in Christ,

Rusty Hancock
RustyWofT@aol.com

Dear friends of The Word of Truth Ministry,

The Word of Truth Ministry is moving forward! Since I became heavily involved with the ministry eight years ago with the publication of the *Philippians Resultant Version* in *Seed and Bread*, I have watched the ministry expand from mostly a local ministry in Southern California that published the *Bulletin* and *Seed and Bread* to a wider audience. Now, we have yearly Bible conferences in the Twin Cities area, at which I have been able to meet and fellowship with many of you. We have a YouTube channel with Bible teaching videos, mostly from our annual conferences. And we have a nationwide radio ministry, spreading the truths of the Word rightly divided and the glorious truth of the premillennial kingdom of God in many cities across the country.

In those years, the ministry has also shifted focus. With the shrinking of the group in Southern California, we made the decision to close the doors on The Word of Truth Ministry headquarters, saving on expensive rent and freeing up funds for further ministry across the country. This has been in large part responsible for us being able to rapidly expand the radio ministry to sixteen markets, from Richmond to Bakersfield, and from Minneapolis to Pensacola. These funds have also allowed us to hold our yearly conferences in very nice venues and make this gathering around God's Word a very enjoyable experience for everyone who attends.

That said, our ministry has been hit hard financially recently. For many years we have been in good financial condition, and perhaps many of you know this. Yet lately we have lost touch with our biggest donor, which alone puts our budget significantly in the hole. With the state the country is in this year versus last, it is also quite possible that our yearly donations, many of which come in this last quarter of the year, may be reduced. This means that we are having to consider deep cuts to our budget, and sadly the elimination of a large portion of the radio stations that currently broadcast our ministry.

We do not like to make appeals for money, but we do want to let our loyal supporters know about our current situation. As I write this, I am looking at a list of our current radio stations. It is my hope and prayer that there are people hungry for the truth in each one of these cities who are listening to the program and learning more about God and His Word from our teaching. I thank God for the time we have been able to broadcast the truth on each of these stations, and appreciate very much the goodness of God and of His people that has allowed us to do so. If we have to cut many of them, I pray that the time we have been able to broadcast in these cities has been used to God's glory.

We realize that times are hard for many of our supporters. Yet we would also ask you to prayerfully consider if you are able to increase your support for the ministry. Regular giving is especially helpful, but any donation of any amount is welcome. Our administrative budget is small, and most of the funds go either directly into the conference, into the radio ministry, or into the publication of the *Bulletin*. We are using this money to get our understanding of God's Word out to those who want and need to hear it. We would continue to use any support you give us in the same way.

For any who want to donate and have not before, it is easy to donate with PayPal from our website www.seedandbread.org. Just go to the front page and click on the link to the right that says "Donate."

Thanks to all of you for your many years of love and support for The Word of Truth Ministry.

Sincerely,

Nathan C. Johnson, Director