

Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

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When Will All of Our Sorrows End?

We now find ourselves in a new year, 2021. While COVID-19 vaccines have started rolling out, the total of COVID-19 cases and deaths recorded thus far in the United States, and throughout the world, has been truly staggering. The quick disappearance of this disease-causing pandemic has not come to fruition as many had hoped.

Many people's lives have been turned upside down due to the death of family members, loss of jobs and associated financial stress, and the difficulty in taking care of their family's health and educational needs. Medical personnel and facilities worldwide have been stretched to their capacity and beyond.

Due to these troubling circumstances, we may ask ourselves, what now? The trouble and sorrow of today may also cause us to wonder, where am I concerning my level of faith and trust in the Heavenly Father? If we look to the Scriptures for comfort and assurance, our faith and trust in God can grow, and we will not be fearful. The psalmist wrote, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Ps. 30:5) This "night" of sin, sorrow, and death began with the disobedience of our first parents in Eden, and it has indeed been a night of weeping.—Gen. 2:17; 3:1-24

However, do not despair for there is to be a morning of joy for humanity which will usher in a new day of blessing through the establishment of God's kingdom, with Jesus as its ruler, and the government of

righteousness foretold by all God's "holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:20-21) This wonderful arrangement will create universal and lasting peace, which man in his selfishness has been unable to do. The divine head of this government, Christ, is referred to in prophecy as "The Prince of Peace," and we are assured that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:6,7

Additionally, there will be economic security as shown by the prophecy that every man will dwell under his own "vine" and "fig tree." (Mic. 4:4) Much of the suffering in the world throughout the ages has been due to a lack of food, clothing, and shelter. This will be corrected through the agencies of Christ's kingdom. All shall have the opportunity to live in peace and safety.—Isa. 11:9

Finally, "there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked." (Acts 24:15) In Christ's kingdom, "If the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die."—Ezek. 18:21 *NASB*

Isaiah wrote, "In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things. ... He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; ... for the LORD hath spoken it."—Isa. 25:6,8

To learn more, see our offer for the free booklet *Life after Death* on the back page of this newsletter. ■

Samson

Samson was the seventh judge of Israel. His birth and commission to be a Nazarite were foretold by an angel, an honor given to very few in scripture. He was endowed with miraculous strength which he used to fight the Philistines. At this point, the Philistines had ruled over Israel for forty years. (Compare Judges 13:1 and Judges 15:11)

Samson had a preoccupation with the women of Philistia which was overruled by God for the improvement of Israel's national situation. (Judges 14:4) His romantic interests became a pretext for personal conflict with the Philistines.

At the celebration of his marriage to a woman of Timnah, Samson challenged his Philistine companions to solve a riddle. Unable to solve it, they threatened his bride and her family for the answer. In response Samson paid his debt with the garments of thirty Philistines he killed in a neighboring town.—Judges 14:10-19

In his absence, his bride was married to another. (Judges 14:20-15:2) This started his feud with the Philistines that defined his judgeship. This feud led to spoiling the Philistine economy by burning their crops at harvest (Judges 15:3-5), the killing of a thousand men with a jawbone (Judges 15:14-16), and the destruction of the gates of the city of Gaza.—Judges 16:3

Samson's fall came from his relationship with Delilah who convinced him to share the secret of his strength—his relationship with God, as symbolized by his hair. With his hair cut, Samson lost his strength, was blinded, and imprisoned. In the moment of his greatest weakness, chained to two pillars in the temple of Dagon, Samson asked God for strength. Receiving it, he destroyed the temple, killing himself and 3,000 Philistines, including their leaders. Thus, he freed Israel from Philistine oppression for the next twenty years.—Judges 16:23-30

Samson's story is an example that God can use imperfect people to accomplish his plans. It reminds us of the danger of giving in to our fallen human tendencies. It reveals that when we are at our weakest, God is still with us. If we ask for his strength to do his will, He is faithful to hear us.—Lam. 3:22,23

Brotherly Love

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Rom. 12:10, *NIV*) The Apostle Paul specifically mentions brotherly love as one of the characteristics of a Christian. In the twelfth chapter of Romans, Paul states that we should not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renovation of our minds. (Rom. 12:2) If we transform our mind, one of the characteristics we should develop is brotherly love. The Apostle Peter also lists brotherly love as one of the key qualities of a Christian. (2 Pet. 1:5-7) These qualities are so important, Peter writes that “if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”—2 Pet 1:10,11, *NIV*

What is this characteristic of brotherly love that Paul and Peter identify? It is not just familial love but the love of our brethren in Christ—the love we should have for each other as fellow believers in Jesus. As believers we share the same hopes, interests, and promises. Thus, our aims are the same, and our struggle to overcome our imperfect flesh, (*Continued on next page*)

Reflections at the Laver

The laver of the Tabernacle of Israel represents to Christians something of profound significance. (Exod. 30:18-21) The laver was made from polished copper and filled with water for the priests to wash and cleanse themselves before entering the Tabernacle and performing its services. “When they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die;”—vss. 20,21, *NASB*

We understand from scripture that this polished copper was made from the looking glasses, or mirrors, of the Israelites. Copper is a picture of human perfection, just as the copper snake that was lifted up in the wilderness to heal the snake-bitten Jews. This showed how Jesus took mankind’s place under sin’s penalty by giving his perfect human life as a ransom for Adam. (Num. 21:6-9; John 3:14; 1 Tim. 2:5,6) The water in the laver represented the water of Truth from God’s holy Word which the christian uses to cleanse himself.—Eph. 5:26

Antitypical priests, or spirit-begotten Christians, come to the laver of God’s Word to wash and thus, cleanse themselves from the defilements of sin in their fallen human nature. Like the Levitical priests, they strive to cleanse themselves in a process of sanctification, for the service to which they have been called.—1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:22

When a spirit-begotten Christian bends forward to utilize the water of Truth for cleansing, they see the reflection of their imperfections from the water. However, because the laver itself was made from polished copper, they also see the reflection of Christ Jesus’ perfection and recognize how to better be conformed to his image. Through the process of continual cleansing, they hopefully will see a reflected image that looks more and more like Jesus, and less and less like the old creature they used to be. This is expressed in the words, “Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.” We are to humble ourselves and be obedient to the Word of God being “conformed to the image of his Son [Jesus].”—Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:29 ■

Brotherly Love *(continued from previous page)*

the world, and the devil are the same as well. Through these shared hopes and goals, we develop sympathy, love, and care for one another as each strives to do his best to serve the Heavenly Father and our Lord Christ Jesus.

How do we show this brotherly love to each other? The Scriptures give us clear admonitions to follow. Jesus says, “Love each other as I have loved you.” (John 15:12, *NIV*) This was the new commandment that Jesus gave his followers: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34, *NIV*) Jesus loved his disciples, cared for them, and watched out for their earthly and spiritual needs.

We are to do the same for our Christian brethren. Paul points out in Romans 12:10 to “honor one another above yourselves.” We should be putting our brethren’s preferences first. Paul used the Thessalonians as an example of this brotherly love. Their love was evident not only among each other but to all the brethren in Macedonia. (1 Thess. 4:9,10) Likewise, our love for our brethren should be easily visible to others. ■

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www.orlandobible.org

The Orlando Bible Students is a non-denominational group that meets for Bible studies and devotions on Sunday mornings.

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Life after Death

This booklet discusses the future resurrection of all that are in their graves, and the glorious work of Christ's Kingdom.

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