

A photograph of a young child in a crowd next to a soldier with a rifle. The child is wearing blue overalls and holding a piece of bread. The soldier is wearing camouflage pants and holding a rifle. The background shows a crowd of people.

# *Forerunner*

Preparing Christians for the Kingdom of God

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November 2002

## The Future of EUROPE?

# November 2002 Contents

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## About Our Cover



Immigration—particularly from Islamic countries—as lately become the prime topic of concern in Europe. With immigrant populations growing faster than native ones, Europeans are concerned that they are quickly losing their cultures. How will Europe react? **(Reuters)**

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# The Elements of Motivation

## Part Five: Who We Are

Sometimes it seems as though all of life's time is divided between just two general activities, work and play. One we look forward to eagerly, but very frequently, the same cannot be said of the other. We often perceive the expending of time and energy in work as drudgery, a necessary duty, or even an evil one must do before one can do something more pleasurable. When viewed this way, the major difference between the two is attitude.

We generally view work in a much less favorable light than play, and as a result, work leaves us feeling drained, sometimes cross, and itching to get away from it. On the other hand, we may expend far more energy playing than we would ever think to spend working, finishing tired but exhilarated and wishing it could continue.

A story is told about a general contractor who sought to advance one of his workers into a supervisory position. He asked two bricklayers the same question, receiving two very different replies, revealing which man had the greater vision and perceived work in an attitude more likely to produce more and better results. The question he asked was, "What are you doing?" The first bricklayer replied, "I am laying bricks." The second, however, replied, "I am building a beautiful building." The first man saw only what was immediately before him. The second saw not only his immediate work but also its relationship to the result.

### What Really Reinvigorated Jesus?

John 4:3-4, 6, 31-34 records an incident that shows the difference attitude can make:

He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. . . . Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about

the sixth hour. . . . In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

At this point in His ministry, Jesus was gaining attention, and to avoid arousing even more attention and directly clashing with the Pharisees, He moved His work north into Galilee. The shortest route there was through Samaria, the land of the Samaritans. Verse 4 says He *needed* to go that way. He had a choice of two roads to get to Galilee. One went around Samaria, the other through it. The latter was obviously the shorter route. Most Jews took the longer route to avoid having to deal with the Samaritans. The Greek indicates that Jesus was led to choose the shorter route: He *had* to go that way.

By the time the group reached Jacob's well, Jesus was exhausted. Most of the modern versions fail to give the force of His tiredness because it takes a great number of English words to parallel it. They may say He sat down, "just as He was." It indicates He wearily flopped down, as if it was more than just being tired from traveling. We can easily think of Jesus as the all-conquering and mighty Messiah who swept aside every obstacle in His path as if they did not exist. John, however, shows us a Jesus who had to struggle against His humanity.

It is good for us to remember that the Word became flesh (John 1:14). Hebrews 4:15 says He was tested in all things as we are. Yet, even when He was bone weary, He did not allow his weariness to justify sin or failure to carry out His God-assigned obligations in serving and setting an example for mankind. Experiencing the kinds of obstacles we must overcome fully prepared Him to function as our High Priest. When

Jesus speaks, we need to be confident that He has every right to speak, not merely because He is God but also because He has experienced the limitations and weaknesses of humanity. Jesus' manhood was not something that was merely apparent but a real participation in humanity's frailties. His work was just as fatiguing to Him as it would be to us.

This story of the woman at the well begins with a bone-weary, physically worn out Jesus. The disciples leave Him to go into the city to buy some food. When they return, they find Him in an entirely different state: His hunger is gone, His exhaustion ended, and He is full of fresh vigor, ready to go on doing His work.

Their first thought is that someone else had supplied Him with food and reinvigorated Him, but this is not the case at all. Jesus' reply is that something entirely different reenergized Him. Commentators commonly conclude that Jesus said doing God's work stimulated him. It is true that involvement in work produces further stimulation. From our own experience, we know that a job we dread doing seems to erect a barrier that keeps us from even starting, leading to procrastination. Finally, we drag ourselves into beginning, but once we get going, the work produces its own energy in us, our attitude changes, and we really get into the job.

Yet, that is not quite what Christ said. *McClaren's Commentary* on this verse makes an interesting observation, one worth mentioning because it more accurately

*“My food is to  
do the will of Him  
who sent me,  
and to finish His work.”  
—John 4:34*

reflects what He said: “Notice that the language of the original is so constructed as to give prominence to the idea that the *aim* of the Christ's life was the doing of the Father's will; and that it is the *aim* rather than the actual performance and realization of the *aim* which is pointed at by our Lord.”

His words, then, are better rendered, “My food is that I *may* do the will of Him that sent Me and finish His work.” His reinvigoration derived from making the accomplishment of the Father's will His every impelling

motive. In this case, it was not the actual doing of the work but the motive for doing it that was so energizing and stimulating.

*The Revised English Bible* translates this verse as, “But Jesus said, ‘For Me it is meat and drink to do the will of Him who sent me until I have finished His work.’” “Until” properly indicates He was being sustained and energized from the motivation to see the work done. The apostle Paul expresses a similar motivation in I Corinthians 9:16, “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” These men felt driven to do the work God had appointed for them.

If our lives are going to be at all worthy, it will be because of two factors: What we aim for in life and recognizing who we are. The first may be simply described by saying, “You gotta have high hopes,” and we can have no higher aim in life than to do the will of the Father. The second can be understood by grasping why psychologists keep trying to persuade parents to work to build their children's self-esteem. They have observed that, if children do not think they are anything or can do anything, are of no value and unloved, or have absolutely no skills, they will not do anything. They will spend their lives cowering in self-pity and spinning their wheels in ineffective, low-level activity.

Anything connected to doing the will of the Father supercedes all other ambitions in life. Jesus Himself says in Matthew 6:33, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

## Are We Important?

Understanding I Corinthians 10:11 helps us realize the significant position we maintain because of God's calling: “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.” “All these things” refers to God's experiences with Old Testament Israel. These events took place over a span of more than a thousand years and involved millions of people being moved about as God worked out His purpose. As the context shows, His purpose included recording these things for our spiritual benefit. God made massive preparations far in advance of our arrival to provide us witnesses of how to do or not to do things to please Him and prepare us for His Kingdom. Paul's powerful admonition tells us how important we are and why we must flee idolatry (verse 14)!

II Peter 3:11-14 adds further encouragement to the called of God to take every advantage of their unique position:

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy

conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless. . . .

Luke 12:35-40 adds yet more incentive to get ourselves moving:

Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

These strong warnings and encouragements apply only to one small and unique group of very special people who are blessed and valuable to God above all on earth (Malachi 3:16-17). They are special and valuable not because they are great, talented, and accomplished in this world, but because God has called them, covered them with the priceless blood of Jesus Christ, and made them His regenerated children.

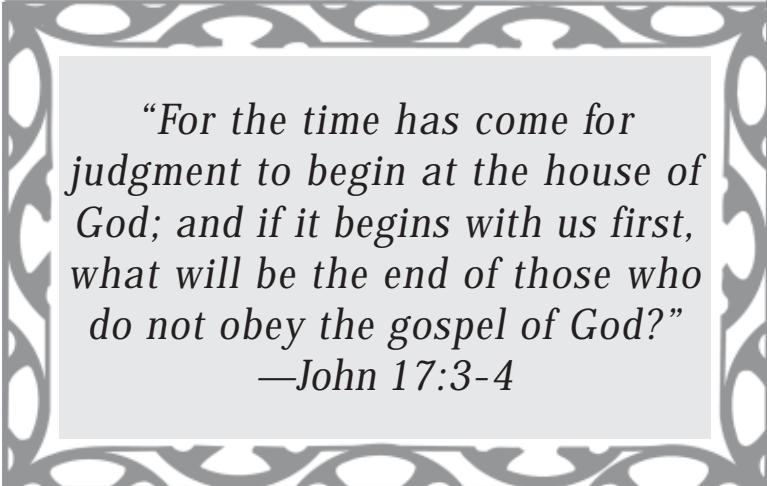
## Called to Be Saints

An interesting sidelight on this appears in Romans 1:1, 7: “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God. . . . To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints. . . .” Notice that in both verses the verb form “to be” appears: in verse 1, “called to be an apostle,” and in verse 7, “called to be saints.” Neither “to be” is in the Greek text. While their insertion by the translators is not entirely wrong, they tend to give a misleading impression that can easily result in misunderstanding.

“To be” can give a person the impression of something resulting in the future or of something that must be earned. The Greek, however, does not imply either. In verse 1, Paul is clearly saying that his apostleship coincided with or was simultaneous with his calling!

Acts 9:15-16 emphatically proves this. God had already determined what Paul would do at the time He called him. The same is true of our sainthood. The beloved of God are saints, and He loved us when He called us. He did not wait until later to begin loving us. In the same way, our sainthood began at our calling because God was already setting us apart.

The word translated “called” more specifically means “summoned.” It does not imply “named” or “designated.” It does not describe a name by which we



*“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”*  
—John 17:3-4

are known but the thing we are summoned to be. The calling is our vocation, our work, and our work is to keep God’s commandments and to witness for Him (Isaiah 43:11-12).

“Saint” and “holy” express the same general concept, though they entered the English from different languages. Both imply separation, consecration, or dedication. The common idea is “belonging to God.” A saint, then, is one who has been summoned to be dedicated or consecrated as belonging to God.

Therefore, we are not our own but have been placed into an exclusive group. God has summoned us to glorify Him with our lives, and it is from this that the witness of Him shines forth. The glory of the witness arises entirely from a saint’s striving for a purity of life that matches our Savior’s. Without striving, the consecration derived from God’s summons would not amount to a thing. What we see here is our tremendous privilege of being the called of God.

Amos 3:1-2 declares, “Hear this word that the LORD, has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: ‘You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.’” The Israelites failed in their calling, but ours is exceedingly higher! Virtue, goodness, purity, righteousness, mercy, joy, and peace all express noble things we love to embrace, but they all go to naught unless we see who we

are. For at the foundation of what we need to produce these wonderful qualities is holiness—what God has summoned us to be and do.

If we do not grasp the awesome privilege and purpose of this high calling, we will not aim high enough with our lives. We will not make the effort to produce because we will not see that this *is* our life. I Peter 4:17 admonishes us, “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” Brethren, this is it for us! We will have no second chance to grab the brass ring!

Every branch of our armed forces has a special elite group like the Army Rangers or Navy Seals to which is given both honor and weighty responsibility. A similar civilian group would be the SWAT Team of a municipal police force. To be chosen as a member is an exceedingly great privilege. The implications of the Marine Corp’s former advertising motto is appropriate if altered somewhat to apply to the called. About the Marines, it proclaims, “The few, the proud, the Marines.” For us, it might say, “The few, the humbled, the called.”

Far too many in the church of God have been deluded into believing in some slightly modified form of the worldly notion that all one has to do is to accept Christ. However, God is creating, and He has called us for the express purpose of giving us the opportunity to yield to His creative efforts. Yielding is the work of submitting to His will. This is how purity of life is produced; this is how character is built and how the witness is made.

Recall that in John 4:34 Jesus draws attention to the fact that His *desire* to do the will of God and finish His work motivated Him to lay Himself out for God and mankind. John 17:3-4 shows His success: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

## Summoned to Be Sent

Jesus not only accomplished what He set out to do, but He also glorified God in the way He did it. In His statement, He draws attention to the fact that He knew God had sent Him to do what He did. Later, He expands this divine commission to those He called and appointed as apostles: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). It is well known that *apostle* means “one sent.”

This principle of sending does not end there. As we see in Isaiah 43:11-12, all Israel was intended by God to witness in His behalf, so also is the entire church of God. In effect, God sent them into the world to be His witnesses.

Notice Paul’s expansion of this principle in I Corinthians 3:6-17:

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become manifest; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

This passage begins by seeming to say that God sends only the ministry to labor in His behalf. However, as Paul proceeds, the context reaches out to embrace all the called of God by admonishing us to take heed how we build the Temple, the church of God. I Corinthians 12 leaves no doubt that we are all members of the Body of Christ, and it is the Body of Christ that is sent forth to witness for God in the world. The Body of Jesus Christ is the Israel of God in this New Testament period (Galatians 6:16).

All of us are considered sent by God even as He sent Jesus and the apostles. John 4:35-38 includes us in the same work God has been doing since the beginning:

Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes the harvest?” Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.

Perhaps this section has been somewhat circuitous in its thought, but the operation God has summoned and sent us forth to labor within should impress us in its massiveness—in terms of time—and magnificence—in

*(continued on page 14)*

# The Art of Tact and Diplomacy

One of the greatest statesmen in modern history could arguably be Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II. To war-torn England, he brought a formidable example of tenacity and resolve combined with an ability to motivate and promote confidence. Indeed, his approach to life and war were much-needed traits that inspired the English to regain their bearings when faced with the nightmarish situations early in the war.

His courage, decisiveness, political experience, and enormous vitality enabled him to lead his country through one of the most desperate struggles in British history. On May 10, 1940, the day Germany launched its surprise invasion of Holland and Belgium, King George VI asked Churchill to be prime minister. Churchill set the tone of his leadership in his first report to the House of Commons with these stirring words, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat."

It was only the first of his inspiring wartime speeches, which knit the country together and inspired people

around the world. However, his leadership was especially effective during the Battle of Britain, which drew England into WWII. When the battles began, the Royal Air Force suffered heavy losses, but managed to turn back the powerful German Luftwaffe. Characteristically, Churchill put his words into action during the German bombing raids on London, spending as much time as possible with Britain's stricken citizens.

History reminds us favorably of Churchill's leadership and inspirational speeches to the English and the Allies, illustrating the impact of the right words spoken at a critical time. Yet, his words were not all that made him stand out. He also had the ability to *utilize his actions* in a fashion that was often just what was needed at the time; sometimes cautiously and other times forthrightly.

Of course, even Churchill had his human side, when his tact failed him. Once, he had a conversation with a woman who disliked him as much as

he did her. When she felt compelled to tell him, "Mr. Churchill, if I were your wife, I would poison your coffee!" he replied, "Madam, if you were my wife, I would drink it." With his characteristic wit, he also was fully aware of his potential for speaking imprudently: "In the course of my life, I have often had to eat my words, and I must confess that I have always found it a wholesome diet."



ˆA wicked messenger falls into trouble,  
but a faithful ambassador brings health.ˆ  
óProverbs 13:17

## Diplomacy and Tact

Even with Churchill's carnal side as a factor, we can learn much from certain aspects of his life. From his "blood, sweat, and tears" speech in the House of Commons to his involvement in the lives of the everyday British, we see a man who "put his money where his mouth is" by striving to use just the right words for the proper circumstance and to support them with appropriate action. He tried to couple his words and actions, saying and doing the right thing at the right time.

This endeavor can be summarized by two key words: diplomacy and tact. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines these two words as:

- *Diplomacy*: "a smoothness or skill in dealing with people."
- *Tact*: "the delicate perception of saying or doing the right thing; having a quick sense of what fits the given situation; thus avoiding offense."

Most of us are familiar with special individuals that most countries utilize in their relations with other nations, the diplomat. Typically, diplomats are seasoned individuals with a great deal of training in the fine art of smoothing over misunderstandings or misconceptions by one country of another. They are prized for their well-honed diplomatic skills as well as for having a firm grasp of how to deal tactfully with delicate issues that could start a war or bring about peace, depending on their skill.

One person whose job requires the use of these skills is an ambassador. This person is typically the chief representative of a nation in a foreign land. In many ways, he must embody these traits since he is the first-line contact of his home country or leader. His words and actions can affect the ongoing relationship between the two states.

An *ambassador* is "a messenger or a servant with a specific mission or task," who should have the above-mentioned traits. From this concept,

along with scriptural references (II Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:20), Herbert Armstrong named Ambassador College, an institution for educating people in the valuable virtues necessary for living a biblical way of life as "strangers and pilgrims" in a foreign land. Whether or not we realize it, each of us has had this education, be it through personally attending the college, hearing sermons at church given by its ministerial graduates, reading the publications, or watching the programs the church and college produced.

Most of us could never imagine ourselves in such a prominent role as a diplomat or ambassador. However, comparatively speaking, we should see these roles paling in scope to our own potential roles as regenerated sons of God. We have the vital responsibility *now* to grow in these attributes. We are currently learning this role one person and one circumstance at a time: how to say and do the right things at the right time, just as God himself does. We will need these skills constantly in our future roles as rulers and leaders in God's Kingdom. Right now, we are students, and our world and all who touch it are our classroom.

## Monitoring Our Words

Proverbs 13:3 says, "He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction." Proverbs 25:11 agrees, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." Both scriptures give a basic standard for our speech. We must carefully consider what we say, tactfully and diplomatically using appropriate words—or not saying anything at all.

Of course, we cannot always know how our words will affect someone, whether through ignorance, misunderstandings, past history, or any number of reasons. Nevertheless, we can gauge what we say by our intentions, the tone of our voice, the meanings and double meanings of our word choices, and other methods within our control.

Every person and every situation

we face are different. Our words and actions must be tailored to fit each one; a one-size-fits-all approach will likely end in a "diplomatic disaster." We have to remember that, in personal relations as much as in physics, for every action there is a reaction.

People often take our words at face value because they do not know our particular twists on them. We must choose our words to fit the situation or the personality of the person or group to which we are speaking. Some people may like the example of Churchill's response to the spiteful woman, but another person might take great offense at such a direct or blunt approach.

It is probably good to remember the adage, "Truthfulness and honesty may make a man respectable, but diplomacy and tactfulness makes him respected." Another says, "The secret to a man's success resides in his insight into the moods of people and his tact in dealing with them." Unfortunately for many of us, we fail to gauge our own moods. Our words usually mirror who or what we are inside. A momentary bad time for us can bring out the worst in us. However, if we can learn to monitor our words carefully when we are not in an emotional state or a bad situation, we will have a better handle on our words and attitudes when things deteriorate.

Proverbs 15:1-4, 7 gives a good synopsis of the right way to monitor our words:

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. . . . The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the fool does not do so.

## Winning Through Action

Proverbs 13:17 discloses that our actions will bring either good or bad

consequences: “A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful ambassador brings health.” *Ambassador* translates the Hebrew word *tsiyir*, which has a broad range of meanings, from “a hinge or pivot” to “pains” to “a messenger or envoy.” The last definition is obviously what the writer intends, as we can see in two additional Bible translations of verse 17:

- NIV: “A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.”
- *The Living Bible*: “An unreliable messenger can cause a lot of trouble. Reliable communication permits progress.”

A major problem in today’s world is most people expect great tolerance for themselves but fail to forbear with others. We should certainly not tolerate sin, but who among us would not want someone to help us overcome our most glaring sins?

How much more could we gain with our words and actions if mercy and forgiveness were the foundation of our relationships instead of criticism and judgmentalism? How many of us expect this from God, because He has promised it, but forget our corresponding responsibility, as seen in the model prayer in Matthew 6:12: “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”?

The apostle Paul shows us that, in order to understand (or, in his words, to win) someone, we have to become a servant to all. In the vernacular, we must walk a mile in their shoes, to see life from their perspective.

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but

under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (I Corinthians 9:19-27)

While we know that our words are important, our actions or reactions to a person are just as critical. As Paul understood, we may not totally comprehend where we stand on common ground with someone, but we have to place that person and his needs before ourselves. We must understand that everyone is not just like us. Even people in God’s church have different backgrounds, different trials, different likes and dislikes, and different perspectives on just about everything, regardless of position or station in life.

This is where it becomes tough: trying always to say the right words and exhibit the right approaches, striving to win a person through our actions and knowing that he may not respond in kind. Yet, God gives us a recipe for ongoing success in I Peter 3:8-11:

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling

for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For “He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.”

No one has the ability to say just the right thing or to act toward another in just the right way every time. We know that relationships and interpersonal actions require at least two to be involved, and when one of them is not God, the possibility for misunderstandings and offenses are very real, for one or both parties. However, we need to realize that we are diplomats or ambassadors “in training,” representing the government of God just as a nation’s diplomat does today, only from a spiritual perspective and with every person and in every circumstance we face each day.

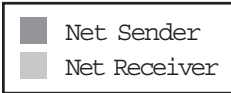
Since we are all human, we might be wise to remember these two quotations as we strive to grow in diplomacy and tactfulness:

- “Diplomacy is thinking twice before saying nothing.”
- “It is not whether your words or actions are tough or gentle; it is the spirit behind your actions and words that announces your inner state.”

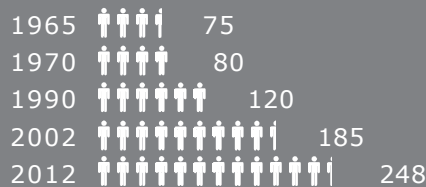
As converted people, however, we have a great deal of assistance that aids in squelching our natural or Satan-inspired words and actions. Jesus promises us a Helper to inspire and guide our actions and words (John 16:7-14). What a benefit this gift is, for God’s Spirit is the essence of true diplomacy and tact! If we make use of this help, one day our reputation for speaking and acting in right measure will overshadow the pale, human efforts of even the best of this world’s statesmen.

—Rod Keese

## Estimated global migration



### Estimated migrant population in millions



Sources: IOM/UN Population Division

# CLA

Without much exaggeration, one could say that the history of the world is the story of the movements of peoples over the face of the earth. As a migrating group made contact with an established people, conflict usually flared. The winner of such conflicts remained on the disputed land, and the loser moved farther into the frontier.

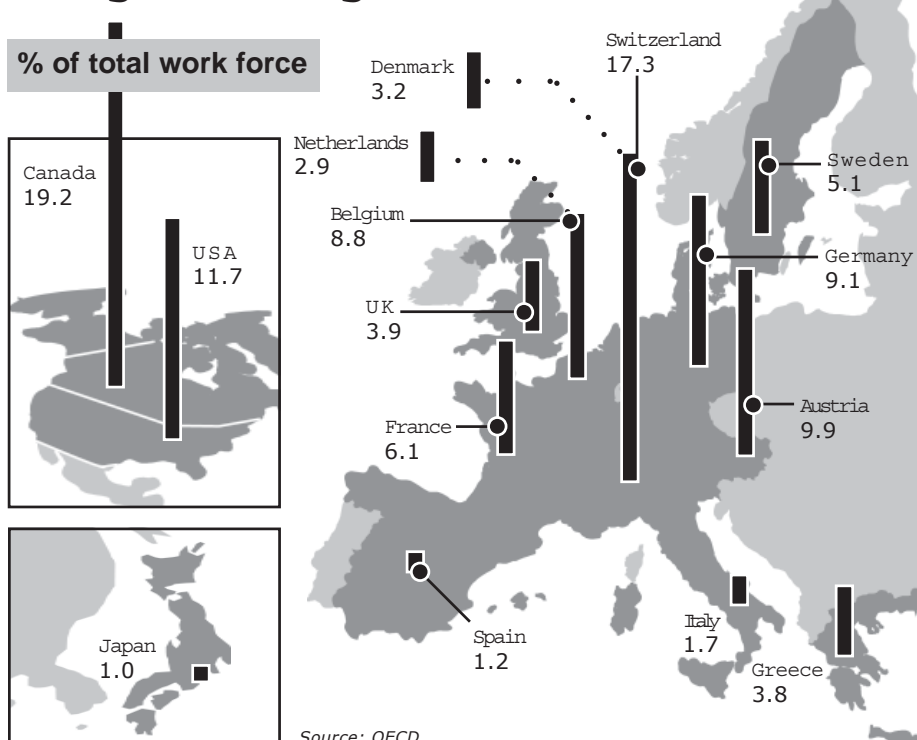
These kinds of events are not relegated to the gray record of antiquity. In fact, some of the greatest migrations in history have occurred within the last few centuries. Millions of “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses” streamed across the Atlantic and the Pacific to the United States in search of a better life in the New World. Equal numbers—perhaps more—abandoned the crowded cities of Asia to seek economic opportunities all across the globe. Countless refugees fled oppressive and tyrannical regimes on just about every continent, looking for political freedom among the world’s democracies.

At any time, a small but significant percentage of the earth’s population is on the move. The United Nations (UN) estimates that there are 185 million migrants among the earth’s population.<sup>1</sup> Whereas in earlier times whole tribes removed to new lands on the frontier, often to escape the depredations of a stronger group, modern migrations tend to be movements of individuals or families from poor countries to the world’s most prosperous nations, regardless of distance. The motivations for today’s migrations, then, are primarily personal and economic.

## People on the Move

For a half-century, the number of migrants worldwide has been steadily increasing, and the UN projects that this trend will continue. Most of the movement is out of the Third World into the economically prosperous West. Europe particularly is seeing increasing numbers of migrants in its work force as its native population ages and produces fewer children.

## Foreign or foreign-born labor



# CLASH OF CULTURES

However, the effect remains the same. No matter what the motivations, the incursion of migrants into an established society creates friction. Whether it is Asians into British Columbia, Latin Americans into the United States, or Muslims into Europe, the cultural and/or religious differences cause conflict. The clash of cultures can be so sharp and fierce that it sparks struggles that only harsh measures can quench.

## Battleground Europe

Immigration has long been a front-burner issue in the United States, which proudly calls itself “a nation of immigrants” and “a melting pot.” In its relatively short history, it has successfully dealt with influxes of various European immigrants from Germans to Irish to Slavs. Its current problems with Hispanic and Asian immigrants have proven to be more lasting and challenging than previous groups, particularly because of a combination of multicultural thinking among Americans and a reluctance to integrate among the newcomers. In addition, distinct racial and cultural differences make it far harder for these non-European peoples to fit in with the American mainstream.

The United States is not alone in suffering immigration woes. Along with the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia, among a few other countries, the nations of Europe are net receivers of immigrants. In fact,

immigration accounted for 89 percent of Europe’s population growth during the 1990s, even though most of the European nations have “closed-door” policies on their books.<sup>2</sup> In 2001, the population increased a measly 0.4 percent across the continent, but a whopping three-quarters of it came through immigration.<sup>3</sup>

Forecasters believe that the influx of foreigners will continue. In August 2002, the British government released a report calculating that the nation’s population would increase by 15 million immigrants over the next forty years.<sup>4</sup> Other nations, such as Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Denmark, and the Netherlands, are predicting similar increases of immigrant populations.

A large proportion of this increase is Muslim. The UN says that Europe’s Muslim population has doubled over the past decade from eight to sixteen million, and it is predicted to continue to rise at the rate of one million per year.<sup>5</sup> This contrasts sharply with the negative birth rates of many of the native European ethnic groups. Across the European Union (EU), the birth rate hovers around 1.5 children per woman.<sup>6</sup>

Even though at this point the percentages are small, the Muslim impact on Europe is significant. Until recently, European nations were considered homogenous. Their citizens’ national character, traits, culture, and history were well known and well defined. Many European governments are concerned because the people are beginning to feel that they are losing their identities.

The Netherlands is a case in point. About one million of its 16 million population—about six percent—is Muslim. However, within its three largest cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague, Islamic immigrants, mostly Turks and Moroccans, equal the native Dutch population.<sup>7</sup> Stephen Baker of *Business Week* writes, “Globalization is turning once-close-knit European towns and cities into cosmopolitan hives of people in transit.”<sup>8</sup>

The problem is that many of these “people in transit” do not move on but disappear into the local Islamic ghetto that can be found in nearly every urban area in Europe. Because of this, many Europeans of all political stripes are calling for profound changes in immigration policies within individual nations and the EU. Most want to stem the tide of asylum seekers and deal more rigorously with the associated social problems, welfare and crime.

## Tough New Laws

Advocates of immigration often cite the fact that immigrants often fill the jobs most of the natives will no longer consider doing: low-wage, menial, physical labor positions. Though this is true to a point, the fact remains that unemployment among immigrants is always high, and if the state offers benefits to illegals, many of them opt to remain unemployed because the benefits allow them to live better in their adopted country than they could working in their country of origin.

Denmark is one European nation that has taken a hard stance against immigrants, passing earlier this summer what is considered to be the toughest immigration law in the EU. It has made it harder to claim refugee status, cut back on financial aid to newcomers, made foreigners wait seven years for permanent resident status, and disallowed immigrants to bring in potential spouses under the age of 24. The Danish center-right government took this action after it became apparent that, though only five percent of the population is Third-World immigrants, nearly forty percent of welfare spending winds up in their pockets.<sup>9</sup>

Bertel Haarder, Denmark's new immigration minister, speaks plainly about the problem: "Unemployment is a catastrophe, integration is a catastrophe, and crime is a catastrophe. We are fed up with forced marriages and the systematic use of the right of family reunification to get families to Denmark at the expense of the young. For a Nordic mind, this is a huge offense to freedom, human dignity, and self-determination, and something we Danes simply cannot accept."<sup>10</sup>

The Netherlands followed suit in August. Hilbrand Nawijn, the Dutch immigration minister, announced a hard-line plan to take effect in early 2003 that would dictate that asylum seekers be detained in converted army barracks for up to two months and then expelled from the country immediately if their applications are denied. Companies will be fined up to about \$2,000 for each illegal immigrant they hire. Social security payments will be cut by as much as ninety percent. Newcomers who do not complete Dutch language and citizenship classes will be penalized. Conditions will be stiffened to prevent refugees from bringing in relatives. All immigrants will have to carry identity papers at all times.<sup>11</sup>

These are not isolated actions. Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Greece have all enacted or plan to enact more stringent rules and laws to curb immigration. Their haste to pass such laws derives from the fear that another wave of immigration will break on them when the EU expands

eastward in 2004. A study by the German Migration Council estimates that five million new immigrants will move into Western Europe by 2020 and that nearly a million are already waiting for the gates to open.<sup>12</sup> Most of these wish to go to Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy.

European nations might tolerate such newcomers were it not for the parallel rise in crime. Denmark reports that 76.5 percent of convicted rapists are Muslim.<sup>13</sup> Ninety percent of street crime in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, is committed by immigrants.<sup>14</sup> In Italy, 64 percent of drug arrests in 2001 involved foreigners.<sup>15</sup> Spain saw crime rise by 10.5 percent in the past year,<sup>16</sup> and 89 percent of those arrested and jailed in the first three months of 2002 were foreigners.<sup>17</sup> In London, street crime has risen a frightening 49 percent over 2001.<sup>18</sup>

Some of these immigrant crimes have a religious dimension. In Belgium in early April 2002, an anti-Ariel Sharon march turned violent when North African activists tried to march into a mostly Jewish area. Similar Muslim-on-Jew riots and crimes have surfaced in England, Germany, Denmark, and France. In some European nations, Muslims already outnumber Jews, a fact that bodes ill for the peace of their communities.



Europe's Muslim population has doubled over the past decade, and it is expected to rise by one million each year. At the same time, Europe's native population is in decline.

## King of the South

Students of Bible prophecy have often wondered about the role of the "king of the South" in the end time. Daniel 11 describes the back-and-forth fighting and intrigue between the Seleucid Empire based in Syria—the king of the North—and the Ptolemaic Empire of Egypt—the king of the South. Obviously, during the time of their conflict, these nations were north and south of Jerusalem, respectively, and their battlegrounds were often in the land of Israel.

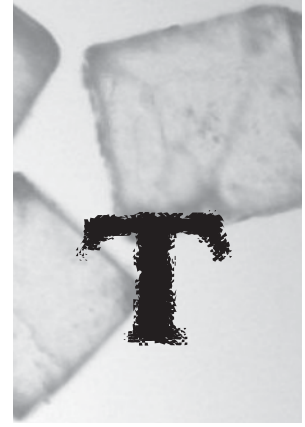
Neither of these two empires exists any longer. However, verse 40 speaks of "the time of the end," meaning the period just before the return of Jesus Christ. Which nations, then, are the kings of the North and the South?

Because the Roman Empire swallowed up both of the older empires, it could at one time have been said to be both. However, Diocletian split the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western halves in AD 284, and in 324, Constantine established the eastern capital at Byzantium, renamed Constantinople (now Istanbul). The Western Empire fell in 476, to be succeeded down the centuries by several resurrections of a Holy Roman Empire.

The Eastern Empire, however, proved more enduring, lasting until 1453 when the Turks under Mahmed II took the weak and tired city of Constantinople after a 53-day siege. Once again, there were rival kings of North and South, though this event merely formalized an ongoing struggle between Christian Europe and Muslim Middle East. This situation remains intact today: Even now, we are witnessing the bitter and violent conflict between the Western and Islamic civilizations.

Notice Daniel 11:40: "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall

*(continued on page 16)*



Years ago, in another lifetime it seems, I loved to play softball on the church team. We lived outside Dallas, Texas, at the time, an area known for its summertime heat. Many a spring and summer weekend would find us traveling to yet another double-elimination softball tournament. These would be held in one day, on a Sunday, starting early and ending late. Each team was guaranteed at least two games and could play as many as six or eight. Little shade was available, and the heat was often over 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

One summer, I repeatedly experienced severe leg cramps at each of these tournaments. The pain would have me rolling on the ground. My wife figured out that I was losing too much salt through sweating, hence the cramps. Once I began taking a salt tablet at each tournament, the cramps stopped. Years later, when I began to work outdoors in landscaping, I made sure to take salty snacks in my lunch each day.

Salt is a compound of sodium (Na), an unstable metal that can suddenly burst into flame, and chloride (Cl), a lethal gas. Combined, however, they form a substance that is essential for human life. It is not too extreme to state that, without it, we would soon die.

For instance, salt regulates the exchange of water between cells and their environment, aiding the absorption of nutrients and the disposal of waste into the bloodstream. Sodium, which the body cannot manufacture, is necessary for muscle contraction, as well as the transmission of nervous impulses. Chloride is essential for digestion and respiration.

An adult body contains about 250 grams of salt—enough to fill 3 or 4 saltshakers—but we are constantly losing it through bodily functions. It is imperative that we replace this lost salt, as I found out the hard way.

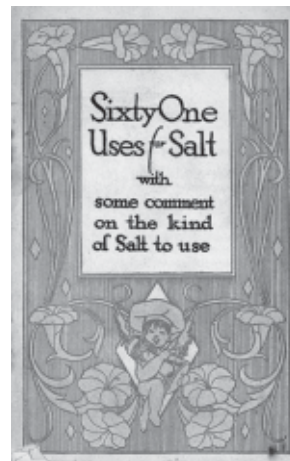


## THE HISTORY OF SALT

In antiquity, Homer called salt a divine substance. Plato described it as being especially dear to the gods. Today, we take salt for granted; we think of it as a common, inexpensive substance that seasons food and clears ice from roads.

However, salt has many more amazing properties and uses. It seasons, cures, and preserves. It also seals, cleans, and acts as an antiseptic. In a booklet put out by a salt company in the 1920s, the list of uses include keeping the colors bright on boiled vegetables; making

ice cream freeze; whipping cream rapidly; getting more heat out of boiled water; removing rust; sealing cracks; removing spots on clothes; putting out grease fires; killing poison ivy; and treating sprains, sore throats, and earaches. The salt industry goes still further, claiming 14,000 different uses for this underappreciated substance!



Until about a hundred years ago, when modern chemistry and geology revealed its prevalence, salt was one of the most sought after commodities. In times past, it has served as currency, been

responsible for trade routes and the establishment of great cities, provoked and financed wars, and played a strategic part in others. Taxes on salt have secured empires and inspired revolution.

The Romans appear to have esteemed salt highly. Its army, for a time, was even paid in salt. This is the origin of the word “salary” and the expressions “worth his salt” and “earning his salt.” In fact, the Latin word *sal* became the French word *solde*, meaning “pay,” and has come down to us in the word “soldier.” The first of the great Roman roads was the Via Salaria, the Salt Road. The Romans used to salt their greens, which is the origin of the word “salad,” salted.

The movie *Gandhi*, portraying the life of Mohandas Gandhi, shows him choosing, as his means of rebellion against British colonialism, to contravene Britain’s salt policy. Many of these and other historical tidbits can be found by reading *Salt, A World History* by Mark Kurlansky: a fascinating study of the only rock humans eat.

During the times in which the Bible was written, salt

*(continued on page 17)*

(continued from page 6)

terms of purpose. We are among the very few who have ever been accorded this privilege! Jesus said His desire to see God's will done completely invigorated Him because He realized how great, good, magnificent, and beneficial in purpose it is to all. In addition, He wanted to ensure that He did His part to make its completion possible. His complete surrender to God's will was His way of loving all mankind and serves as the example to all of us employed in the same labors.

Anybody who can bridge the connection between the Sender and His purpose and the called being sent to labor for Him will view his life in an entirely different way than the rest of mankind. His life will no longer be trivial, small, ignoble, and insignificant. He will live every day to see that God's will is done in it. He will be like a soldier on a forced march or an athlete training to break a record, driving himself on until he accomplishes his goal. That is how Jesus lived. He recognized that God sent Him, and He yielded Himself to accomplishing His will.

## Summoned to Be Worthy

Notice a common thread that flows through these verses.

- **I Corinthians 1:26:** For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.
- **Ephesians 4:1-3:** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- **Philippians 3:14:** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- **II Thessalonians 1:11-12:** Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Hebrews 3:1:** Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.
- **II Peter 1:2-3:** Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all

things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.

This article has used "summons" rather than "calling" from time to time because it is a more technically correct usage of the Greek word *klesis*. Translated as "calling," it suggests generality, as though many people over a wide area simultaneously hear a voice inviting them to do something. "Summons," however, implies a personal

*"For you see your calling,  
brethren, that not many wise  
according to the flesh,  
not many mighty,  
not many noble, are called."  
—I Corinthians 1:26*

invitation directed specifically to certain individuals just as a person is summoned to serve on a jury or give evidence at a trial.

John 6:44 states, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." God foreknew us and determined to call us before He ever made His summons known to us. By doing so, He was making a prognosis. We are in this elite group, the called, only because the great God of heaven and earth specifically and personally summoned us by forcibly bringing the good news to our attention so we would be motivated to choose to respond freely to it.

He then led us to repentance, to a personal understanding of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and to an acceptance of it. Then He gave us His Holy Spirit to enable us to obey the obligations of the New Covenant. It is in this combination of factors, plus a few more, that we can begin to understand the possibilities of human life. We see in Christ the pattern of what we ought to be, and the motivation to be in His image begins to arise in us. But this occurs only because God has summoned us to be in this elite group, the firstfruits, to run for this awesome goal.

Thus Paul urges us in Colossians 1:9-10 to walk worthy of this great calling:

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you

may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Paul says in Romans 11:29, “For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” Here, “calling,” the same word used in the above series of verses, is connected to an unusual word, *ametameleetos*, translated “without repentance” in the King James, which modern translations correct to read “irrevocable.” It means that, on God’s part, the invitation to participate in the blessings of His deliverance of us from sin and death is sure. Eventually, none will ever be able to use the excuse that they did not hear the call and so did not repent.

Those who translated Ephesians 4:1 in the King James provide an interesting twist by translating *klesis* as “vocation.” They did this only here in the New Testament. A vocation can be a summons or invitation to a particular state or course of action. *The American Heritage College Dictionary* defines it as “an inclination, as if in response to a summons, to undertake a certain kind of work, especially a religious career, a calling.” A vocation is a life’s work.

Where can we find what work we are to do? We could turn to an incredible number of scriptures to receive specific instruction. However, I John 3:1-3 gives a general overview:

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

## Summoned to Be Holy

There are many verses of similar general nature, for instance:

- **II Corinthians 7:1:** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
- **Ephesians 4:24:** . . . and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
- **I Thessalonians 4:7:** For God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness.

· **I Timothy 2:15:** Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

· **I Peter 1:15-16:** But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

When John wrote I John 3:1-3, he did not use the word “motivation.” However, he strongly implied that the motivation to purify ourselves arises from knowing who we are. We are now the sons of God, and we shall become like Him as we labor to purify our conduct and attitudes to conform to His image.

I Peter 1:2-5 declares us

elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. . . . Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We have been summoned to a great cause. The summons is personal and specific. It presents us the challenge of choosing to live a life worthy of the awesome vocation to which God has summoned us. Our calling has become our life’s work. God has summoned us to yield to His creative efforts at reproducing Himself, just as II Corinthians 3:18 instructs us: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

II Peter 1:10 urges us, “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.” Each passing day reinforces the fact that we live in dangerous times. Surely, the return of Jesus Christ cannot be many years away! When we consider this along with the greatness of our God-given opportunity, we should be urgently motivated to ensure our calling and election. The very magnitude of the issues involved emphasizes that we must do something now because of who we are—the called—and each person receives only one calling to salvation.

Taking action secures two things. First, it ensures we will not stumble from neglect, forgetfulness, or laziness (verse 9). We live in the age of Laodiceanism. One can easily become lured into and then entrapped in this destructive attitude that produces spiritual blindness.

Second, it ensures that a way will be opened to us into

God's Kingdom (verse 11). In the letter to the Sardis church, Jesus clarifies who will be in God's Kingdom:

You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Revelation 3:4-5)

Our part in salvation is small compared to God's, but vital. Those who are worthy and those who are clothed in white are the same: They are the ones who overcome! It is that simple.

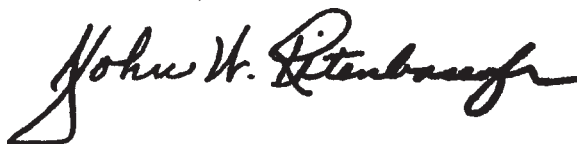
Jesus reinforces this in Luke 20:35-36: "But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, . . . are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." Those who are worthy are those in the resurrection.

He adds yet another factor in Revelation 19:7-8: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the

marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." At this time, the bride of Christ, the church, has made herself ready and is clothed in white linen, which represents her righteous acts. The implications are clear: Getting ready, walking worthy, and overcoming are the righteous acts of the saints that prepare her to be His wife in the resurrection to the Kingdom of God.

God's Word makes many appeals to godly living on the basis of who we are. There is great motivation in recognizing who we are: a very special group, not better than others—peculiar but not odd. We have been separated by God's summons to accomplish things others are not yet required to do, that is, to conform our lives to do His will so that we might be in His image.

In Christian love,



(continued from page 12)

enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through." Notice that the king of the North invades and conquers "countries," suggesting that the king of the South is composed of several nations, much like the modern Middle East.

The King James Version uses "push at him" instead of "attack him," and this is to be preferred, as the Hebrew verb means "to thrust." It could be a military attack, but it could equally be an economic, religious, or cultural assault. Whatever it is, the king of the North reacts to it swiftly and forcefully.

We should also note verses 41-42. In them, God directs our attention to the area targeted by the king of the North: "the Glorious Land"—the land of Israel—Edom, Moab, Ammon (all three part of modern Jordan), and Egypt. It is clear that, if this prophecy speaks of our day, the king of the South is represented by the Arab peoples of the Middle East.

Could we be seeing this prophecy beginning to come to pass? Perhaps the waves of predominantly Muslim immigrants into Europe have woken the emerging colossus of the North to

some of the troubles the clash of cultures can cause. If these problems should be combined with terrorist attacks on European soil of the magnitude of the September 11 bombings, an armed response would seem to be unavoidable.

However, the leader, the person who is the king of the North, is still lacking. No strong man has stood up in Europe to take the lead in solving some of these problems. The stage, though, is being set for such a ruler to

galvanize both the leadership and citizenry of Europe to unite to fight against the enemies of their civilization (see Revelation 17:9-14).

Though it is probably not the catalyst, Europe's immigration woes could provide some of the fuel for the coming conflagration. This is an area on which Christians should keep a watchful eye (Mark 13:32-37).

—Richard T. Ritenbaugh

**Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Thomasson, Emma, "Human Traffic," *Reuters Magazine*, September-October 2002, p. 12.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p 14.
- <sup>3</sup> Spinant, Daniela, "Europe's Dilemma on Immigration," *EUobserver.com*, August 8, 2002.
- <sup>4</sup> Liddle, Rod, "There Are Too Many People in Britain . . .," *The Guardian*, August 21, 2002.
- <sup>5</sup> Evans-Pritchard, Ambrose, "Migrants Blamed for Shift to Right," *The Age*, April 24, 2002.
- <sup>6</sup> Spinant, *ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> Fray, Peter, "The New Infidels," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 11, 2002.
- <sup>8</sup> Baker, Stephen, "Crime and Politics," *Business Week*, March 18, 2002.
- <sup>9</sup> Pipes, Daniel, and Hedegaard, Lars, "Something Rotten in Denmark?" *New*

*York Post*, August 27, 2002.

- <sup>10</sup> Osborn, Andrew, "Danes Justify Harsheset Asylum Laws in Europe," *The Guardian*, June 29, 2002.
- <sup>11</sup> Osborn, Andrew, "Dutch Minister Unveils Tough Measures Against Illegal Immigrants," *The Guardian*, August 17, 2002.
- <sup>12</sup> Connolly, Kate, "5m Eye the West as EU Borders Expand," *The Guardian*, June 27, 2002.
- <sup>13</sup> Pipes and Hedegaard, *ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> Osborn, Andrew, "Netherlands Embroiled in New Race Row," *The Guardian*, August 8, 2002.
- <sup>15</sup> Baker, *ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> Ford, Peter, "Across Europe, the Far Right Rises," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 15, 2002.
- <sup>18</sup> Baker, *ibid.*

# SALT

(continued from page 6)

was much more precious, and people better understood its value. One use that is probably not on the salt industry's list is that salt was to accompany every offering. "And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt" (Leviticus 2:13).

The altar symbolizes God's table. Since salt is always on our tables, God would have it always used at His, not to preserve the sacrifice but because it was the food of God's table and should be salted, especially the meat. It was so important that it was provided by the Temple (Ezra 7:20-22) and stored in a room, the Chamber of Salt, in the court of the Temple.

Notice the phrase "salt of the covenant" in Leviticus 2:13. It has been common throughout history for people to confirm their agreements with each other by eating and drinking together, at which times salt is used. As salt was added to foods, not only for spice but also to preserve them from decay, it became a symbol of incorruptibility and permanence. A "covenant of salt" signified an everlasting covenant, as we will see. In the Bible, salt also came to symbolize purity, perfection, wisdom, hospitality, durability, and fidelity.

The need for various animal sacrifices passed with the death of Jesus Christ. However, the apostle Paul urges us to "present [our] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is [our] reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). The first eleven chapters of Romans are doctrinal in nature, and with Romans 12:1, Paul begins explaining the practical application of God's teaching. The first thing he mentions is that we are to be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. For a sacrifice to be acceptable to God, it must be salted. So, in a symbolic manner, we must be salted as well.

What does this mean? Let's examine just three of salt's main traits and apply them spiritually to our lives.



## SALT PRESERVES

**P**rior to 1800, the only way to keep food for any length of time was to salt it. This method of food preservation declined when people discovered that they could seal food in jars and heat it, what is called "canning" today. Then, in 1809 in London, Peter Durand received a patent for preserving food in tin cans. Unfortunately, he failed to invent the can opener—that would not come for several more years.

Around this same time, people began to pack fish in ice. Packing other foods in ice was not practical, however, because, once the ice melted, the resulting water created an environment in which bacteria could

flourish. An American inventor named Clarence Birdseye took care of this. During his life, he patented 250 inventions, but we remember him mostly for his method of freezing food.

Now, when we want something for dinner, we reach into our freezers for vegetables, meats, desserts, and the like. In earlier times, we would have gone to the storehouse and sliced off some salted meat, or to the cellar for pickled vegetables. Salt, therefore, has come to stand for durability, permanence, perpetuity, incorruptibility, and purity. This is why salt was used to ratify a covenant; it preserved and stood for permanence. In Numbers 18:19, God says to Aaron:

All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you.

Adam Clarke comments that "salt was the opposite of leaven, for it preserved from putrefaction and corruption, and signified the purity and persevering fidelity that were necessary in the worship of God."

The symbolism should be obvious to us as living sacrifices. We are to be without spot or blemish—pure, in other words. God does not change (Hebrews 13:8), and He does not lie (Numbers 23:19). He has made certain covenants with His people that cannot be broken. We have only to live a life of obedience, which God helps us to do. Our sacrifice, then, is not a one-time deal but is ongoing and perpetual. Salt preserves.



## SALT SEASONS

**T**he New King James' heading above Mark 9:49 reads, "Tasteless Salt Is Worthless," which is certainly true. Most of us have probably never tasted salt that had lost its flavor, but we can easily understand the concept. Christ tells His disciples, "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another" (Mark 9:49-50).

This characteristic is somewhat the opposite of the first one. Obviously, sacrifices in the Old Testament were not salted to preserve them since the meat was consumed immediately. They were salted because it was the food of God's table, and no flesh is eaten without salt. Jesus says, "Every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt." Man is flesh, and his nature, corrupt (Genesis 6:3); therefore, his sacrifice must be seasoned and made more palatable.

Notice that Christ says, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." How do we do this? The

apostle Paul writes in Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." He is speaking specifically of answering those in the world, but should we not be even more gracious to those in our family?

The Greek word Paul uses, translated "grace," is *charis*, which means "graciousness, of manner or act, especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life." Matthew Henry's commentary says, "Grace is the salt which seasons our discourse, makes it savory and keeps it from corrupting."

The words that come from our mouths reflect upon us more than any other facet of our lives. When we gossip, are those words seasoned? Are they "savory" to the ears of others? When we speak in a hurtful manner to our family, both physical and spiritual, are those words seasoned?

Think of it this way: If we are living sacrifices, and if the altar is God's table, what kind of dinner-table conversation would be appropriate while sharing a meal with God? Revelation 3:20 tells us that we will have the chance to dine with Christ. If we live our lives as living sacrifices, then we are always before the altar of God. Our actions, especially our speech, should always be done as if we are carrying on conversations at the table with Christ. Salt seasons.



## A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

Every Sabbath, for as long as I can remember, I have made brunch for the family. Along with the eggs, fruit, bread, and meat, I usually prepare some grits. Sometimes, I forget to add the salt to the grits. As many know, grits without salt are horrible.

Most times, I do not even measure the salt because I am a lazy cook; I just pour and measure by eye. It does not take much salt to season them. If I put too much in though, it detracts from the food. All one tastes is the salt, and it is just as bad as no salt at all.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:13, "You [believers] are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." We must, as Matthew Henry comments, retain the relish and savor of the salt. For "if this salt lose its saltiness, if a Christian revolt from his Christianity, if he loses the savor of it, and be no longer under the power and influence of it, what can recover him, or wherewith will you season him?"

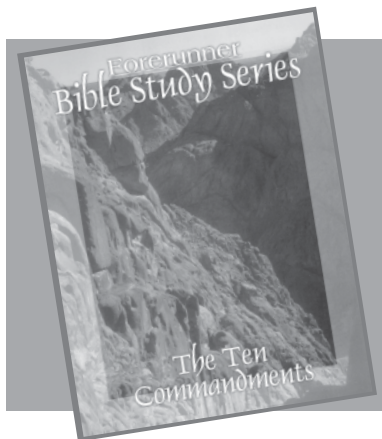
God used a small number of people to support Herbert W. Armstrong in the preaching of the gospel to the world. We are now even fewer in number, yet we have influence far out of relation to our size. What is more, only a remnant of us will support the work of the Two Witnesses. God has always worked with the few. However, if we ease up, if we lose our flavor, we will "be thrown out and trampled underfoot"—a scary thought indeed!

At one time, salt was thought to be very rare. As drilling techniques improved, it was discovered that the earth possessed huge underground salt deposits. Near the town of Cardona, Spain, there is literally a mountain of salt. Covered by a few feet of soil, most of the mountain—around 70 percent—is pure rock salt. Just as God's people are rare now, we represent multitudes to be "discovered" in the future. A little salt goes a long way.

These three points barely scratch the surface of this subject. As with salt itself, there is more to it than what first appears. Pointing out the depth of what, on the surface, looks to be simple statements about a common substance could expand into volumes of insights and instruction. Like so much of what we read in the Bible, God has built in many layers of meaning.

What "simple" principle can we take away from this study? God has called us to be living sacrifices. The Christian life is an ongoing process of striving for purity, in which we must ensure that our lives are properly seasoned so that we might not lose our "flavor" and succeed in being among God's firstfruits.

—Mike Ford



No set of laws governing conduct is greater than the Ten Commandments. With simplicity and directness, these laws cut to the heart of man's nature, regulating his relationships with God and with his neighbors. They are needed now more than ever!

Order your copy of *The Ten Commandments* Bible Study Series booklet today!

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# BIBLE STUDY:

## PARABLE OF THE TREASURE

People love to be with a rich man while he can give, but they have no use for him when his riches disappear. The world follows the beautiful and bubbly actress, yet, when her beauty has faded, it unceremoniously dumps her for the next starlet. The world has nothing permanent to give but is always active in taking what we have.

Jesus teaches that this world's importance is not in



1. What "treasures on earth" is Jesus admonishing us to de-emphasize? Matthew 6:19; Job 20:28; Proverbs 27:24; I Timothy 6:7.

**COMMENT:** Among the ancients, treasures, riches, or wealth consisted of clothing as well as gold, silver, gems, wine, lands, and oil. An abundance of anything conducive to the ornamentation or comfort of life was considered treasure. Like then, most people today are thrilled with splendid display of expensive garments and accessories. Our treasure, in fact, often consists of beautiful and richly ornamented articles of apparel. In a society like ours, an unlimited number of things could become our treasure—clothing and jewelry, cars and boats, or CDs and DVDs, to name a few.

2. What do moths signify? Genesis 45:22; Joshua 7:21; Job 13:28; Isaiah 50:9; 51:8; James 5:1-2.

**COMMENT:** To us, wealth is money, land, houses, and cars, but in biblical times, clothing was a key part of a man's wealth. For example, Joseph gave his brothers "changes of garments," and Achan coveted "a beautiful Babylonian garment." Part of clothing's appeal to them was its ability to make a "display," so the garments of the rich were impressively colorful and opulent. Moths were the most destructive force against such treasures. Although a moth is small, its power to destroy clothing is great.

3. What does rust symbolize? Proverbs 23:4-5; James 5:3.

**COMMENT:** "Rust" represents anything that "eats into" and destroys things more durable than clothing. In this parable, it has a wider application than mere iron oxide. Rusting or oxidation will eventually corrode all metal, including silver and gold; all of our physical treasure will deteriorate in time. Once moths and rust settle on an object, they gradually eat their way from the exterior to the interior. Thus, beyond their ability to destroy physical objects, moths and rust represent the decay of a person's life.

4. What do thieves represent? Isaiah 56:10-12; Luke 10:30; John 10:1, 8, 10.

**COMMENT:** Houses in the ancient Middle East were frequently made of sun-baked clay or loose stones. Because of this, thieves found it comparatively easy to

itself but in where it leads. Since this world is not the end of life but a stage on the way, we should never lose our hearts to it or any worldly thing. In his *Commentary on Matthew*, Richard Glover says, "He builds too low who builds beneath the skies." Our eyes should be fixed on the goal of the Kingdom of God beyond this life. Jesus' parable in Matthew 6:19-21 illustrates this lesson using three metaphors: moths, rust, and thieves.

dig through the wall to enter and steal. Thieves represent the ungodly world that continually seeks to take everything we have and return to us nothing but trouble. Moths and rust attack consumable things, but thieves look to steal enduring treasures for themselves.

All three metaphors, moth, rust and thieves, merge into one lesson: the futility of an earth-centered life. Taken together, these three stealthy destroyers demonstrate the folly of amassing earthly goods for their own sake. If no other destroyers come against us, old age is like a moth that ruins our beauty and wholeness, disease is like rust that corrodes our bodies, and death is like a thief that breaks in and steals everything we possess. A grim Spanish proverb says, "There are no pockets in a shroud." We can take nothing with us but the character we have built (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Job 32:8).

5. What treasures are we to lay up for ourselves in heaven? Matthew 6:20-21; Isaiah 55:2; Romans 2:5-11; I Peter 1:4.

**COMMENT:** Laying up—saving or storing—is not in itself sinful; Paul enjoins honest industry and wise enterprise (II Corinthians 12:14). If wealth comes our way, we should use it, not only for our ease and profit, but also for the good of others. Treasures on earth, if distributed for God's glory, become tools for laying up treasures in heaven.

It is natural for the human heart, mind, affection, and interest to be fixed on treasure. To regulate this fixation, it is important that the treasure be proper. We must be seeking the right goal—not physical riches but spiritually sound treasures in the form of deeds of kindness: good works (Luke 12:33) and the character formed by them (Revelation 14:13). Paul urges us to "be rich in good works" (I Timothy 6:18), partakers of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" and "the riches of His glory" (Ephesians 3:8, 16), and James advises us to be "rich in faith" (James 2:5).

The treasure of the converted is to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, to attain an incorruptible, undefiled inheritance that does not fade away. In the Kingdom of God, nothing corrupts, nothing dies away, and no enemies plunder or destroy. What a tremendous potential we have!