
Pilgrims Journal

“They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb 11:13–16)

Number 84

July–August 2010



New Testament Ministries

507 Orange St., Newark, NJ 07107, USA

Phone: (973) 485–1181

Email: ntcnewark@juno.com, ntcpjmail@gmail.com

Table of Contents

(click on the title to go directly to the article)

Any Moment Now...

Biblical Bows & Arrows

Part 3 — Elders' Arrows

Arranged By God

Part 4 — Factors Promoting A Blissful Union

Testimony

Sister Sunitha Thakur

Workmanship Of His Hands

Peculiar Pandas

Heroes Of Faith

The Life of John Geddie

Excuse me, are you Jesus?

To subscribe to the *Pilgrims Journal* email list please send an email to:
pilgrimsjournal-on@pj.worthyofpraise.org

Any Moment Now...

Coming soon! Joy and victory! Or...gloom and doom? Ready or not, Jesus is coming. This is the next great event that we are looking for. For the church that is ready, we can't wait. For others, it may be frightening to think about. *What is it all about? What is going to happen?*

The rapture of the church is an event that is not just for individuals, but for an entire group of saints. It will not only be of importance to them, but for all of heaven. The consequences for those left behind are grave. All of heaven will rejoice when the saints are caught up. But, it will usher in a time of woe to the earth: the devil will be cast down to the earth.

Most of the earth's population will not be included when the overcoming Church is caught up at the secret coming of the Lord. Only the Spirit-filled saints who are watching and waiting for His coming will be taken up from this earth to be with the Lord. In fact, the word of God indicates that, from among God's children, only an elect group will be transformed at the coming of the Lord. The other Christians will be left behind. Our first priority as children of God should be to see that we are prepared to meet the Lord at His appearing.

The apostle Paul teaches about **the secret coming of the Lord** in his epistle to the Thessalonians. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught

up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We see two groups of people mentioned here that will be included in the rapture. They are the "dead in Christ," and "we which are alive and remain." *So, who are "the dead in Christ"? Who are "we which are alive and remain"?*

In Christ

Everyone knows what "dead" means. But *what does the term "in Christ" signify?* First of all, to be "in Christ," one must repent of his or her sins and be baptized in water according to the scriptural example. Beyond that though, it is actually through the infilling of the Holy Spirit that a person receives the experience of being "in Christ." How do we know this? Well, when Jesus was telling His disciples that after His death and resurrection He would go to the Father and send the Comforter to them, He said, "At that day [when they received the Comforter, the Holy Spirit] ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me [*in Christ*], and I in you" (Jn 14:20). In verse seventeen of the same chapter He said of the Holy Spirit, "...for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." A distinction is made between "dwelling *with* you," and "dwelling *in* you." When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, as the one hundred twenty were on the Day of Pentecost, we are brought into the experience of being "in Christ."

Now, after being brought into Christ, *we cannot remain as babes in Christ and still expect to be caught up at the coming of the Lord.* The apostle Paul had to get after the Corinthian church because of its carnality. That carnality revealed their spiritual

state. They had not grown and put away their fleshly nature. They had not come to a state where they could receive stronger spiritual food. They were still babes. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto *babes in Christ*. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.”

Neither can we spend our days and moments as we please and expect to be transformed in the twinkling of an eye at His coming. John wrote, “And now, little children, *abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence*, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (1Jn 2:28). An abiding life is needed so we can receive the fullness of grace that is in the presence of God. This grace will sanctify our inner man and make us worthy of Christ and His kingdom.

By Any Means Necessary

The rapture is an exclusive event. God has special things for those who pay the price. Paul expresses this when he says, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ” (Phil 3:7). This goes beyond what most of us understand today. And then he says, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil 3:8). What is he talking about? We don’t have to win Christ, do we? Isn’t salvation a free gift? Can’t we just do whatever we feel like doing and be caught up to the throne of God when Jesus comes?

Paul didn’t stop there: he went on to write, “*If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*” (Phil 3:11). What

is this “if by any means” stuff? This is something to think about! Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is revealing a very, very important truth. There is going to be a **select resurrection**. The resurrection he is referring to in Philippians chapter three is **the resurrection of the bride of Christ**.

Something To Attain

Furthermore, he says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:12-14). From Paul’s words we can understand that to be ready for the secret coming of the Lord is something we must attain.

“To attain” implies spiritual growth; it implies overcoming our trials; it implies gaining victory over sin. It implies ruling over the flesh and the devil; it implies running a race and winning first prize; it implies fighting a battle and conquering the enemy. We can see from these verses that there is something for which we should press towards. We have not yet arrived. We are still running with all our might to reach that goal. We are striving according to the power of God that is working mightily in us. Though the scriptures state, “we shall *all* be changed,” it should be clear that the word of God is referring to *all those who are ready*. The reference is to those who have attained—to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The Event

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1Cor 15:51-52). What will be changed at His coming? It should be obvious now that it is our bodies which will be changed. Our inner man—that is, our character—is being changed now as we live for God every day (2Cor 3:18). *If our inner man is not being changed now from glory to glory into His likeness, we cannot expect our bodies to be changed suddenly when Jesus comes.*

Writing to the Philippians, Paul says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil 3:20-21). Those who expect to be caught up at the coming of the Lord should have a real connection to heaven. Paul says, “... our conversation [our way of life, our conduct, our behavior] is in heaven.” In other words, we must have a heavenly life. Paul had pointed out in the previous verses that, in contrast to this heavenly life, there were many who walked according to the flesh, who were minding earthly things, and were averse to the demands of the cross of Christ. Those who live like that won’t be caught up when Jesus comes. “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)” (Phil 3:17-19).

There is going to be a **sudden disappearance** of the waiting saints on the day of the rapture. Jesus said, “I tell you in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Lk 17:34-36). For the saints who are caught up, it is going to be great! But for those who are left behind it is going to be terrible.

Joy In Heaven, Hell On Earth

In the Book of Revelation we read the following: “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev 12:12). The perfected church will instantly inherit eternal glory when she is caught up to the throne of God. Her arrival in heaven will change the very appearance of heaven forever. The heavens and those that dwell in them will rejoice, and that rejoicing will go on forever. But for those who are left on earth it is going to be a completely different story.

As the flood came and swept them all away in the days of Noah, the great tribulation will suddenly come upon the entire earth. No one will escape the terrible calamities that will strike everywhere with a vengeance. As fire and brimstone destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot, so judgment will come upon all people. Look what Jesus said: “And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did

eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, *and destroyed them all*. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, *and destroyed them all*. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Lk 17:26-30). It is clear that *everyone* upon the earth will be affected. Jesus said, “For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth” (Lk 21:35).

How Shall We Escape?

Jesus not only warns us to be ready, He instructs us *how* to be ready to meet Him when He comes. He said, “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk 21:34). Again, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Lk 21:36).

He is coming for those who love His appearing, for those who are ardently looking for Him. The hope of His coming inspires us to purify ourselves as He is pure, so that when He shall appear we will be like Him (1Jn 3:1-3).

We can hear the words of an overcomer, one who came to the place of being ready for the coming of the Lord, as we read Paul’s farewell to Timothy, his son in the faith. “For **I am now ready** to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,

I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2Tim 4:6-8). This servant of God, who at one time said he did not consider himself to have yet apprehended but was pressing forward toward the goal, now declares that he *is* ready. God had perfected him and his time had come to go to be with the Lord whom he had loved and served. May it be so with all of us. Let us fight the good fight, keep the faith, and finish our course. Let us prepare ourselves so we may hear the words of our beloved Lord on that day, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.” □

[Click to return to the Table of Contents](#)



BIBLICAL BOWS & ARROWS

Part 3 — Elders' Arrows

In this installment of the series on the symbolic meanings of bows and arrows in the Bible, we will study their **connections with fathers and elders**. (In reference to fathers, this can be either literal or spiritual fathers. Our biological parents should also be our spiritual parents, but unfortunately this is often not the case.) Let us see how God blesses parents with children, has blessings for their elders to give them, and will make those offspring a blessing in time and eternity.

The God Who Establishes

For the first association between elders and arrows let us study Psalm 127. From it we are inspired, instructed and encouraged to learn that it is **Jehovah Who builds and preserves our houses and habitations**. It is God Who will guide and guard all our labors and loved ones. Though men must sweat and toil in order to construct anything in this fallen world, we read that it is really the Lord Who establishes our families and keeps them secure. By their works men can make houses, but it takes faith to turn them into homes that remain.

A Quiver Of Arrows

This chapter also declares that **offspring are a heritage from the Lord** and then compares them to arrows held in a warrior's

hand or quiver. A happy (or blessed) man will have many of them. The passage ends with a promise and prophecy, that one day these **living arrows will defend what was achieved by their forefathers**. Flying on after their elders' courses have ended, they will continue to defeat and conquer future enemies. *"Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them... they shall speak with the enemies in the gate"* (Psa 127:5). In ancient times, gates were where elders judged and where enemies would fight the fiercest. These blessings and promises are not just for men and fathers, but for women and mothers also. *"Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them"* (Gen 24:60; 3:15; Ruth 4:10-11).

Inheriting Children

Inheritance is usually thought of as something children receive after the death of a parent or loved one. Yet in this passage we discover that the **children themselves are the inheritance of their fathers**. This fact is best revealed by our Heavenly Father's heritage. *"When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance... He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance"* (Deut 32:7-9). One day the nations of them that are saved will see those twelve names of the children of Israel inscribed on the gates of New Jerusalem as they enter that city with twelve foundations (Rev 21:12; Eze 48:31). Ultimately every family (or fatherhood) in heaven and earth gets its being, name and meaning from God the Father (Eph 3:15). May the eyes of our understanding be enlightened so that we may know the *"riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints"* (Eph 1:18).

The Stars Are Ours

Moreover, the Scriptures show that physical death does not separate the saint from his God-given heritage or cause it to cease. When Old Testament saints died, they were said to have been “gathered unto their fathers.” After the patriarch Job was tested by the loss of all he possessed, God restored to him twice as much of everything, except for his children. The same number that he had before was given again, showing that his children already in Paradise had not been permanently taken from him. Following the death of his innocent son as a result of David’s sin, the repentant father said, “*I shall go to him*” (2Sam 12:23). However this eternal inheritance is not made up of offspring born to us in just the physical way. We must not imagine heaven as being a repetition of our natural families, only richer, happier and longer lasting. When Jesus taught using the story of the rich man and Lazarus (two of Abraham’s many sons) He said that only one of them was carried up to “*Abraham’s bosom*” after death. The rich man went to hell (Lk 16:22; Mat 8:11). It is true that he was an earthly son of Abraham, like the “*sand which is upon the sea shore*” but it was Lazarus who became a spiritual one “*like the stars of the heaven; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies*” (Gen 22:17). “*For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith*” (Rom 4:13; Gal 3:1-29). **By faith such stars will also be ours.**

Seeing Seed

Christ was crucified, died and was buried without having any natural offspring, yet **through resurrection faith He “saw His seed”** (Isa 53:10; Psa 2:7-8). Jesus said, “*I will put my trust in Him.*

And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me” (Heb 2:10-16). From His throne the Son of God has promised that “*he that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son*” (Rev 21:7). Through faith in His suffering, sacrifice and resurrection, many sons are still being brought to glory. Whether we ever have physical children or not, if we have faith in, and the faith of, the Son of God, we too will one glorious day see our offspring.

Quivering Children

After the Psalm reveals that children are an inheritance, it likens them to a bunch of arrows. It states that a blessed man does not have just one or two of them, but a quiver full. This same Psalm sings that the fruit of the womb is a reward from the Lord. God’s very first recorded words to man were “*be fruitful, and multiply*” (Gen 1:28). Yet in direct contradiction to this command, a different message is being proclaimed today by evil men. Children are depicted as being burdens—detrimental to the environment and something that must be limited. Men are taught that the earth will not have the resources to sustain an expanding population. Women are told they will not be fulfilled by bearing children but must labor like men, rather than mothers. **A doctrine of barrenness and destruction of the unborn is being promoted.** The stated goal and motto of such rebels is known as ZPG (Zero Population Growth), but in fact their actual aim is zero population. God calls mankind to “*choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live*” (Deut 30:19). Yet the main choice of the ironically named “Pro-Choice” abortion movement is death for those in the womb, who get no choice. Another abominable (and abominably

misnamed) group, “The Planned Parenthood Association,” has for its real plan the prevention of parenthood and the slaughter of pre-born persons. Calling their carnage “Reproductive Health” they halt reproduction and murder innocent infants. The philosophy of these groups comes from a humanism that despises and destroys human life. Inspired by the murderer Satan, they do all they can to stop mankind from being fruitful. The results of these doctrines can now be seen in the richer and greater developed nations. One of the most common surgeries for women in the West is abortion. In the very countries that are more able to support larger populations, the birthrates are declining. Today many Christian couples do not want to have large families, while those who follow false prophets such as Marx and Mohammed do. Far from being a curse on the earth, children are gifts from God here and in eternity. All should desire and receive as many of them as God wants to give. What soldier would want to go to war with only one or two bullets and no extra ammunition? What good is an archer with no arrows?

Handled With Care

At the start of this series we looked at the preparation necessary for the production of literal arrows and compared this to the way God prepares His saints. The same process is no less applicable to parents and the upbringing of their offspring. Children must be spiritually, physically, mentally and socially straightened, shined, sharpened, and separated from harm in a loving and secure family. Like the quiver is for arrows, **parents must keep the home a place of protection for the young** from the corruptions of the world until it is time for their release. As with arrows, if not properly prepared and preserved, children will go off course and cause shame and

sorrow for their elders and others. To the ignorant observer it might appear that such careful and conscientious parents are quenching or depriving their children and being overprotective. If the same uninstructed person watched an expert archer in action he could make a similar misinterpretation. He would see the Bowman tightly holding onto his arrow and steadily drawing it back to himself. Yet rather than inhibiting the arrow, the archer is transferring all his energy to the projectile as he accurately aims it. **Parents, like skilled archers, must impart strength and guidance to their children.** Finally, the Bowman knows just when to discharge his arrow, and so should a father and mother. It is true that some parents cling onto their children and do not ever want to release them. But an arrow only works when you let it go. As we have already observed, though your children be loosed from you, they are not lost. Even the gates of death and hell will not be able to prevail against them.

Indoor Archery

The second place in the Bible where we can see a connection between arrows and elders is found in 2 Kings 13:14-21. Here we find the aged Elisha in his final hours. Up until this time nothing had been recorded about the prophet for over forty years; he would now have been in his eighties. Joash, the king of Israel, came to Elisha’s deathbed and weeping over him evoked past glories by crying out: *“O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.”* This was an echo of Elisha’s former triumphs over Syria (2Kgs 6:15) and the exclamation he made when he had seen his own mentor, Elijah, caught up to heaven (2Kgs 2:12). Nevertheless, the king had seen no fiery chariots coming for

Elisha, just a feeble old invalid suffering from a terminal illness. Joash was looking to the past but the dying **prophet was still looking forward in faith to future deliverances and victories.** Elisha told the king to take a bow and arrow. Too ill to go outside or draw a bow himself, he placed his hand on the king's and told him to shoot an arrow out an eastward facing window. This was the direction of the sunrise and from which the enemy would come. As it flew he named it the arrow of the Lord's deliverance from Syria. To naturally-minded men, the actions and instructions of spiritual elders are often a mystery and seem to make little sense. Some may have been thinking, "there were no Syrians in the area to get hit, the old man was too weak to shoot for himself" or "who does archery indoors anyway?" Yet **God frequently gives His gifts and guidance to us through trembling and age-spotted hands.** We may be healed by the laying on of hands of an unhealthy man. We may even receive a powerful ordination or anointing through a physically weak minister.

The Blessing Of Elders

Throughout the Biblical record we see God's blessings being passed on by frail, failing or fallible hands. Noah had just been inebriated and naked when he blessed two of his sons. Abraham was well-stricken in years when he sought a bride for his son. Isaac was blind, and literally had the wool pulled over his eyes when he felt the blessing go from himself to Jacob. Crippled and dying, Jacob blessed his grandsons while leaning on his staff that had now become a crutch. Joseph, ending his life in Egypt, spoke of the Exodus. Though advanced in years, Joshua called on all Israel to choose to serve the Lord and encouraged them to continue

conquering. King David, old and cold, bowed and blessed Solomon from his bed. In his last letter, though imprisoned, condemned and forsaken, the Apostle Paul reminded Timothy that he had laid hands on him and charged his spiritual son to boldly press forward in the ministry. In his last letter, the aged Apostle Peter, knowing his departure was at hand, strove to make sure the believers would keep their eyes on the prize. Likewise, at the end of his life, and afterwards, Elisha was still inspiring others to overcome. Let us desire and remember the laying on of our elders' hands. The instruments that God uses to ordain, bless and direct us may not always be the dynamic and charismatic ones. They may look worn out on the outside but resurrection power is working within. Let us remember that the weakest and most easily broken part of the bow is the bowstring; yet it is what provides all the speed and energy to the arrow. Even if we too become old, sick, shut-in or left on the shelf, our faith, prayer and vision can still fly through the windows toward victory and the coming of the Lord.

Winning The War

After the arrow was shot, the prophet instructed the king to strike the rest of them against the ground. This would have appeared to him even more foolish and irrational than shooting them out a window. No sane Bowman would intentionally dull and damage his arrows in this way. But **God has reasons that go beyond our human reasoning.** Joash gave only three half-hearted hits which really angered the prophet. Good enough is not good enough for God. He does not want us to just go through the motions, doing the minimum required to get by. Ok is not ok. It is not enough to win a few battles—**we must win the war.**

Elisha, zealous and enthusiastic unto the end, told the king he should have struck five or six times. (Five is the number of man with his five human senses and six is the number of the angels or created spiritual beings.) The Lord wants us to overcome in all things and put all our enemies—be they physical or spiritual—under our feet. He commands and demands that we be victorious. Nothing less than perfection will please God or His apostles and prophets! **Jesus has called us to overcome and inherit all things.** Even if our elders, parents and teachers are gone, the work and wars of the Lord will still go on. We are in Jesus' quiver and by Him we, and our offspring, will be more than conquerors! □

[Click to return to the Table of Contents](#)



Part 4 — Factors Promoting A Blissful Union

Adam in his pristine state of creation looked at Eve and said that she was “bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.” The bond and unity were solid. Adam saw that God had made them one. After his fall, however, man became self-centered. Adam responded to God saying “I was afraid,” “I hid myself,” “I was naked.” In fact in his fallen state he not only separated himself, but went further to blame the helpmate God had given him. Since God is restoring what man had lost in Eden (Acts 3:21), it is important to enter into marriage with an understanding of factors that promote unity in marriage. The indicators that one might look for in a prospective partner, and ideals that one might aspire to achieve as one prepares for marriage, are worth reviewing in order that the marriage union may be blessed.

Abide In Christ, End The War

The Old Testament law stated that a man newly married should not be sent to war, as his mind and heart would not be able

to focus on the battle. Similarly, we could say a man in the middle of a war should not be sent to marriage, as his attention would be divided. There are lusts that war in our members, and that is an important victory for us to gain before going into marriage (Jam 4:1; 1Pet 2:11).

Some ignorantly look to marriage as a solution for lust, hoping in the scripture: “It is better to marry than to burn [with lust].” Marriage is not the cure for uncontrollable sexual appetites: it is by grace that we reign in righteousness. And all that grace is made available to us as we abide in Christ (Gal 5:24; Rom 8:13).

This is one reason that dating is counterproductive to godly marriages: rather than fleeing youthful lusts, one is provoking it. As stated earlier, once the desires of the body have been exalted beyond measure, the mind is unable to receive proper guidance.

If there are struggles in these areas, speak to a mature servant of God (Pro 20:18). Get counsel and prayer regarding battles with inordinate affection (Col 3:5; Eze 23:11) and confess past mistakes and internal struggles. After decisive victories in this war, it is much easier to hear God’s voice and receive His guidance.

Sacrifice: The Measure Of Love

The measure of God’s love is sacrifice (1Jn 3:16; Jn 15:13). As such, the extent to which a person, before marriage, sacrifices for the family and family of God firstly, and secondly to better their own selves, also provides a window into the extent to which they will be capable of loving their partner after marriage. In this respect, parents who do everything for their children, instead of training them to be responsible and assist in household chores, do more harm than good to their children in the long run. In order to know if Rebekah was the one God had chosen for Isaac, Eliezer

placed such a test. He said that he would ask for water for himself but the maid should answer and say that she will draw water for him and for all the camels (Gen 24:14). Going beyond the call of duty, willing to go the extra mile, to spend and be spent, is a clear reflection of willingness to walk in love. Love goes beyond God-ordained duty.

One pastor said that a perfect marriage is not the union of two perfect people, but the union of two forgiving people. Bitterness and grudges that people are unable to get over before marriage will constitute baggage, an expensive excess luggage, that they will bring into the marriage and which will finally be directed at the spouse after marriage.

Growing in love—especially divine love—within marriage requires sacrifice. One may sacrifice without love (1Cor 13:3) but one cannot love without sacrifice. *Walking* in love is the first step (Eph 5:2). The fragrance of this sacrifice will be sensed when strife is avoided, forgiveness is extended, and kindness pervades both lives. The second step of love comes when on one's knees one is able to bear the faults of the other. The third step follows when, despite the faults of the partner, one is able to serve that person. This will inevitably bring us to the ultimate step: where one finds grace to obey all of God's truth. It is this point that God wants to bring everyone to—to love with a pure heart fervently (1Pet 1:22). With all the saints, one can then understand the length, breadth, height and the depth of God's love that we might be filled with His divine nature (Eph 3:16-19). Ezekiel saw this work being accomplished by the Holy Ghost (Ezk 47:1-5). He saw the waters (of the Holy Ghost) coming from the sanctuary,

first to the ankles, then to the knees, then the loins (for service, Jn 13:4-5) and finally above the head—to swim in.

Fear of God

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. God looks to the man that will tremble at His word. The preeminence that a person gives to God's word in his or her life is a clear indication of how blessed one's marriage will be. In practical terms, even if one has areas of weakness, such as an inability to forgive willingly, as long as the person has the fear of God, he will not let the sun go down on his anger and be willing to forgive and reconcile. The fear of God and the importance that one assigns to God's word may be assessed by the importance the person gives to be in the house of God beyond the Sunday Service; how much of their decisions are guided on the basis of God's word, and how much of it do they read daily.

Honor God

One who honors God will give the Lord preeminence in all aspects of their life. One visible area is with their substance (Pro 3:9). Are all things that are in the individual's possessions being only used in ways that come under His word and for His glory? Giving to God of the increase He gives clearly reflects whether the Lord will be able to rebuke the enemy on the couple's behalf and prosper their labors. One of the curses that came upon man, and especially woman, after Adam's fall, was that in sorrow she should bear children, her desire will be to her husband and that he shall rule over her. Caution is needed where prospective partners demonstrate traits of independence. Just as the head of every woman is the man, the head of every man is Christ. The extent

to which a young man is willing to surrender to the Lordship of Christ over his life will indicate prospects for a blessed union.

Honor Parents

Within the fear of God, children that honor their parents will more likely honor and respect their spouses as well. As previously stated, for sons, the wife will take the number one place that the mother had before marriage. The way the son interacts with the mother will indicate the way in which he will interact with his wife. Rebellious natures do not cease after marriage. Having trouble in the flesh (1Cor 7:28) will only propagate and compound after marriage especially as the two wills collide. In this respect, parental upbringing will also play a great part. Adonijah had his own way in his childhood, never being corrected by his father. When he grew up he exalted himself and appointed himself king (1Kg 1:5-6).

Willingness

When Abraham sent Eliezer to find a bride for Isaac, he told him that if she would not come with him then he would be free of the oath. This mirrors God's call upon every saved and spirit-filled person to become the bride of Christ. Many will give excuses why they cannot come, as Jesus shared in the parable of the great wedding feast. Just as Rebekah exercised her will to go, there must be a willingness to go and become a wife. If there is reluctance on either side, or if a person feels pressured to consent, problems may arise later. It must be accepted that God works in us all to will and do of His good pleasure and that all things will work for good. Where this basic faith is lacking, a blissful union may remain elusive.

Seeking God

While Eliezer went seeking a wife for Isaac, Isaac was seeking God and meditating. The best legacy parents can leave to their children is a legacy of prayer. This is imperative for the head of the household, the husband, to order his house under his Head: Christ. Similarly, the prayer of a mother to stand in the gap and make up the hedges that children may constantly break down requires a spirit of prayer. In fact, God's word speaks of prayer as a love above the physical and emotional—it is love in the Spirit (Rom 15:30; Col 1:8). It is this love that enables us to fulfill the law of Christ—to love one another. A prospective spouse that gives priority to prayer is one that will bless and unite the family.

Fullness of Blessing

Psalm 128 is a Psalm of degrees—one that was sung as the Jews would go up during times of feasts. This Psalm in particular speaks of God's intended blessings over families, such as peace and joy in the home. Where do these blessings for the family come from? "The Lord shall bless [the family] out of Zion." The Lord dwells in Zion and shines His glory out of Zion. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined" (Psa 50:2). May the God of Zion lead us in every decision of our life, especially regarding marriage, so that His glory may be seen in us. □

[Click to return to the Table of Contents](#)



I was born into a Hindu family, the eldest of two children. My mother a doctor and my father a professor, both valued education and taught us the same. At an early age, I began reading the teachings of Gautama Buddha and decided that I too wanted to achieve Nirvana and salvation in my life, but I did not know how to obtain it. I understood, that there were two paths in life: the material and the spiritual. Unhappiness lay on the path of material aspiration where everything was temporary. However, eternal peace lay on the spiritual path whose final destination was God. I wanted to walk the spiritual path in my life. I wanted to walk towards that one final and ultimate God who stood at the end of that path, beyond whom there were no more gods.

Throughout my education from school to graduate college, I studied in a convent and was exposed to Christian missionaries and to their discipline and teachings. I liked the discipline of the nuns and the symbol of Jesus on the cross. But beyond that, I hated Christians and Christianity as a religion. I thought that it was a very immoral religion since most of my Christian classmates lived a very immoral life. Whenever I saw missionaries distributing tracts, I would take them, tear them up and throw them away as I loathed Christian propaganda. If at that time, someone would have told me that I would convert and become a Christian one day, I would have hated myself.

I got married into a very traditional Hindu family in a match arranged by my parents and lived as a Hindu for 10 years of my married life. It was while I was waiting for our travel documents to move to a foreign land that I felt for the first time my past slipping away. I was leaving my two small kids, aged 7 and 8, behind with my parents for an uncertain period. In my heart, huge and fearful storms were rising and I could not control them and I was very afraid. I felt that my past had slipped away and my future held no hope. My present was also not in my control. I felt like a rudderless speck of dust that was being tossed and thrown around in the tumultuous ocean of life. Just then, I saw a Gideon Bible kept on the dressing table in the room. I looked at the Bible and laughed. I spoke to it saying, "Are you god? My gods did not help me. So if you are god, are you going to help me?"

I don't know why I did what I did next. I had never seen anyone do this before. I picked up the Gideon Bible and closed my eyes. I then opened the Bible and placed my fingers on a verse. When I opened my eyes to look at the verse, the words which leaped out to me said, "Keep restrain, I am with you." I don't know how, but these words suddenly stopped the storm in my heart and stilled the tumultuous waves within. I held on to this verse like an anchor. Every time I felt the storm in my heart rising, I recited these words and the storm went calm. At that time I was doing the "prosperity prayer." Every Friday I took a head bath and donned a red saree and performed this prayer. The relative in whose house we were living used to attend a prayer meeting every Friday evening and compelled us to attend this prayer meeting. They prayed to Jesus for each other's problems and I became a part of this prayer

group. Every Friday morning I would do the “prosperity prayer” and in the evening attend this other prayer meeting. This went on for some time. However, during those simple prayer meetings, I started having visions of Jesus on the cross.

In my first vision, I saw Jesus nailed to the cross. He was a figure in flesh and blood and I could see His palms nailed and bleeding. I could see Jesus breathing in pain. He was raised up on a wooden cross and His feet tied together by a nail pierced through them. I saw multitudes thronging before Him. I also saw myself standing in that crowd. I looked for Christians in that crowd but could not find many. On seeing this vision, I cried desperately and wept before God. I asked Jesus for forgiveness for all those times when I tore the tracts while in college. I looked at Jesus and at various Hindu gods and knew that no one in history had made such a sacrifice of love for humanity. After that vision, I realized that Jesus had not died for Christians alone. He had died for humanity and he had died for me too! After this vision, I started reading the Bible.

The second vision I had was after a few weeks during the same prayer meeting. In this vision, I saw Jesus as a tall, dusky figure standing near a short wall and calling to me. He was not talking to me. He was only beckoning to me with His eyes. He was asking me to enter into a small door in that wall. I was so happy that Jesus was calling me that I jumped and ran to Him. As I ran to Jesus, I realized, that I had found my ultimate God whom I was searching for all my life on the spiritual path I always wanted to walk on. My search for God had come to an end. My spiritual journey had begun. I obeyed Jesus and tried to enter into that small

door He was asking me to enter. I was sure of finding beautiful things behind those walls since Jesus Himself was beckoning me to enter. But as soon as I bent and steeped into that door with great difficulty, I could see only thorns, thistles and thick briars all around. There was no path to walk on. I had to cut through those thorns and thistles with my bare arms and as I tried to pave a path before me, my hands bled being pierced by those thorns. Turning to Jesus, I asked why He was asking me to enter into this forest full of thorns and thistles? He answered me and said that I had to walk through these thorns and thistles and prove my love to Him. Only when I succeeded in walking through this forest of thorns without complaining, would He wait for me on the other side, to take me to green pastures and peaceful waters. At that time I had not read Psalm 23 and did not know what my vision symbolically represented. Meanwhile in my physical world, I had also started kneeling down in prayer to Jesus every night.

One evening after the prayer meeting, I was listening to the general conversation and suddenly, I lost track of what they were saying. I don't remember if my eyes were open or closed. I just remember myself sinking deeper and deeper into darkness within. I was falling and falling into a deep and still darkness. The darkness was so dark and so still that even if a thin needle were to fall, it's sound would reverberate for a long time in that stillness. In that dark stillness even if my eyes were open, I could not have seen anything. But in that stillness, I heard a voice. The voice was very soft at first. It just whispered three words. It said, “Take my stamp.” I did not pay heed to that voice and ignored it. The voice came a second time and a little louder. It said again the same three

words, “Take my stamp.” I did not know what “stamp” meant. But I knew by faith who that voice belonged to. I knew it was Jesus speaking. Yet, I asked that voice, “Who are you?” The voice said, “I am Jesus.” I asked, “What is ‘stamp?’” Jesus said, “Get baptized.” I did not know what baptism was. I knew it had something to do with conversion but that was it. I asked Jesus, “How can I get baptized? I am a Hindu and married to a Hindu. I have to ask my husband’s permission before making any decision. How can I say yes to you now?” Then Jesus said, “You are a Hindu and are married. However, you are in a spiritual realm now where you have no husband and no father or mother or children. It is just the two of us on this plane, just you and Me. You are free to make your decision now.” Then the voice for the third time said to me, “Take my stamp.” Since Jesus said that I was free to make a decision, I replied, “Yes, if I am free, then I will take your stamp.” The minute I said this, I remember coming out of the trance and I saw myself sitting next to my husband in the physical realm and I realized the enormity of the decision I had just made. I shared this with my husband and informed him that I had decided to take baptism.

From then on, I tried to find out what baptism was and how to get baptized. I left for UAE and had surrendered to Jesus in faith in all matters. I knelt down in prayer to Jesus asking for His counsel and guidance. I prayed to Jesus to show me the way to baptism. The first job I found overseas was at an office where the owner was a Hindu married to a Christian who had been baptized 21 years ago. God was leading me. Subsequently, someone in my office came to know that I was seeking baptism. He was a member of the New Testament Church in Dubai. He brought me to church and

introduced me to the pastor. The pastor asked me why I wanted to get baptized. I responded by expressing my love for Jesus. I decided to give up all my jewelery realizing it was all dung before the Lord. On January 9th, 1998, I was baptized and soon after I received the Holy Spirit and started speaking in tongues.

All these years until this day, God has led me most wonderfully. In the beginning my parents took it very hard and this affected my children. But now they have accepted my conversion and transformation. Jesus has wonderfully sustained my family and cared for us all these years. My life has been surrendered to fulfill God’s purpose in this world and His will for my life. When I look back from where I came from, I see that my former life was a hardened land full of thorns and briers. God had mercy on this land and decided to plow it. Then God sowed the seed: His word. He cared for this seed which took root and brought forth a tender plant. God nurtured that plant for 11 long years in the desserts of Dubai, watering it constantly. Soon after, He plucked out that plant from its roots and taking it in the palm of His hands, Jesus planted it in another soil. This new land is Canada. Here the Lord is doing a more wonderful work in this plant’s life.

Jesus has promised me through a vision, that He would be there waiting for me to take me with Him, when I have accomplished His purpose in this world. I know God will not fail me and He will keep His promise.

*Sister Sunitha Thakur
Toronto, Canada*

[Click to return to the Table of Contents](#)



PECULIAR PANDAS

As we look at the “cute-and-cuddly” giant panda, it’s not hard to see why this bear is so commonly adored. Its striking black and white coloring and short muzzle on an apparently oversized head give it a baby-like appeal. To many, this animal, renowned for its lack of violent behavior towards man, seems like a soft toy come to life: a living teddy bear.

The first record of these bamboo-eating creatures come from the highlands of western China, from a Chinese text purportedly more than 2,700 years old. Other records show that during the Han Dynasty (around 2,000 years ago) the emperor kept a much-treasured giant panda in his garden. Regarded as a symbol of peace and friendship, panda skins are recognized throughout Chinese imperial records as goodwill gifts on great occasions of state. But the panda apparently remained unknown outside China until the late 1800s, when accounts of its existence reached the outside world by traders and Christian missionaries.

Today, the giant panda is widely recognized as the international symbol for wildlife conservation. The arrival of Chi-Chi, the panda at the London Zoo in 1961, inspired the fledgling WWF to adopt the “big, furry animal with her appealing, black-patched eyes” for

its famous panda logo. But the panda’s fame has not managed to keep it from sliding towards extinction, with less than a thousand estimated to be still alive in the wild. Expanding human settlement and agriculture now confine the giant panda to just six isolated populations across China.

Pandas are completely suited to their bamboo diet. The famous thumb-like appendage on their front paws enables them to hold, pull and strip bamboo stems, while their large head supports the strong jaw muscles needed for chewing. But their dependence on bamboo means they face starvation when their food flowers and dies! Pandas used to simply migrate to areas with other bamboo species, but agricultural expansion now restricts such migration.

Trying to rescue this flagship species from the “seriously endangered” list, China and the international community have instituted several programs to protect the giant panda from poachers and to restore bamboo habitats. There are also million-dollar breeding projects with zoos worldwide in an effort to boost panda numbers. Nevertheless, breeding giant pandas in captivity has proven very difficult, despite the best expertise and technology.

But are illegal hunting and habitat loss the only threats to panda survival? A recent news report said it was not just these that were killing the giant panda—but evolution as well! The report said, “Evolution simply has not done right by one of the world’s most popular animals, now a critically endangered species with only about a thousand believed to exist in the wild” (New York Times).

The report went on to explain that, as giant pandas mostly live a solitary life amongst the dense bamboo thickets, females must rely

on their scent to attract an equally reclusive male. Timing is crucial, as female pandas have but two or three fertile days per year. And if an egg is successfully fertilized, it floats free in the womb for up to five months before it implants in the uterus and starts developing.

And then, if there are no problems during pregnancy, a tiny, blind and helpless cub is born, with very little fur. It is utterly dependent on its 100 kg (220 lb) mother who, if not extraordinarily careful and devoted, could easily crush her infant—and, apparently, often does. This would be the equivalent of a 3.5 kg (8 lb) human baby having a mother weighing around 3,000 kg (three tons)!

When twin cubs are born (nearly half of all births), the mother panda must abandon one of them—such are the demands of caring for the one helpless infant that must be cradled to her chest for weeks on end if it is to survive.

With all these obstacles to reproduction, it seems incredible that the panda still exists. Yet here is an evolutionary puzzle—how is it that, with such reproductive deficiencies, the species managed to survive even up to these last few years?

The panda's situation takes on a whole new perspective within a Biblical framework. Because the Bible is historical truth, we can know that pandas have not been in existence for millions of years, nor are they descended from primeval pond scum which supposedly sprang to life by chance, billions of years ago. Instead, the ancestors of today's pandas were created with the other land animals on Day 6 of Creation Week (Gen 1:24-25); so pandas could not have been on Earth longer than about 6,000 years. Furthermore, all giant

pandas in the world today are descended from a pair of animals that came off the Ark around 4,300 years ago.

But would this original ancestral “kind” have looked like the lovable black-and-white big-headed creature we today call the giant panda? Or was the original “kind” a more nondescript bear—the ancestor of all bears in the world today? One difficulty with such a concept would be explaining why only the giant panda and its possible relative, the red panda, have a “thumb.” Could it be that other bears have lost the genetic information for the thumb, which was present in the originally created bear “kind”? Or could the appendage have arisen by mutations which resulted in distortion and enlargement of the wrist-bone? (Though mutations are genetic copying mistakes which cause defects, even defects may on rare occasions be helpful, although they still involve corruption or loss of information. Evolutionary belief requires information-increasing mutations, but observed mutations are relentlessly “downhill” in information content.) The truth is that it stretches beyond belief that random mutations could have produced such a wonderfully useful appendage as the panda's thumb—complete with working muscles all in the right places. Evolutionists claim that compared to the human thumb, the panda thumb is very basic, therefore it is not really a good design. But does the panda really need a human-like thumb? We should remember that pandas do not have to cook, write, repair cars or use computers. Therefore, they don't need a human thumb, in fact, their own “thumb” serves them far more effectively in handling bamboo than a human thumb ever could.

Almost certainly the giant pandas were originally created as their “own kind,” already endowed with their distinctive characteristics that suit them superbly to their specialized mode of life.

So if the giant panda is so well-suited to living in bamboo forests, why is its present reproductive capacity so marginal for survival? As genetic information is passed from parents to offspring, generation after generation, the number of “copying mistakes” (mutations) present in the population progressively increases. Natural selection will not get rid of all defects, as many of them are “hidden” in their effects if the mutated genes are inherited from one parent only. Known as the mutational load or genetic burden, this is likely to be a primary factor in the giant panda’s decline. This problem is worse in species with low breeding rates. For evolutionists, this build-up of mutated genes is a major difficulty, but it strikingly fits the Bible’s description of a “groaning” creation “in bondage to decay” (Rom 8:21-22).

The build up of genetic copying mistakes therefore explains the giant panda’s degenerative decrease into extinction, aggravated by the approaching human settlements and illegal poaching. But for evolutionists, the belief that they have been around for “millions of years” is put into a big question mark. For Christians, though, the pandas give gentle testimony to a creation “subjected to frustration” and which “waits in eager expectation” for God to restore everything, as He has promised (Rom 8:19-20; Acts 3:21). □

[Click to return to the Table of Contents](#)



In the mid 1800's, a missionary from Canada traveled to New Hebrides (Vanuatu) to take the gospel of the love of Christ to a people that had not heard of such a great love. Risking life, abandoning comforts, and forsaking his own will, John Geddie, traveled 20,000 miles to this little known people and left for us an awe-inspiring testimony of the power of the love of Christ. After his death, a tablet was placed behind the pulpit he preached from which read: *"In memory of John Geddie, D.D., born in Scotland, 1815, minister in Prince Edward Island seven years, missionary sent from Nova Scotia to Aneiteum for twenty-four years. When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians here, and when he left in 1872 there were no heathen."*

John Geddie was born in Banff, Scotland on April 10, 1815 to devout Christian parents. He was the only son to his parents who also had three daughters. The following year his parents moved to Nova Scotia, Canada where John had his upbringing. In his youth John was greatly convicted of his sin, so much so that he thought he could not be forgiven. Yet the love of Christ overcame all these thoughts and John gave his heart to the Lord and devoted his life to Christ. He went on to study theology but his health began to deteriorate. At this point in his life, John made a covenant with the Lord that if the Lord would heal him and restore him to good health that he would devote his life to take the gospel to a heathen land. The faithful Lord answered John's cry and

later in life John would be faithful to keep his part of the covenant. In 1838 he was ordained as a pastor of a church in Prince Edward Island.

During this time, Prince Edward Island was a British Colony and the churches in these areas were still developing and seeking help from other countries and lands. Yet John had the burden that they should send missionaries to heathen lands that had not heard the gospel before. Despite opposition, John was successful and others adopted this idea as well. They were moved by his plea: *"To undertake a mission to the heathen is our solemn duty and our high privilege. The glory of God, the command of Christ and the reproaches of those who have gone to perdition unwarned, call us to it. With 600,000,000 of immortal souls as my clients, I beg you to arouse yourselves and to take a worthy part in this noble enterprise which seems destined, in the arrangement of God, to be instrumental in achieving the redemption of the world."*

In 1846, John, his wife and their children also engaged in this endeavor as they began their journey to Eastern Melanesia. Before leaving, John testified: *"In accord with the Redeemer's command and assured of His presence, we are going forth to those lands where Satan has established his dark domain. I know that suffering awaits me. But to bear the Redeemer's yoke is an honor to one who has felt the Redeemer's love."*

After arriving in Samoa, John spent six months studying the Samoan language and this would greatly aid him in future communications. Thereafter he and his family traveled by boat on a tour of the islands in order to determine where to settle and begin their mission. The natives of these islands were living in very primitive conditions and many were cannibals. Horror stories of murder and brutality abounded. On one island a ship had crashed with a crew of around 22 people. They were all killed and eaten. To make matters

worse, white traders would engage in violent acts against the natives that precipitated a spirit of revenge against the white foreigners and made evangelism difficult and dangerous. There were even cases of innocent missionaries martyred in these attacks of revenge. Yet, John Geddie decided to settle on the island of Aneiteum in 1848 and continued there for 24 years till the day of his death. After the ship left them on this island they began their uphill task of sharing the love of God with the natives of this cruel and ruthless island. They were the only Christians on the island. John wrote, *“Though severed now from those with whom we could take sweet counsel, we are not alone. We have His promise, at whose command we have come hither, ‘Lo, I am with you always.’”*

The inhabitants looked like savages and also acted like savages. The men had long hair twisted into locks which were their pride and the women had hair cut short. They painted their faces to look dreadful to the foreigner and cut large holes in their ears and noses. The women wore a girdle made of a leaf and the men were almost naked. The wife served as a slave to her husband and if the husband died, the wife would be strangled to death so that she could, as they believed, accompany her husband into the afterlife. Cannibalism was an established practice and many considered human flesh the best of foods. Enemies in battle would be eaten and people were known to even eat their own children. Revenge was part of life and culture, and love and forgiveness were unknown. This was the situation in which John Geddie and his family had to live and work, in order to share the love of Christ. He wrote: *“The love of Christ sustains us and constrains us. My heart pants to tell this miserable people the wonders of redeeming love...If ever we win these benighted islanders, we must draw them with cords of love. I know*

of no power that is adequate to transform their lives except that which transformed my own life, namely the power of the living Christ who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Geddie began his work with Aneiteum as his base but knew he needed help. He sent requests for more missionaries to come from Canada and Scotland but for years he labored alone. One famous missionary who would later arrive and work in this area was John G. Paton. Although there were many trials and hardships (including the death of one son at age three), Geddie worked hard to share the gospel through various means throughout the island. As he traveled, many tried to kill him, stone him, and injure him in some way. He did face physical injuries but endured to continue to share the love of Christ through words and deeds.

On one occasion, Geddie found a woman waiting next to her husband’s dead body. She was awaiting her death by strangling. Geddie took the woman and told the people that she should not die. They beat Geddie, took the woman back and strangled her to death. Geddie tried to stop them but could not prevail. After her death, risking his own life, he began to gently share with them the love of God and how the Son of God gave up all his heavenly riches to come to earth to die for them. Compelled by the love of Christ emanating from this man of God, the men lowered their clubs and sticks and listened to this most beautiful story. Truly the love of God can change even the hardest of hearts!

John Geddie patiently labored for the Lord and in time he began to see the fruit of his labors as many were being converted to Christ. He taught his converts to share the gospel with others and also to love and study the word of God. Many of these natives would go on

to be missionaries themselves, taking this gospel of love to the other surrounding islands. Some even died as martyrs on other islands!

As years passed by, the darkness of Satan encompassing these islands was dissipating as the light of the love of Christ pervaded the islands. Geddie wrote about the transformation of the island and its people: *“For many months after our arrival almost every day brought some new act of theft to light, and altogether we lost property to a considerable amount; but now locks and keys are entirely useless. The natives who attended our Sabbath meetings used to come with their clubs and spears and painted visages; but now we seldom see a weapon on the Sabbath day, and the habit of painting is falling into disuse. I have seen the day when a man who wore a garment was the sport of others, but now every rag in the community is in requisition on the Sabbath day. All this were nothing, however, except as evidence of a change of heart wrought by the Spirit of God.”*

One day the most feared man, known as the greatest cannibal on the island, came to see Geddie. In his area, there were very few children because he had eaten many of them. Adults were also terrified of him because of all the murders he had committed. Yet he came to Geddie because he heard about the gospel of love and forgiveness that he was preaching. Even the most impossible of cases were being changed by the love of Christ. The transformation on Aneiteum was so profound that people from other islands traveled to Aneiteum just to see first hand the remarkable change in the island.

On December 14, 1872, the Lord called John Geddie home to be with Him. His labor for the Lord he loved is a testimony to the great power of the love of Christ that can change and transform a life and an island from darkness to light. □

Excuse me, are you Jesus?

A group of salesmen went to a regional sales convention in Chicago. They had assured their wives that they would be home in plenty of time for Friday night's dinner. In their rush, with tickets and briefcases, one of these salesmen inadvertently kicked over a table which held a display of apples. Apples flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time for their nearly missed boarding. All but one! He paused, took a deep breath, and experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned. He told his buddies to go on without him, waved good-bye, told one of them to call his wife when they arrived at their home destination and explain his taking a later flight. Then he returned to the terminal where the apples were all over the terminal floor. He was glad he did.

The 16 year old girl was totally blind! She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in frustration, and at the same time helplessly groping for her spilled produce as the crowd swirled about her, no one stopping and no one to care for her plight.

The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many of them had become battered and bruised; these he set aside in another basket. When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, "Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay?" She nodded through her tears. He continued on with, "I hope we didn't spoil your day too badly." As the salesman started to walk away, the bewildered blind girl called out to him, "Mister..." He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, "...are you Jesus?" He stopped in mid-stride, and he wondered. Then slowly he made his way to catch the later flight with that question burning and bouncing about in his soul: "Are you Jesus?"

Do people mistake you for Jesus? That's our destiny, is it not? To be so much like Jesus that people cannot tell the difference as we live and interact with a world that is blind to His love, life and grace. If we claim to know Him, we should live, walk and act as He would. Knowing Him is more than simply quoting scripture and going to church. It's actually living the Word as life unfolds day to day. We are the apple of His eye even though we, too, have been bruised by a fall. He stopped what He was doing and picked you up on a hill called Calvary and paid in full for our damage. May the Lord help us to do the same. *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (Jn 15:13).