

upon the precious book divine

# Reflections

November - December 2006

Volume 2, Number 5



## Acts 1:10

And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

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## 2 Corinthians 5:9

Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

## THE CITY OF HEAVEN

- by Brant Stubblefield

As one reads the Bible it becomes an absolute fact that heaven is referred to multiple times within the text as a city (Heb. 11:10; 12:6; Rev. 21:14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21; 22:14). May it be our ultimate goal to someday bask in the eternal city of God with the faithful from every age! "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). Within this brief article it is my intention to elaborate upon heaven as both a divine reward and beautiful home. Finally, the populous of heaven will be considered.

The Christian life despite its troublesome trials, discouragement, persecution, etc. is spurred on by several motivating factors that act as catalysts to our souls. What better God-ordained incentive could possibly be ours than that of everlasting life in heaven? Jesus Christ spoke of this fact as a future promise to His disciples in the book of John as they were deeply disturbed. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself where I am, there ye may be also" (Jho. 14:1-3). It is neither an act of selfishness nor arrogance for faithful Christians to desire and long for their mansion, robe, and crown in the city of heaven! "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:24). Jesus himself spoke of that future abode in the *Sermon on the Mount* as a "great reward" (Mat. 5:12). The inspired apostle Peter describes that inheritance as, "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4).

The apostle Paul suffered countless persecutions including ridicule, beatings, starvation, imprisonment, and eventual death yet in his epistles he constantly makes mention of his passion and excitement concerning "the prize" (Phi. 3:14) that lies at the end of the way for those who are obedient to the Father's will (Mat. 7:21-23). In his moments of deep despair, Paul dwelled on the city of heaven! "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen for the things which are not seen are *eternal*" (2 Cor. 5:18). "For we *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). Drawing near to the end of his earthly life Paul continues his concentration on the city of Zion. "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:



*"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 12:6).*

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*Reflections* is a biblical publication sent absolutely free of charge by your friends at the church of Christ in Lindsay, Oklahoma with the aid of members of the church at large.

## THE GLORY-LAND WAY

- by Rick Popejoy

The confidence expressed in this song is comforting to the one who possess it. Like David of old as he faced the giant (1 Sam. 17:26), here is a man that knows he is on that right path - not arrogance but a humble realization that he is doing what God has revealed. Herein lies trust that we, His children, would do things the way He has revealed them in the Good Book, "the holy scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15). Anything else would be either ignorance or arrogance, both of which are condemned in Scripture (Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Pet. 5:5). May God bless our efforts as we travel the highway of holiness, the glory-land way.

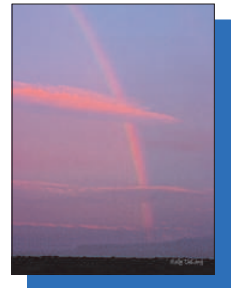
As one reflects upon this song written by J.S. Torbett, he is able to see the willing obedience to the great commission, exhorting others to "listen" to "the gospel call" and urging "wand'ers" to "hasten to obey" and "come home". Because he is on the glory-land way his heart of mercy (Mat. 5:7) also desires others to join him on this way of wisdom (Pro. 4:11).

Further reflection reveals the joy of the glory-land way. "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard" (Pro. 11:35). The sweet singer of Israel spoke of the statutes of the Lord as "rejoicing the heart" and the commandment of the Lord as "enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19:8). Even the apostles understood this, regardless of the harsh terrain (Acts 5:41). One should realize this whether he is just beginning on the narrow way (Acts 8:39; Mat. 7:14) or coming to the end of his journey (Heb. 3:6).

*I'm in the way, the bright and shining way  
I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
Telling the world that Jesus saves today  
Yes, I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
Listen to the call, the gospel call today  
Get in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
Wand'ers, come home, o hasten to obey  
For I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
Onward I go rejoicing in His love  
I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
Soon I shall see Him in that home above  
O, I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)  
Heaven is nearer and the way groweth clearer  
For I'm in the Glory Land way (Glory Land way)*

May God richly bless us as we continue to walk "in the way, the bright and shining way... The Glory-Land way."

~R



*And an highway shall  
be there, and a way,  
and it shall be called  
The way of holiness...*

Isaiah 35:8

# THE CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD

- by Kevin Rhodes

Avoiding any mention of the inevitable challenges a Christian will face in life may postpone when a young disciple has to face that reality, but it also leaves him completely unprepared for that reality. Jesus told His disciples about the challenges they would face in their future on the very night of His betrayal, and it is this model that we should emulate.

Jesus warned His disciples that they would likely face depression due to His physical departure (Jho. 14:1, 27), but that the gospel message inspired by the Holy Spirit would fill that teaching void (Jho. 14:26). He spoke to them about the great responsibility they had (Jho. 15:15-16, 26-27), and of the persecution they would face (Jho. 15:18-16:4).

He told them all of this specifically so that they “should not be made to stumble” (Jho. 16:1) but would rather have their faith strengthened as a result (Jho. 16:4). You do not help others by denying challenges exist; you help them by preparing them for the challenges that you are sure exist.

At the core of Jesus’ own preparation of His disciples was the challenge of the cross that was before Him in the next few hours (Jho. 16:19-24). And despite the knowledge that His own disciples would desert Him during His greatest challenge, He took comfort in knowing He would please the Father and would ultimately be victorious (Jho. 16:32-33). At this time of ultimate challenge, Jesus prayed (Jho. 17:1-26).

All Christians will face challenges in their lives spiritually. What we must do is take up the challenge now to prepare for the challenges that will come our way.

## There’s Always More to Learn

The apostle Paul had an enviable education for someone who would spend his life addressing the errors of Judaizing teaching while spreading the gospel. He had been “brought up... at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught ac-



ording to the perfect manner of all the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward



it comes to our spiritual education.

While a young Christian usually realizes how much there is to learn, once that material has been learned it is easy to become apathetic toward spiritual education. One of the saddest sights in any congregation is to see older Christians who have stopped learning and stopped growing spiritually. But surely this did not happen by deliberate choice! Somewhere along the line they became content with their present level of knowledge and plateaued.

Once a young Christian has found the beauty of the truth, he should commit himself to unearthing scriptural treasures for the remainder of his life. If we evaluate our understanding by a checklist of doctrines, we will always come up short. If we keep the Word of God in the forefront, we will always remember how much more there is yet to learn (1 Pet. 2:2).

## Spiritual Growth

Most Christians understand, at least in theory, that they are to grow spiritually. But many of them do not know what that means. For many, spiritual growth is equated with an understanding of the Bible. But while a growing understanding of the Bible is necessary for spiritual growth, they are not the same thing. In his second epistle, Peter closed by saying, “But grow in grace and in the

*(Continued on page 4)*

God” (Acts 22:3) and had received direct revelation from Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). Yet at the end of his life, after years of faithful service, study, and preaching, he wrote to Timothy, “The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but especially the parchments*” (2 Tim. 4:13). While it is impossible to detect the exact identity of these books and parchments, the urgency with which Paul wrote shows how much he valued them personally. If the much studied apostle Paul realized the value of continuing education even at the end of his life, then surely we can deduce from this that there is always more to learn when

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18a). Spiritual growth requires that we grow in two separate components: grace and knowledge. They are related, but distinct. And in order to grow spiritually we need both to understand and implement them together.

Growing in knowledge requires a commitment to diligent investigation of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Growing in grace (favor) requires a commitment to applying those things we learn so that we might please God and enjoy His favor (1 The. 4:1; Jho. 17:17). Spiritual growth does not occur until both of these aspects are present consistently.

Growing spiritual knowledge is essential because you must know what you should do before you can do it. But at the same time, if you understand the Bible theoretically but remain unaffected in the way you live your life, how has your study profited you? Someone can know every word of the Bible by heart and yet be a miserable person because the message has not truly entered the heart.

Spiritual growth is therefore judged not by how much you know but by how well you live. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

### Planning for Eternity

We live in a society dominated by the “now.” We want faster computers, faster service, and faster food. If something is important we want it done yesterday. Our society caters to our wants and puts off dealing with our needs. We are a debtor society because we want more than what we have while ignoring what we actually need. As a result, we

spend most of our time worrying about immediate wants and little time preparing for what lies ahead. The future will just have to wait. But all of this should change when we become Christians, because we must change from thinking in terms of time to thinking in terms of eternity.

The apostle John reminds us, “And this is the promise which he hath promised us, *even* eternal life” (1 Jho. 2:25). Furthermore, Paul said that he lived “in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Tit. 1:2). For a child of God with true faith (2 Cor. 5:7), eternal life is as real as anything currently in existence. A Christian lives not for the moment but for that moment when He meets His Savior face to face (1 Jho. 3:2).

If we think temporally (time-based), we will be satisfied with a temporal existence and a temporal reward. It is only when we think in terms of eternity that we will live for an eternal existence with an eternal reward. Paul explained his own motivation for living and preaching to the Corinthians. “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal” (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

### Becoming a Leader Begins Now

Every congregation of the Lord’s people needs leadership. Sadly, only a relatively small number of congregations have true leadership - leadership that goes beyond a title and basic decision making to visionary thinking built around a knowledge of and dedication

to the scriptures. This situation exists because few seem to understand the importance of a lifelong training process in becoming a spiritual leader.

All Christians should become well acquainted with the qualifications for elders (Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7), deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13), preachers (1 Tim. 4:12-16), worship leader (1 Tim. 2:1-12), and teachers (Jas. 3:17). While some note that most of the qualities mentioned should be true for all Christians, the point they should understand is that these qualities *must* exist in that person’s life before they are qualified to take on that role. Therefore, until a person has demonstrated the development of his own character as prescribed by God’s Word, he has no business leading others in the spiritual realm. Developing maturity in these areas takes time and dedication; therefore, it is essential that Christians begin immediately if they are to achieve the growth necessary for the responsibilities of leadership.

Spiritual leadership does not come by appointment. Rather the appointment should come in recognition of the prior existence of spiritual leadership. A congregation that accepts politicking for leadership positions will get politicians for their leaders—in the worst sense of that word. But many congregations go ahead with this because the members have not prepared themselves for anything better. The church will need solid, spiritual leaders in the future, which is why young Christians need to begin preparing themselves today. ~R

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[Editor’s Note: The preceding article is from an upcoming book by Kevin Rhodes entitled, *Beyond Baptism*. I have had the privilege of reviewing the book and look with anticipation upon its arrival. It will aid teachers and students alike. May God speed the book to our shelves.]

(Continued from page 1)

and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Through all of Paul's persecutions he endured - he never lost sight of that which cannot be seen! It can truly be said that Paul was like Abraham who, "looked for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Let us "give thanks unto the Lord" (Psa. 107:1) and "bless his holy name" (Psa. 103:1) for his construction of such a "place" (Jho. 14:2) as heaven that serves as our motivation!

Second, the Biblical record portrays the city of heaven as a magnificently beautiful and grand abode. The book of Revelation was written on a highly figurative scale as Jesus Christ "sent and signified" (Rev. 1:1) the revelation by his angel unto his servant John. Thus, the descriptive images that speak of heaven's details become somewhat confusing. Actually, heaven will be so sublime it is incomprehensible by the feeble minds of mankind to completely understand it. Therefore, the Holy Spirit inspired men to write upon the theme of heaven to encourage us to press on and live for Christ! However, the most fluent and avid writer of our day, using the highest degree of any English vocabulary to describe the grand state of heaven falls short! Heaven is a place prepared by Christ (Jho. 14:1-3). Heaven is where God lives and sits upon his throne (Heb. 1:1; Acts 1:11). For these reasons and more, the descriptive entirety of heaven's attributes and qualities of perfectedness shall not be fully known until we "enter into through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). However, the Bible is full of inspired comments that wet our spiritual appetite concerning the splendor of the eternal home (Rev. 21, 22).

Third, there is much discussion between religious folks concerning the future populous of heaven. How many will dwell in the city for eternity? Does what Jesus taught in Matthew 7:13-14 contradict what He taught in John 14:2? Listen to the words of Christ: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mat. 7:13-14). Yet in John 14:2 we read, "In my Father's house are *many* mansions." In Matthew chapter seven Jesus is simply driving home a point of contrast between the broad way and the road less traveled. Because Christianity requires sacrifice and self-discipline only a few are willing to engage in such rigorous spiritual submission. In comparison to the vast majority of the world, there

(Continued on page 7)

## HEAVEN

### H. Leo Boles

The Bible and our observation reveal two classes of people in the world: the righteous and the wicked. The Bible reveals two destinies for these - heaven and hell. Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:1-13).

#### I. SCRIPTURAL NAMES FOR HEAVEN

1. The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2).
2. The City of God (Heb. 12:22).
3. Paradise (2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7).
4. Our Father's House (John 14:1-6).

#### II. HABITATION OF GOD

1. God dwells there in His glory.
2. Christ is there at God's right hand.
3. The angels are there.
4. The spirits of the redeemed are there.

#### III. AS A STATE

1. No sin there; sin converted this earth into a region of woe.
2. No pain and suffering there.
3. No death there - separation.
4. State of perfect bliss.
5. A state where love only rules.

#### IV. ALL MAY GO THERE

1. It is the destiny of the faithful.
2. "Whosoever will" are invited.
3. Only the righteous will go and dwell there.

(The **Sermon Outlines** of H. Leo Boles compiled and edited by B.C. Goodpasture, 1949).

# Restoration Reflections

SEEKING SCRIPTURAL SOLUTIONS

SCOTT CHAPEL

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(A seminar focusing on unity & division)

*Reflecting on...*

***Friday: January 19, 2007***

6:00 PM Barton W. Stone - Monte Ginnings  
7:00 PM Thomas Campbell - David Dugan  
8:00 PM Alexander Campbell - Gil Yoder  
9:00 PM Q&A Session - Ginnings, Dugan & Yoder

***Saturday: January 20, 2007***

8:30 AM Renewing our Day  
9:00 AM The Division of 1906 - Tom Wacaster  
10:00 AM Doctrinal Divisions - Michael Light  
11:00 AM The Forty Years of Wandering - Tommy Haynes

Lunch off campus

1:30 PM Cane Ridge - Richard Melson  
2:30 PM The Decision of 2006 - Brant Stubblefield  
3:30 PM Biblical Examples of Restoration - Richard Massey  
4:30 PM Causes of Division & Moments of Great Unity - Rick Popejoy  
5:30 PM *Giving Honor to Whom Honor is Due*  
6:30 PM Q&A Session - Melson, Massey & Ginnings

For more information, visit: [divinereflections.blogspot.com](http://divinereflections.blogspot.com)

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JANUARY 19~20, 2007

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are only a “few” in every generation that serve God faithfully. However, the city of heaven is a large place (Rev. 21:12-27) and contains “many mansions” (Jho. 14:2) for the multitudes of souls who will live forever in that land. Thus, the few become many!

So much could be written about the city of heaven! I suppose my favorite verses concerning the land of fadeless day are as follows:

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (Rev. 21:23).

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 21:27).

Heaven is a place where the superb glory of God giveth light throughout eternity and where sin, such as lies, and the “father of all lies” (Jho. 8:44), can not so much as enter a single time. Let us long for heaven as our inheritance, appreciate her beauty, and hope to be a part of the few that become many, who will dwell therein. Think on these things. ~R

**Editor’s Note:**

Within Tom Wacaster’s article, **What Makes “Fatal” False Doctrine**, page 3, paragraph 1, (V2, N4): the sentence should read... “An erroneous doctrine on this vital subject will cause a man to fail to be baptized, fail to respect the only authorized action (immersion),...” rather than (immersion, pouring, etc.),...”

We apologize for the inconvenience and are grateful for the understanding.

# FELLOWHELPERS

*“We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth” - 3 Jho. 8*

**In Memory:**

- In memory of Wes Wilson*
- Jim Inskeep Ins. (Newcastle, OK) \$50.00
- Tamara S. Ward (Oklahoma City, OK) \$50.00
- James & Cheryl Wilson (Newcastle, OK) \$100.00
- Gracie Mayhugh & Hall Families (Newcastle, OK) \$100.00
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- John & Wanda Slater (Tishomingo, OK) \$100.00
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**THANK YOU SO MUCH**



*May our neighborhood increase!*

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



### **Radio Stations:**

*The Words of Life*

**Sunday @ 8:30 am**

KBLP 105.1 FM

Lindsay, OK

**Sunday @ 7:30 am**

KTFX 102.1 FM

Muskogee, OK

As co-editors of *Reflections*, Rick and I are thankful that God has allowed us to serve Him in this capacity as we enter into another year. We are both appreciative and overwhelmed by the ongoing generosity displayed by countless brethren far and wide. Without your bold statement of financial support this spiritual endeavor would cease to exist. Please continue to make *Reflections* a priority in your giving this year. Because of the constant increase in our printing and mailing numbers, we must remind the “fellowhelpers” (3 Jho. 9) from time to time of our needs. Furthermore, the cost of advertising for the upcoming **Reflections Seminar** on *Restoration & Unity* will set us back a few thousand dollars. Assist us at this time if possible. We extend out gratitude in advance.

Last but not least, it is our privilege and honor to announce the upcoming spiritual seminar hosted by the *Reflection* staff on the campus of Oklahoma Christian University, January 19-20, 2007. Consider this our plea for faithful brethren who love and uphold the truth to rally to this cause and join us in our crusade to stand firmly for that which is right in the eyes of God. Liberalism has had front and center attention for too long! It is our prayer that the conservative brethren send a strong signal to the masses of the church and those who teach in “our” universities of higher learning that loyal soldiers of the cross will fight for the truth now and forever. Let us enjoy one another’s fellowship in the gospel as we seek to edify the church through these series of lessons. We will see you at **Scott Chapel** on January 19-20, 2007. ~ R



*upon the precious book divine*

# Reflections

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