

# Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE  
PROCLAMATION OF THE  
WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105  
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path.

AUGUST 2011

## THE STRANGE AND DIVERSE

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

Hebrews 13:9

**T**he complexities of life seem to demand an equally complex description and philosophy of life. However, the constant demand of the Scriptures is to remain simple and pure. We consistently meet, in these very Scriptures, a Lord who serves the suppliant needs and arresting desires of children and fishermen, goatherds and washer-women who gain access to the holiest of holies, while the philosophers and Mensa qualifiers are left in their arguments out in the hall.

Alien ("strange") and complex ("diverse") teachings are, in all actuality, *only* what our world, at present, seems to qualify as binding. In other words, we are told that we must embrace *all* things if we are to be on the path of truth (perhaps you have seen the recent bumper sticker, "COEXIST," employing various religious symbols). The only teaching acceptable in such a state requires the relaxation of principle, the watering-down of doctrine, and the reduction of what is referred to as prejudice. For "strange and diverse" are the ingredients absolutely necessary for the concoction of a proper "world view." Anything else

is characterized (or shall I say, vilified) as narrow, egocentric, and generally inferior. The family has been marginalized, its very structure questioned; the state is disqualified as dysfunctional and oppressive; the peer group: uncaring; the counselor's office: ambiguous; the internet: faceless, limbless, heartless. One seeks a body to which he may belong and finds only talking heads. He seeks a friend and finds only ridicule. He seeks the watchful eye and finds only abdication on the part of parent, teacher, judge, and peer. Why not, he concludes, be led away by the strange and diverse, for the familiar and consistent has been pulled from under him and taken from around him, like one who takes off a garment on a cold day (Proverbs 25:20).

Isn't it fascinating that the writer to the Hebrews finds a close relation in "strange and diverse teaching" to foods having no benefit. These entertain for a while and leave the partaker empty and hanging in the end. The teaching has a façade of truth about it, but holds only a vacant promise of rest. We have everything and nothing, all at the same time.

We cannot be our own person nor the person of the Lord without a flagrant violation of the tribe of those who hold "strange and diverse" as their motto of pride. We stand upon a much more simple and straightforward principle. The simplicity upon which we stand is tied to and borne from grace, not simplicity for its own sake; but, rather, a grace that is generated from God and ends in God. Simplicity detached from God and exercised for its own sake yields only another path of the many paths to truth upon which any monk of determined discipline may embark. Simplicity born of grace, and flowing as naturally as water down the mountainside, is that which ultimately strengthens the heart. God is gracious and accepting, and loves us for the sake of His Obedient Son. And in no other way can the world know this but for the spectacular wonder of the cross of Christ Jesus, whose simple and steadfast purpose ultimately wins the day and all eternity for the downcast and lonely soul. Overcome by Him, none can wander aimlessly, driven in submission to the vacuous claims of the "strange and diverse." Overcome by Him, one loses his appetite for these, and finds strength in the final word from God in His Son.

*Pastor Nathan Juntunen  
Vancouver, Washington*

## THE CONGREGATION (AND ITS ODDITIES)

**W**e live in trying times. Should it be any surprise to us? Jesus prophesied to His disciples that such times as these would come to pass prior to His return. The Word tells us in Romans 8 that the whole of creation is in bondage waiting for deliverance. This bondage fell upon all of mankind when the first parents fell into the trap laid by the liar and deceiver and they sinned; death and destruction entered into the world because of that seemingly insignificant transgression. Now as we look around us we see North and South Korea rattling their sabers; the powder keg which is the Middle East, with Israel at the center; we hear of earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and floods; loved ones are stricken with cancer, maimed in accidents; marriages and families are ripped apart by every sin known to mankind; societal battle lines between right and wrong are drawn deeper and deeper into the sand... Jesus entered into this in His incarnation, walked in it as a man, and spoke to His disciples: *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28)*

Many of these tribulations happen to "someone else" and, therefore, we are not affected much by them. As the tragedies hit closer to home, we suddenly begin to take notice and, like the fable of old, may cry out, "The sky is falling!" We do not take heed of the words of Jesus: *But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them... (John 16:4)*

Anyone who is involved within the physical church is accosted with another problem, a problem that all too often enters and grips our lives, controlling our conversations with

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others and our dinner-time chats with family. What I am writing about are the daily struggles that enter into the body of believers; some call it politics, others issues, others "soul care" or "Christianity," gossip possibly the driving force of all. There was a man in the Bible who was healed of blindness by Jesus. While his friends, family, acquaintances, and leaders in the synagogue should have been elated, they rather bickered among themselves, wondering how it could be that this man Jesus, a sinner, could heal another and what should they do with the parents of this blind man who were in the throes of societal pressure. In the middle of the surrounding chaos, the clear message of faith rang forth: *...One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. (John 9:25)*

As troubled and tainted by sin as the church on earth may be, where else could one go where he may hear the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ? We attend a troubled and tainted church. Yes, the enemy of the soul follows us to church. We may look around us and be overwhelmed, captivated, or repulsed by the issues of the day, wrongly thinking that we must be the only congregation in the world that argues about things. How do we measure up against others? Are we embarrassed, ashamed, or disappointed about our worship style, our simple building, our hominess, or (heaven forbid) our doctrine? Are the winds of change and discontent so great that you cannot hear the voice of the Good Shepherd calling out with love to the penitent? Are your own struggles concerning your congregation so great that you could never ask another to attend your church? My prayer is that none of these would be the case. Put aside the cares of this life and rest in what Jesus offers; yes, even our church with all its oddities. Church: a being full of wrinkles, sores and uncomely members; but, underneath, a place where the songs of Zion are sung, the children are taught, the sacraments are administered for strengthening on the journey, and repentance and remission of sins is preached in Jesus' name. May God help us all through the Holy Spirit, which points us to Jesus, the One who has borne all our oddities.

*God's peace,  
Pastor Phil Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington*

## HE ANSWERED HER NOT A WORD

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (Matthew 15:21-28)

**I**t may be a child of God is reading these words who has had some great crushing sorrow, some bitter disappointment, some heart-breaking blow from a totally unexpected quarter. You are longing for your Master's voice bidding you, "Be of good cheer," but only silence and a sense of mystery and misery meet you—"He answered her not a word."

God's tender heart must often ache listening to all the sad, complaining cries which arise from our weak, impatient hearts, because we do not see that for our own sakes He answers not at all or otherwise than seems best to our tear-blinded, short-sighted eyes.

The silences of Jesus are as eloquent as His speech and may be a sign, not of His disapproval, but of His approval and of a deep purpose of blessing for you.

"Why are you cast down, O soul?" You shalt yet praise Him, yes, even for His silence. Listen to an old and beautiful story of how one Christian dreamed that she saw three others at prayer. As they knelt the Master drew near to them.

As He approached the first of the three, He bent over her in tenderness and grace, with smiles full of radiant love and spoke to her in accents of purest, sweetest music. Leaving her, He

came to the next, but only placed His hand upon her bowed head, and gave her one look of loving approval. The third woman He passed almost abruptly without stopping for a word or glance.

The woman in her dream said to herself, "How greatly He must love the first one, to the second He gave His approval, but none of the special demonstrations of love He gave the first; and the third must have grieved Him deeply, for He gave her no word at all, not even a passing look. I wonder what she has done, and why He made so much difference between them?"

As she tried to account for the action of her Lord, He Himself stood by her and said: "O woman! How wrongly have you interpreted Me. The first kneeling woman needs all the weight of My tenderness and care to keep her feet in My narrow way. She needs My love, thought and help every moment of the day. Without it she would fail and fall. The second has stronger faith and deeper love, and I can trust her to trust Me however things may go and whatever people do. The third, whom I seemed not to notice, and even to neglect, has faith and love of the finest quality, and her I am training by quick and drastic processes for the highest and holiest service.

"She knows Me so intimately, and trusts Me so utterly, that she is independent of words or looks or any outward imitation of My approval. She is not dismayed nor discouraged by any circumstances through which I arrange that she shall pass; she trusts Me when sense and reason and every finer instinct of the natural heart would rebel;—because she knows that I am working in her for eternity, and that what I do, though she knows not the explanation now, she will understand hereafter.

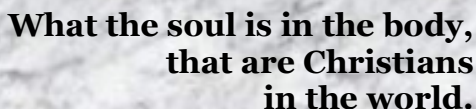
"I am silent in My love because I love beyond the power of words to express, or of human hearts to understand, and also for your sakes that you may learn to love and trust Me in Spirit-taught, spontaneous response to My love, without the spur of anything outward to call it forth."

He will do marvels if you will learn the mystery of His silence, and praise Him, for every time He withdraws His gifts that you may better know and love the Giver.

*from Streams in the Desert, Compiled by Mrs. C. E. Cowman  
Submitted by Dave Impola  
Everett, Washington*

## CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD

**C**hristians are distinguished from other people neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews and persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.



**What the soul is in the body,  
that are Christians  
in the world.**

To sum up all in one word—what the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world. The invisible soul is guarded by the visible body, and Christians are known indeed to be in the world, but their godliness remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against it, though itself suffering no injury, because it is prevented from enjoying pleasures; the world also hates the Christians, though in no wise injured, because they abjure pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and [loves also] the members; Christians likewise love those that hate them. The soul is imprisoned in the body, yet preserves that very body; and Christians are confined in the world as in a prison, and yet they are the preservers of the world. The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle; and Christians dwell as sojourners in corruptible [bodies], looking for an incorruptible dwelling in the heavens. The soul, when but ill-provided with food and drink, becomes better; in like manner, the Christians, though subjected day by day to punishment, increase the more in number. God has assigned them this illustrious position, which it were unlawful for them to forsake.

*from The Epistle to Diognetus*

**He brought me to the banqueting house,  
and his banner over me was love.**

*Song of Solomon 2:4*

**C**hrist is not only a remedy for your weariness and trouble, but He will give you an abundance of the contrary, joy and delight. They who come to Christ do not only come to a resting-place after they have been wandering in a wilderness, but they come to a banqueting-house where they may rest and where they may feast. They may cease from their former troubles and toils, and they may enter upon a course of delights and spiritual joys.

*Jonathan Edwards*



## FORGETTING GOD

If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

Psalm 44:20-21

**N**o man can be without his god.

If he have not the true God to bless and sustain him, he will have some false god to delude and to betray him. The psalmist knew this, and therefore he joined so closely forgetting the name of our God and holding up our hands to some strange god. For every man has something in which he hopes, on which he leans, to which he retreats and retires, with which he fills up his thoughts in empty spaces of time; when he is alone, when he lies sleepless on his bed, when he is not pressed with other thoughts; to which he betakes himself in sorrow or trouble, as that from which he shall draw comfort and strength—his fortress, his citadel, his defense; and has not this a good right to be called his god? Man was made to lean on the Creator; but if not on Him, then he leans on the creature in one shape or another. The ivy cannot grow alone; it must twine round some support or other; if not the goodly oak, then the ragged thorn; round any dead stick whatever, rather than have no stay nor support at all. It is even so with the heart and affections of man; if they do not twine around God, they must twine around some meaner thing.

*Richard C. Trench*

**H**umility is perfect quietness of heart.

It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble.

*Andrew Murray*

## Dear Children, precious in the Lord's sight,

Does the Lord know all about us? Let's look at *Psalm 139* and see.

### THE LORD KNOWS ALL ABOUT ME

As we look at *verse 1*: *O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me*, the above question is already answered. Yes, the Lord knows us.

**H**e knows where you go and when you rest. He even knows what you think before you know it. He is right beside you on your walk and watches where you step. He knows when you lie down to rest. He knows exactly how you feel when you are hurt, sad, angry, lonely, happy, or however you feel.



*Verse 4: For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.* The Lord knows every word you speak, even if you whisper secrets to a friend. He hears the unkind words we speak. We need to be very careful and ask ourselves, "Is what I'm saying good or bad, and will it hurt anyone, even me?" The Lord protects you from in front and behind and keeps His hand on you no matter where you go. He cares so much for you. You can

never escape out of the Lord's sight or from His spirit; it will follow you all the days of your life.

*Verses 7-9* say that if you were to go to heaven, to hell, or to the most desolate place of the sea, you would find the Lord there ahead of you. There is no place where the Lord cannot be, and even in the places I mentioned the Lord would be there to hold your hand and to lead you.

*Verse 12: Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.* This verse is saying that where the Lord is, there is no darkness. If people have Jesus in their hearts and truly believe in Him, darkness cannot be in the heart.



*Verse 14: I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

*Verses 13-16* speak of how God knew all about you before you were born. He saw you in your mother's womb, and even when you still did not have a real baby look, God had written in His book all about



you, as far as arms, legs, eyes, hair, fingernails, everything. There is nothing He does not know. Then when you were born and your parents held you for the first time, they were holding the exact baby that He planned you to be.

*Verses 17-18: How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.* The Lord is so near you and all who love Him and you are always in His thoughts. He is such a great God and none can compare to Him.

*Verses 19-24* speak of enemies and how our Lord will even deal with them, and He will protect us from them. Sometimes people will do or say mean things to us or use God's name in vain. We might get angry at them, but we must not treat them the same way; we must pray for those people. Finally, we should ask God to show us if there be any bad ways or thoughts that we may have, and for Him to help us to repent of those things. We should ask that He would continue to lead us in the way everlasting.

**G**od knows everything about you, He knows you better than you know yourself, and, lastly, HE LOVES YOU more than you love yourself.

*God's peace,  
Gwen Wilson*

## ASSURANCE OF PURE DOCTRINE IS ESSENTIAL

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:7-11)

**I**n the first place, therefore, it is necessary that both preachers and hearers take heed to doctrine and have clear, unmistakable evidence that what they embrace is really the true Word of God revealed from heaven; the doctrine given to the holy and primitive fathers, prophets and apostles; the doctrine Christ Himself confirmed and commanded to be taught. We are not permitted to employ the teaching dictated by any man's pleasure or fancy. We may not adapt the Word to mere human knowledge and reason. We are not to trifle with the Scriptures, to juggle with the Word of God, as if it would admit of being explained to suit the people; of being twisted, distended and patched to effect peace and agreement among men. Otherwise, there would be no sure, permanent foundation whereon the conscience might rely.

Nor is it any more admissible for one who chances to have an office of greater influence than others, who is peculiarly holy, or who is of exalted spirit and intellect—even though he were an apostle—to presume upon his gifts and the office and take authority to teach according to his own inclinations, requiring his hearers to accept unquestioningly his word and rely upon it because what he teaches must be right. But thus the Pope in time past persuaded the world that because he occupied the seat of the apostles, the highest office, and assembled the councils, the latter could not err, and that therefore all men are obliged to believe and obey what they resolve and confirm.

This theory is opposed by Peter's teaching, and all the Scriptures forbid men, at the peril of losing eternal salvation, to rely on or respect anyone or anyone's gifts, in the things pertaining to faith. The Scriptures teach rather that we are to prove and judge all doctrine by the clear and sure Word of God given us from heaven and supported by the reliable, concurrent testimony of the apostles and the Church from the beginning. Paul, by way of denouncing the false teachers who boasted of being disciples of eminent apostles and relied upon the latter and their reputation, pronounced this sentence: *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* (Galatians 1:8)

Similarly, in the offices or government of the Church, there must first be convincing evidence that command and office are instituted of God. No one may be permitted to institute, promise or do anything of his own power or pleasure and compel men to regard it as divine authority or as essential to salvation, simply because of his appointment to office. Nevertheless, the Pope, by virtue of his ecclesiastical office, undertook to domineer over all men, to issue commands and institute laws and religious services binding upon everyone.

**We are not to trifle  
with the Scriptures, to juggle  
with the Word of God...**

He who holds and would exercise office in the Church must first give clear Scripture proof of having derived his office from the authority of

God. He must be able to say: "I did not institute such and such a proceeding; it is of God." Then they who comply may be assured they are obeying, not the individual, but God.

For instance, if in obedience to Christ's command I, as a carer of souls, or servant of the Church, administer the holy sacrament or pronounce absolution; if I admonish, comfort, reprove; I can say: "That which I do, I do not; Christ performs it." For I act not of my own design, but in obedience to the command of Christ—to His injunction. The Pope and his adherents cannot make the above assertion. For they pervert the order and commandment of Christ the Lord when, in the

sacrament, they withhold the cup from the laity, and when they change the use of the sacrament or mass, making it a sacrifice for the living and the dead. Thus they do also by innumerable other abominations in their false worship, things established without God's command, indeed contrary thereto; for instance, the invocation of dead saints, and similar idolatries, introduced by the Pope under cover of his office, as if he had the power from Christ to institute and command such things.

### **Assurance Of Divine Efficiency Is Essential**

**I**n the second place, it is not enough that office and commandment be God-appointed. We his ministers should be conscious—and the people should so be taught—that efficacy of office is not of human effort, but is God's power and work. In other words, that which the office was designed to accomplish is not effective by virtue of our speech or action, but by virtue of God's commandment and appointment. He it is who orders; and Himself will effectively operate through that office which is obedient to God's command. For instance, in baptism, the Lord's Supper and absolution, we are not to be concerned about the person administering the sacraments or pronouncing absolution—who he is, how righteous, how holy, how worthy. Worthiness or unworthiness of either administering or receiving hand effects nothing; all the virtue lies in God's command and ordinance.

This is the explanation of Peter's phrase, *the ability which God giveth*. Effect is produced, not through man's power, not in obedience to man's will; but through the strength of God and because of His ordering. No man has a right presumptuously to boast his own power and ability effective, as the Pope does in his pretensions about keys and ecclesiastical power. Know that it is necessary to the efficacy of your office and the salutary character of your work or authority in the Church that God Himself give and exert the influence. And that influence is exerted when God's Word and testimony are present that the ministry in question is commanded, or authorized, of God.

Therefore it is earnestly enjoined that in the Church no attempt should be made by any individual to institute any order or perform any work, much or little, great or small, merely at the prompting of his own inclinations or in obedience to the

advice of any man. Let him who would teach and work be sure that his words and acts are really of God—commanded by Him. Until he is certain in this respect, let him abandon his office, suspend his ministry; let him engage in something else for a time. Nor should we hear or believe anything presented to us that does not bear indisputable evidence of being the divine Word, or command. For God will not permit mockery of Himself in the things of His own prerogative and on which depends the salvation of souls; for souls will be led to eternal ruin where this rule and command are disregarded.

*Martin Luther*

**C**hristianity is not a religion of human authority, like Confucianism. It is not a religion of tradition, like Judaism. It is not a religion of force and might, like Islam. It is not a religion based upon argument and philosophy; although Christianity is a philosophy, and although the Bible calls upon us to reason with God. But it is a religion, first and always, from beginning to end, of experiment and experience; it is a pragmatic faith. *O taste and see that the LORD is good... (Psalm 34:8) ...Prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. (Malachi 3:10) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28) Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (Matthew 7:7)* This is the religion we preach and commend to the non-Christian world.

**C**hrist occupies the solitary throne of every heart once yielded to Him; even as He occupies the throne of heaven, before which myriad redeemed ones are falling prostrate before Him, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy! Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins, to Him be the glory for ever!" The Lamb is on the throne now and to all eternity.

*Samuel Zwemer*

## AS SEEN ON FACEBOOK



**Linda Wirkkala:** Worry gives a small thing a big shadow. ~Swedish Proverb. Let's cast our cares upon Him who cares for us!

**Jared Salmi:** God is great! I love the little ways He works. Who knew preaching doesn't have to be in a pulpit, but works just as well walking around talking to people?! What an awesome God He is!

**Martha Mickelson:** Is Jesus your steering wheel or spare tire? (from Mark Matson's sermon)

**Lana Wilson:** Grace, forgiveness, mercy, healing—He'll meet you wherever you are! (Third Day paraphrase) How can I keep from loving Him?

**Steven E. Anderson:** I had dinner once with a fellow officer who was serious about his faith. When my meal was served, I paused and said a silent thanks to God who gives me all blessings only thru the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. My friend, who made a more visible prayer, said to me: Aren't you going to give thanks? I said: I already did. He said: I didn't see you. I replied: I wasn't praying to you.

**Tina Questad Benitez:** 1834. C. Spurgeon. "You say, 'If I had a little more, I'd be very satisfied.' You make a mistake. If you aren't content with what you have, you wouldn't be satisfied if it were doubled."

**Jesse Aho:** We laugh and joke about man's foolish ways of date setting [regarding predictions about the return of Christ]. Let's not be fooled. Many other false teachings come from taking the Word out of context. Pray for clarity, not fleshly wisdom.

**Sarah Karlsen:** Satan's Plan: Doubt = makes you question God's Word and His goodness; Discouragement = makes you look at your problems rather than at God; Diversion = makes the wrong things seem attractive so that you will want them more than the right things; Defeat = makes you feel like a failure so that you don't even try; Delay = makes you put off doing something so it never gets done. [Courtesy of Life Application Bible]

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## NOAH'S ARK AND FAITH



**T**he faith that Noah had in following the instructions from God to build the ark was truly amazing. Imagine the questions that he would have had in mind when he was first instructed to build an ark. Since we understand that there was no rain on the earth at that time (the earth was watered by a mist), one of the things that Noah must have wondered about was how it was going to float, as he perhaps had not seen water in abundance. Also, the time involved in the building of the ark must have challenged his thinking, although Noah's family probably helped. But he never wavered in believing and following God's instructions. Noah had faith in God and knew that the final outcome would be most beneficial.

Thus, in due time, the ark was completed, the animals and other creatures had been selected and gathered, and the flood came. And when the flood had subsided, Noah gave an offering of thanksgiving to God. *Genesis 8:20: And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*

**P**eople still are looking for the remnants of the ark in our present age. Expeditions to the supposed site of the landing of the ark have been made many times, one of the latest being last year. There have been people who have claimed to have seen the ark, but there has never been any physical evidence offered to substantiate it. Some people have offered evidence, but then cannot verify their claims.

It is claimed the site where the ark landed is in Mt. Ararat in Turkey. But the Bible says that the ark landed in the "mountains of Ararat" (Genesis 8:4), not on a "mountain named Mt. Ararat." But a mountain has been selected, Agri Dagı (Turkish), as the landing site, and it is the highest peak in that particular mountain range. The name, Mt. Ararat, came into existence during medieval times.

Many non-Christians ridicule the stories in the Bible like Noah's ark since there is no proof that an ark ever existed. There are other things they scoff at, like the Exodus, since there are no Egyptian records proving that the Israelites were captives in Egypt, and no record of their wanderings in the Sinai Peninsula. But the Bible needs no defense—all of the areas that are unclear to us now will eventually

be revealed according to God's will. *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)*

Regarding the expeditions which have proceeded to Mt. Ararat to find Noah's ark only to be humbled and driven back empty-handed, I would hope and pray that the faith of the searchers is not shaken when their trips have not proven to be fruitful. But if man seeks only the glory of finding Noah's ark, he won't find it. If it's according to God's will and if man gives glory where glory is due, then the world in time might actually see the ark, or remnants of it, from which we have all originated.

***Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (Greek: assurance) of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)***

Alvar Helmes

Battle Ground, Washington

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## *A General Confession.*

**A**LMIGHTY and most merciful Father, we have erred, and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore Thou those who are penitent, according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy name. Amen.

## *The Declaration of Absolution, or Remission of Sins.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live, hath given power, and commandment, to His ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel.

Wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance, and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to His eternal joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Book of Common Prayer, 1928*

