



MARCH 2022 NEWSLETTER

THE YEAR OF THE GREAT HARVEST: 2022

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One of the greatest opportunities—as well as one of the greatest responsibilities—we have as servants of Jesus Christ is to reach out to others and encourage them to become disciples. Hopefully, we have entered into the year 2022 with that goal in mind.



In fact, it is important that we appeal to God in prayer for such opportunities. In doing so, we will be imitating the Apostle Paul who declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’ (Romans 1:16-17).

There are many things we should be ashamed of:

1. Not seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33)
2. Sin and any disobedience of our past life (1 Timothy 1:12-13)
3. Any communion with darkness (Ephesians 5:11)
4. Our lack of knowledge (1 Corinthians 15:34; 2 Timothy 2:15)
5. All that is not true, honest, fair, pure, kind, etc. (Philippians 4:8).

But we should never be ashamed of the gospel. Nothing in our lives—social position, race, past religion, or any commitments of life—should cause us to be ashamed of the gospel.

With sadness, not all the world holds the gospel in such esteem, even rejecting its message of salvation as did so many in the first century. Paul declares, “*but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks*

foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:23). He has already taught the Corinthians that “it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1:21).

The gospel was a stumbling block then, and even continues to be for some today, because it contradicts non-biblical beliefs based on false and hollow philosophies or simply because people do not give themselves the opportunity to go to the source of all wisdom—the Word inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Today, many are filled with pride, believing in false science, trusting in their own reasoning, and denying the existence of an Almighty God, who is Creator and Sustainer of all that exists.

Long before the gospel age, the prophet Isaiah quoted God as he described the Jews, not only of that day but also even those who lived after Jesus came to the earth and established His kingdom: “*All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people” (Romans 10:21).* The world, then and now, has become accustomed to its rites, culture, and way of seeing life. As a result, many continue to reject the gospel: thus, we have a challenging task before us.

The Scriptures have designated that all evangelists and all Christians are messengers of Christ with the responsibility of proclaiming the good news of salvation in the midst of this world full of darkness and immersed in sin. The good news is that Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be crucified for the sins of the entire world—including our sins. And, in rising from His grave, He conquered death and gave us the hope of going to heaven.

To fulfill the directive Paul gives in Romans 1 requires courage, my beloved brethren; but let us always remember that it will be worth it. In this life, God provides many good things for us; however, His provisions for eternity are of far greater significance.

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Let us strive to be courageous, then, remembering the One who called us from darkness into His marvelous light—let us do the work of evangelism without fainting because in time the Great Harvest will come. At that point, we can enjoy the full, spiritual riches of being with Christ Jesus as well as with the Heavenly Father.

GOD'S BLUEPRINT

Austin Garrett | Piedmont, OK

As the world became extremely wicked, God told Noah to “*make yourself an ark*” using “*gopher wood*” (**Genesis 6:14**). God instructed him to build “*a window for the ark*” and to “*set the door of the ark in its side.*” If Noah, for any reason, had disobeyed one of God’s commands, the ark would not have floated; however, Noah did “*according to all that God commanded him,*” and he received his promise of safe passage.



Actually, since the days of Adam and Eve—since the beginning of recorded time—people have called into question God’s teachings and have strayed far from them. The Apostle Paul mentions that “*all scripture is given by inspiration of God*” so that “*the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). As a result, every piece of scripture is crucial for our salvation.

Paul writes to the church in Ephesus and assures the members that there is “*one hope of your calling*” (**Ephesians 4:4**), and he makes it clear that hope is based on their walking “*worthy of the calling with which you were called*” (**4:1**). They could keep that command by staying true to the instructions given them. So, if people have access to God’s perfect instruction manual, why have they strayed from that straight and narrow path (**Matthew 7**)?

Scriptures make it clear. “*My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord*” (**Isaiah 55:8**). People have chosen their own truth over God’s truth. The Apostle Paul points out to the Corinthians: “*But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*” (**2 Corinthians 11:3**).

Like Adam and Eve, we too have worldly desires of which we remind ourselves, “*You shall not eat it, nor*

shall you touch it” (**Genesis 3:3**). Just as Paul warned the church so long ago, however, people today have allowed their thoughts of health, wealth, and self-righteousness to cloud their minds from the truth. Instead of hearing the word and accepting it as Noah displayed in building the ark, people sometimes choose to twist the meaning as Satan did with Eve in **Genesis 3**. This separation, which began with Satan’s deception in the Garden of Eden, continues today.

People continue clouding their minds from the truth. Paul warns of this problem when he says, “*you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart*” (**Ephesians 4:17-18**). This scripture explains the actions of Eve in **Genesis 3**. She was told not to touch that tree; so, she understood the command. The problem was that Eve’s perfect understanding was tainted by Satan’s influence when he made a slight change in the words.

The Bible also records many followers straying from God because of emotions. In **Jonah 1**, Jonah’s fear of Nineveh leads him to disobey God’s command. In **Mark 9**, after Peter witnesses the transfiguration of Jesus, his excitement moves him to suggest multiple sacred tabernacles. In **Numbers 20:11**, Moses’ anger causes him to disobey God. As a result, he is denied access to the promised land and instead dies on the mountain (**Deuteronomy 34**).

All people throughout time have fallen “*short of the glory of God*” (**Romans 3:23**). The connection between misguidance and sin is evident in the story of Adam and Eve; as well, the connection between emotion and sin is found in the story of Moses. Both cases result in access being denied to the territory given by God.

The Bible notes that not everyone who says, “*Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven.*” Jesus will say to many, “*depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*” (**Matthew 7:21-23**). Those who act on the belief that man’s ways are higher than the Lord’s are not following the straight and narrow blueprint. Therefore, they will be standing on the outside of God’s promised heavenly home. The preacher teaches, “*there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*” (**Proverbs 14:12**).



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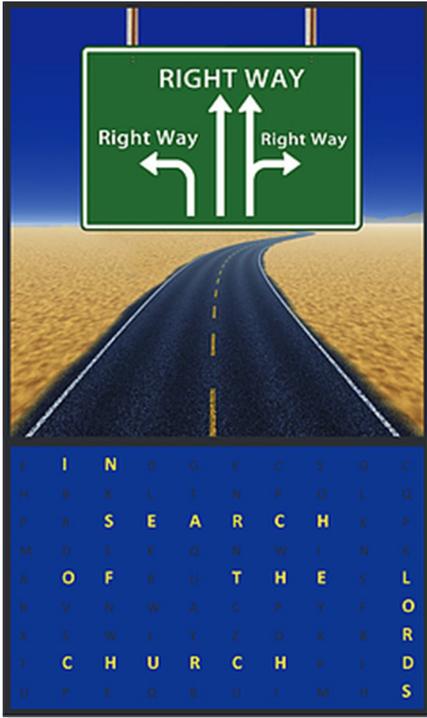
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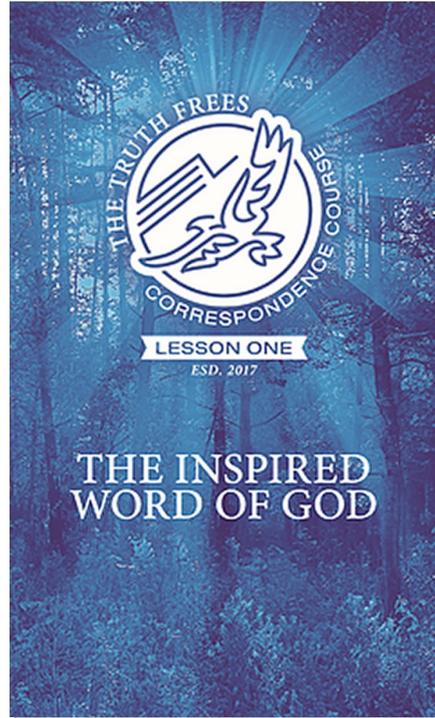
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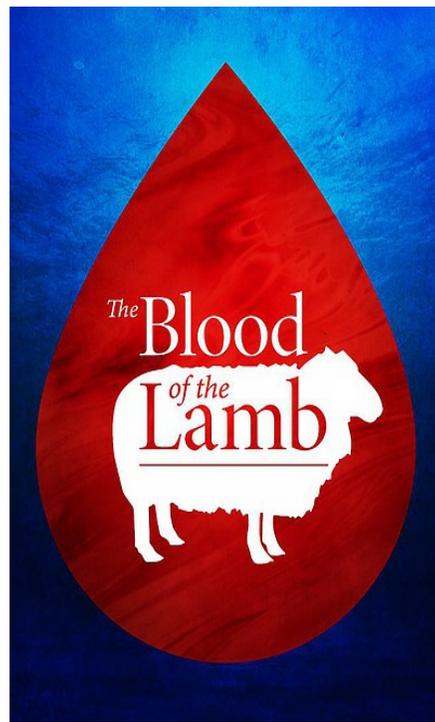
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