

1 JOHN 5:18

THE TELL-TALE LIFE

“We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”¹

Some truths cannot be hidden. Though a wicked individual may attempt to hide the evil that contaminates the soul, the sinful proclivity becomes increasingly obvious as people come to know that individual. Jesus taught His disciples, “From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person” [MARK 7:21-23]. Jesus taught, *What we are internally, we reveal outwardly.*

Similarly, a godly person will be recognised as godly through that person’s manner of life. Again, this truth becomes obvious from what the Master taught. Perhaps you recall Jesus’ words, “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” [LUKE 6:45]. *Daily routine exposes what lies in the heart.*

No individual is perfect; no person lives without sin. Likewise, even people we identify as evil may show some good qualities on occasion. No good person is one hundred percent good; and no evil person is absolutely evil. On occasion, bad people may do good deeds; even Al Capone organised soup kitchens for hungry people. I have likewise witnessed some great preachers who could be petty and heartless toward people with whom they disagreed.

In the context of what has already been presented, sinless perfection, the idea that an individual can live such a holy life that they are no longer capable of sin, is popular among some segments of the Faith. Though the concept may appear attractive, it is unattainable in this present life. The Apostle to the Gentiles was unaware of the possibility of living without struggles against sin. You may recall his lament recorded in his Letter to Roman Christians.

“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

“So, I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death” [ROMANS 7:15-24]?

To be sure, we who name the Name of Christ are commanded to strive for holiness; we are to work to live a life marked by devotion to God, a life that is separated from sin. Without question, the Christian has the Spirit of God living within to empower him or her. However, we struggle to be holy because the old nature is yet very much a part of life. Otherwise, there would be no need of the repeated admonitions to bring our life into conformity with the will of Christ the Lord. Nevertheless, for the Christian, the trajectory of life is always toward the light.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

THE TRANSFORMED LIFE — “We know that *everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning.*” Perhaps you will recall that earlier in this same letter, the Apostle of Love had written, “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother” [1 JOHN 3:4-10].

If you imagine that this brief missive from John’s pen is presenting a consistent theme throughout the letter, you would be correct. The theme of John’s First Letter to the saints is the Transformed Life—*those who are saved reveal the new life through how they live.* We’ve already seen how John dealt with this issue in the third chapter, but even before writing those words that we read, he had written, “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him” [1 JOHN 2:29].

Here is the theme that is neglected among modern churches—God is in the business of transforming lives. If your life is as it always was, you are not born from above. Listen to John. “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” [1 JOHN 1:5-7].

Then, in pointed application, John warned those who would read his words, “If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” [1 JOHN 1:10].

Again, the Apostle of Love has written, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says, ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” [1 JOHN 2:1-6].

Once more, we read, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” [1 JOHN 2:15].

John echoes the words which he heard drop from the lips of the Master. Jesus testified, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” [JOHN 8:12].

Christians need to recall the teaching found in John’s Gospel that is too often neglected. Whether Jesus spoke these words or John provided commentary is immaterial. “This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God” [JOHN 3:18-21].

For too long, the churches of this day have perpetuated the lie that saying some magic words will make people Christians. People seem somehow to think that saying, “I love Jesus” makes them Christian. People seem somehow to think that saying, “I believe Jesus” makes them Christian. Let me make it very clear to you who hear me today, it is not in saying that you believe Jesus that one becomes a Christian—it is in believing Jesus that one becomes a Christian. You cannot make yourself a Christian by saying the words; you must receive Him as Master over your life. You cannot make yourself a Christian by changing how you live; you must be a Christian, and then Christ will make the necessary changes.

I pastored a congregation in which a man ran roughshod over the church. He avowed on repeated occasions that he was the “Chairman of the Church.” I called him “Mao Tse C...,” Chairman of the Church. He had a habit of coming into the meetings of the church and saying something like, “I led three people to the Lord this week.”

Very quickly, I realised that his life didn’t speak very well of whoever it was that he was serving. So, I asked, “How did these people come to the Lord?”

“Why,” he would smirk, “they prayed the prayer.”

“What prayer is that?” I would ask.

“The sinner’s prayer,” he’d reply incredulously.

“Where are they?” I would ask.

“That’s not my concern,” he would offer. “I led them to Jesus and it is His problem of where he wants them to be.”

Listen to me! Those who are twice-born will reveal the transformation through following the One whom they call Lord.

When teaching at one of the largest institutions for training men for pastoral ministry, I was appointed to the position of Director of Encounter Missions. Every young preacher boy was required to be engaged in a ministry under the supervision of a local congregation. When I assumed my position, in the previous year the school had reported that these preacher boys led over five thousand people to Christ. I was thrilled to work with students such as these! The first week as director, I announced a change in the reporting that would be accepted. Students would be required to provide the name of the individual whom they claimed had trusted Christ, giving the name of the congregation into which the individual had been baptised and received into membership. Reports of conversions plummeted dramatically, but additions to the assemblies of that region went up significantly! There have been too many professions and not enough possession among the professed churches of our God.

Every Christian listening to me today has a “used to” story. You “used to” live only for yourself. You “used to” get drunk, do drugs, salaciously chase others to whom you were not married. You “used to” watch pornography, read lascivious novels that titillated your senses or hated your brothers without a cause. However, you have been transformed; and the transformation was not because of something you did to make yourself better—the Spirit of God coming into your life when you received Jesus as Master over your life transformed you.

Isn’t that what we read in the Word? “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you.” Did you get that? “Such were some of you!” That was your “used to.” What happened? “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” [1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11].

I know a young man who was evil—believe me when I say he was capable of great wickedness. This man surrendered himself to an evil cause, even quitting his chosen career path to begin working in the construction trade so he could recruit and organise workers to join in the evil he espoused. God did something dramatic in that young man’s life when He saved that man’s wife. She was truly saved, transformed by the grace of the Living God. Soon after this, the young man was injured on the job site and forced to resign from fitting pipe; but in his forced retirement he began to read the Bible—I mean really reading. Like everyone else, he read the easy books first—Revelation, Ecclesiastes. In a matter of days—days and not months—the young couple began attending services at a nearby Baptist church. Soon, that young man was saved—gloriously, wondrously born again.

His life was transformed! He didn’t know enough to tell his wife that God was working until one day he announced to the congregation that he was going to be a preacher. His decision was news to her! Then, he began to preach—on the streets of the city, in nursing homes whenever he could gain an opportunity, in a prison farm after morning worship in the church they were then attending. It would be nice to say he made a one hundred eighty-degree turn, but it is more accurate to say he spun around twice and reversed direction. It would take some time before he realised that he owed it to his wife and family to communicate with them before he announced such major changes in direction. I know this report is true.

I recall a young man who brought such joy to my life while we were ministering in San Francisco. I was privileged to serve as God’s instrument of grace used to point that young man to the Saviour. I mean he got a double-dose of salvation when he was saved; salvation broke out on him like the measles—he couldn’t be silent. He wanted to tell everyone that God had saved him. His life was more powerful than were his words.

One day, that young man came to me, seeking counsel. “Brother Mike, do you believe a Christian should confess his sins?” Of course, the answer was “Yes.”

“And do you believe we should make restitution when we have harmed another?” Again, Scripture compelled me to admit that restitution is the biblical principle.

“Well,” he began tentatively, “before I became a Christian, I was a burglar. I burglarised numerous homes down in southern California. I was never caught. I sold everything I stole and spent all the money on my own pleasures. Since I’ve come to Christ, I want to do what is right. I believe I should confess my crimes and do the time. What do you counsel me to do?”

I didn’t tell him that if he became a Christian he would need to make the past right. I didn’t tell him that he needed to clean up his life and then he could be saved. I had told him to put his faith in Christ and trust that the Spirit of God would guide him. He had sat under the preaching of the Word for some weeks, and the whole time the Spirit of God was at work in his life. What I was hearing was God at work in that young man’s life. God changes us and makes us want to do right; then, He gives us the courage to do right. God is in the business of transforming lives.

That the young man did go down to southern California and went house-to-house to confess his theft, offering to make restitution. Without exception, the homeowners refused restitution and asked him to just leave. He was confused, so he went to the police to confess and they couldn’t find a homeowner willing to file a complaint. All alike had inflated claims to insurance companies and would be embarrassed if they were to be confronted with their own perfidy. The young man was never charged with a crime, though he tried to confess. Ultimately, he went to school to train in chiropractic. Here is the thing I learned from watching this: God will lead us to do what is right and then He will protect us when we do what is right.

THE PROTECTED LIFE — “We know that ... *he who was born of God protects him.*” Christian, we are on a battleground, not a playground. If you are a follower of the Christ, you are on the front lines fighting in a vicious war in which you can expect no quarter. Your daily life is a battle, though you don’t always see it as such. As you go about your daily business, there is an evil entity stalking you. He is a vicious enemy. Jesus said of this enemy of the soul that he “comes only to steal and kill and destroy” [see **JOHN 10:10**]. The devil wants to kill you! Peter, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, warns those who would follow the Saviour, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” [**1 PETER 5:8, 9**]. This is war!

It is a humbling thought that none of us have enough strength to resist the evil one. We need a Protector! We need One who is wise and strong to keep us safe from this vicious enemy. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, it is significant that the final request He taught His disciples to pray was, “Deliver us from evil” [see **MATTHEW 6:13**]. Many scholars agree that the request should be translated, “Deliver us from the evil one.”² We are to ask the Master to deliver us from the evil one, deliver us from our adversary, deliver us from the devil.

I am disturbed by the practise of many Christians who pray to the devil. You were never taught to do this in the Word; you were taught to ask the Master to deliver you from the evil one. Despite the teaching of the Word, so very often we hear Christians shout out their anger toward the devil, shout out a personal rebuke to the devil, shout out how much they detest the devil. Some might appeal to a revelation written by Jude, the half-brother of our Lord. Jude writes, “Yet in like manner these people also”—who are these people. These people crept into our assemblies surreptitiously. These people are identified as ungodly. These people are said to pervert the grace of our God into sensuality. These people deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. These people are equated with the demonic powers. Identifying with “these people” assuredly is not comparison that a Christian would find complementary!

Jude warns followers of the Christ to resist this evil practise—Christian, don’t embrace it! Jude writes, “These men, as a result of their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and insult the glorious ones. But even when Michael the archangel was arguing with the devil and debating with him concerning Moses’ body, he did not dare to bring a slanderous judgment, but said, ‘May the Lord rebuke you!’ But these men do not understand the things they slander, and they are being destroyed by the very things that, like irrational animals, they instinctively comprehend” [**JUDE 8-10 NET BIBLE**]. Rather than supporting some furious rebuke presumed to be delivered against the devil and his angels, Jude censures such efforts and suggests that those who do such a thing are at best ignorant of the will of the Lord and at worst they are guilty of presumptuous sin meant to inflate their own ego. Child of God, don’t do this!

We have a protector! The Christian has One who watches over him or who watches over her. This is God’s precious promise.

“I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

² See, e.g., **NET BIBLE, CSB, ISV**

“He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

“The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.

“LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.”

[PSALM 121:1-8]

Early in this brief missive, John has encouraged us who are Christians, who are redeemed, “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” **[1 JOHN 1:5-9]**.

The devil can bring a charge, but we have One who stands before the Father to plead our case—that One is the Saviour, Christ the Lord. Thus, John writes, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” **[1 JOHN 2:1, 2]**.

Now we are equipped to understand the meaning of the words that Paul has written. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Who, indeed! “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” We can trust our God. “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?” Who, indeed? Let the wicked try to charge God’s elect; we have an advocate with the Father! “It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” **[ROMANS 8:31-39]**.

Long years past, the adversary slandered a godly man and did all he could to destroy him. The story of Job is dark with multiplied assaults engineered by the evil one. He used multiple means to injure the saint of God—wind and rain, thieves and murderers, financial reversals, illness and even his own beloved wife. We read the account and we cannot understand how one man could experience such attacks and still cling to God. But, wait a moment! There’s someone here who knows what it is to experience loss and injury. Some who listen to me know what it is to be sick, wondering why there is no cure. Others have been on the receiving end of slander and innuendo that left your reputation in tatters, and few bothered to ask if the vile stories could be true. Still others have seen family shattered—you’ve heard the whispers of those who pretended to be your friends. Here is the testimony! You can’t explain why these things happened and you don’t understand why God permitted you to feel such pain, but you never quit believing! Satan is trying to kill the child of God, but his hand is restrained; Satan cannot go beyond what God permits. We serve a God too good to needlessly hurt His child and too wise to make a mistake.

There is much we cannot understand concerning the reason God permits His people to be slandered or to suffer; however, we discover in the pages of Holy Writ that Satan is ultimately powerless in his slanderous accusations and in his frightful efforts to destroy the people of God. Satan is powerless because he is trying to bring a charge against God’s elect. The Lord Jesus Himself will not let such accusation and assault pass unchallenged; He stands to plead the case for the redeemed saint of God.

Satan will attack, he will bring the charge, “Ah ha, God, do You see what a miserable failure he is?” Satan isn’t saying anything that man doesn’t already know. He knows his failings! The charge is met by the Son of God saying, “Father, he accepted My sacrifice, submitted himself to My reign; he has been set free of the penalty of his sin.”

“But he doesn’t deserve mercy,” Satan sputters.

From the throne, the voice of the Living God thunders, “Not guilty! Case dismissed.”

Satan then tries again. He says, “Okay, God, what about her? She has a sordid past; what are You going to do about that?” She knows her past, no secret here. Like a Lamb that has been slain, the Saviour stands before the throne. He holds forth His hands, showing the prints of the nails. “Father, she accepted Me as her Master. I suffered these wounds—these wounds—for her.” Again, that awful voice thunders from the throne, “Not guilty! Case dismissed.”

And so it goes as Satan attempts again and again to condemn the redeemed saints. Though without exception the saints had the desire to honour God, they failed repeatedly to stand firm, to live righteously, to be holy, to avoid sin. They have sinned, turned often in contrition and deep sorrow to ask forgiveness. Each time they sinned, Satan tried to destroy them, driving them to the ground, whispering to their hearts that they are failures, reminding them each time they stumble, always accusing them before the throne of God. Each time, the accuser is met by the testimony of the Crucified Son of God—and the blood that He shed still sets His people free. We see how that goes in an incident recorded in one of the Old Testament Minor Prophets.

“I saw Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, with Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, ‘May the LORD rebuke you, Satan! May the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Isn’t this man like a burning stick snatched from the fire?’ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood there before the angel. The angel spoke up to those standing all around, ‘Remove his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘I have freely forgiven your iniquity and will dress you in fine clothing.’ Then I spoke up, ‘Let a clean turban be put on his head.’ So, they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood nearby” [ZECHARIAH 3:1-5 NET BIBLE].

I may be a burning stick snatched from the fire, but I've been redeemed. I may have been dressed in filthy clothes, but God has washed me and dressed me in white clothing. I may have failed in your eyes, but in Christ the Lord I've been set free. Each Christian has this testimony. Therefore, the child of God is protected from the assaults of the evil one. It is not my strength that keeps me safe. It is not even our collective strength that keeps us safe. Rather, it is the Risen Son of God, the One who conquered death, hell and the grave that keeps us safe. Ultimately, we who have believed will be victorious in every conflict.

THE VICTORIOUS LIFE — “We know that ... *the evil one does not touch him.*” Because we who believe have a powerful Protector, we are assured of victory. I don't mean to imply that we will never falter or that we are able to live a sinless life, I do mean that we will progress steadily toward glory and we will make the eternal shore by God's grace.

The Apostle to the Gentiles wrote of the child of God, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he *foreknew* he also *predestined* to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also *called*, and those whom he called he also *justified*, and those whom he justified he also *glorified*” [ROMANS 8:26-30].

Note the progression Paul outlined. The redeemed were foreknown. Foreknown, they were predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Those whom God predestined were called. Those who have been called are justified. And those who are justified are glorified. Having believed in Christ the Lord, having placed myself under His rule, having received the gift of life in Him, I already am glorified in Him. In time, I am liable to attack from the evil one; however, he cannot gain a foothold. When I came to Christ, something wonderful happened. Once I was blind; now I can see. Once I walked in darkness; now I walk in light. Once I was dead; now I am alive. Once I was unloved by God; now I am a recipient of His love. Once I was enslaved; now I am free.

I can remember what I was before Christ saved me. I remember what it was to be “separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” [EPHESIANS 2:12]. Thank God, I know what it is “in Christ Jesus [to] have been brought near by the blood of Christ” [EPHESIANS 2:13].

Paul describes me precisely when he writes, “You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” [EPHESIANS 2:1-3].

Thank God for those verses that follow. You remember those verses, don't you? “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” [EPHESIANS 2:4-7]. And our salvation is to His glory.

I cannot help but be a little excited when I read of the triumph of Christ's return—a triumph in which the redeemed of God are destined to share. Paul speaks of that triumph as he writes the Christians of Salonica in the Second Thessalonian Letter. The Apostle has written, “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore, we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

“This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” [2 THESSALONIANS 1:3-12].

The promise of the Lord is that Christ Jesus is coming in order to be glorified in His saints—*in His saints*; and that includes each of us who have received Him as Master over life. Christ Jesus our Lord will return so that He may be marvelled at among all who have believed—*marvelled at among all who have believed*; and that includes each of us, each Christian, who has believed on Him as the One who takes away our sin.

What a powerful picture John presents after showing us the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The Revelator writes, “I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords” [REVELATION 19:11-16].

While pursuing doctoral studies at the medical school in Dallas, I made the acquaintance of a rather simple man who ran a Texaco service station near the house where Lynda and I lived. Bob Greene didn't have much education, but he avidly devoured the Word of God. Bob loved to talk about the things of God; he wasn't shy about telling customers about his faith in the Lord. He was especially interested in eschatology, often engaging me in conversations concerning the meaning of eschatological passages of the Word. I heard Bob affirm on numerous occasions that he believed the Bible to be accurate and dependable, testifying that he had no reason to question what was written therein. Bob boldly declared, “When God says Jesus is coming on a white horse, I expect to see a white horse. He won't be riding on a sorrel, or a roan, or a bay—He will be riding on a white horse.” Bob was correct! I expect to see the Lord calling the earth to account at the end of that Great Tribulation, His awesome presence precipitating terror in earth dwellers. And those who have anticipated His coming will rejoice, sharing in His victory.

In my Bible reading on Saturday, I was reminded of God's promise to His people. Listen again to the comforting promise related by the **91ST PSALM**.

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to the LORD, ‘My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.’

“For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

“A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.

“Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—
no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.

“For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.
On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

““Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.
When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.””

[PSALM 91:1-16]

This is the heritage of the redeemed. This is the heritage of God's people. Amen; and amen.