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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 6



COMING INTO **GOD'S PRESENCE**

Allen Webster

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”
2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

Because the Jews had defended it so fanatically, the Roman general Pompey was anxious to see what was in the temple's most sacred room, the Holy of Holies. He was surprised to find it empty. He wondered why so many Jews had died to defend an empty room.¹ He did not understand the concept of a God “eternal, immortal, invisible” (1 Timothy 1:17).

The worship service is about recognition. It is the time in a Christian's week when he remembers the majesty of his God. It is the time when she acknowledges the greatness of her God's character and deeds. It is the time when God's people as a group fulfill one of His strongest desires. The Bible commands, “Acknowledge Him” (Proverbs 3:6).

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, [Isaiah] saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and

lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1). Worshipers do not come before God on a horizontal plane. One does not approach one's Creator as he does his buddy at the ball field or as she does her friend on the phone. God corrected those who “thought that I was altogether like you” (Psalm 50:21). It is a vertical plane that we ascend to be in God's presence.

Isaiah shows our approach is vertical in both (1) position (“high,” “lofty”) and (2) morality (“holiness”): “Thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place’” (Isaiah 57:15a).

In terms of position, “God is in heaven, and you on earth” (Ecclesiastes 5:2; cf. Psalm 2:4; 68:4; 113:5; 115:3; 123:1; Ephesians 1:20–21). We pray, “Our Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). Even God's name is “exalted”² (Isaiah 12:4).

In terms of morality, the Bible contrasts God's absolute holiness (high) with man's sinfulness (low). “One cried to another



and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts’ . . . So I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips’” (Isaiah 6:3–5).

God wants us to recognize our condition before coming before Him: “Only acknowledge [recognize] your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God . . . and you have not obeyed My voice” (Jeremiah 3:13; cf. 14:20; 24:5; Hosea 5:15). “Reckon [recognize] yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ” (Romans 6:11). Only the worshiper who recognizes this distance and manifests the corresponding humility is allowed to approach the divine Being: “With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

The primary Old Testament word for worship (*shachah*) means “to bow down; to prostrate one’s self; to do obeisance” (cf. Genesis 24:52; Exodus 4:31). When Albert Thorwaldsen completed his famous statue of Christ, he invited a friend to see it. The Danish sculptor had created a portrayal of Christ with His arms outstretched and His head bowed. The friend looked and said, “I can’t see His face.” Thorwaldsen replied, “If you want to see the face of Christ, you must get on your knees.” Only when God’s servants humble themselves in worship to God can we see Him clearly.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE OUR DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

When one becomes impressed with the truth of God’s majesty, he naturally feels insignificant. In the divine pres-

ence, Isaiah said, “Woe is me.” He was “undone”³ (Isaiah 6:5). The psalmist expressed it this way: “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?” (8:3–4).⁴

The recognition is accurate—we are totally dependent on God. An appropriate worship song is “I Need Thee Every Hour,” for worship is an acknowledgment to God that He is our provider, sustainer, redeemer—our existence depends on Him. It is in God that we “live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28; cf. Luke 20:38). David saw men as being in God’s sling, who could be slung out of its pocket at any time (1 Samuel 25:29). In Christ “all things consist” (Colossians 1:17); He upholds “all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3). God has life in Himself (John 5:20–21); He is the very fountain of life (Psalm 36:9). Job put it simply: “In whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10).

A TRUE WORSHIPER RECOGNIZES GOD’S DESIRE TO BE WORSHIPED.

We may not grasp the full scope of worship, but it is a big thing to God. A visit home with the grandchildren may seem like more trouble than it is worth to parents, but to grandparents that visit is the highlight of the week (perhaps the year). If we could ascribe to God such human-like terms, we might say, “Worship is the highlight of God’s week.” To borrow the language of Solomon’s love song,⁵ we can almost hear God saying at worship time,

“O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely” (Song of Solomon 2:14). The eternal Father “takes pleasure⁶ in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy” (Psalm 147:11). A Christian’s prayers delight God (Proverbs 15:8). The Father “is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23).

In the Old Testament, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders were told to worship “from afar” (Exodus 24:1), but now we are invited to “draw near⁷ to God” (Hebrews 7:19; 10:22). We may even come boldly to His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).⁸

Endnotes

¹ Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Stand Publishing Company, 1997).

² Hebrew *sagah*, “inaccessible; high, lofty.”

³ Hebrew *damah*, “to be dumb or silent: hence to fail or perish; be brought to silence.”

⁴ God, though, does not consider man insignificant. He made man in His own image (Genesis 1:26–27). He paid the highest price for our fellowship—the humiliation, suffering, and separation of His Son (Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21–22; Matthew 27:46). We are constantly in His thoughts (Psalm 40:5). He values our worship.

⁵ Some see this as a picture of God’s love relationship with His church.

⁶ Interestingly, this word (*ratsah*) can also mean “to satisfy a debt,” which reminds us of how much we owe God and how little He asks of us in return.

⁷ Greek *proserchomai*, “to approach, visit, worship.”

⁸ There are stipulations, of course. We must come through our High Priest and Mediator, Christ (Hebrews 4:14–15; 1 Timothy 2:5). We must come with clean hands and pure hearts (James 4:8).

PLAY “CATCH” with Your Children

God’s wisdom is seen in His stressing the importance of instilling in children the truths of His Word at an early age (Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 6:4–7). The child will become the man he is trained to be. By exposing children to a large quantity of Bible teachings in their early years, we can be instrumental in programming their mental computers to think as God does.

Truth is as much the natural staff of life for the soul as bread is for the body. The soul cannot be strong and healthy without it. Ignorance leads to the starvation of the soul; error is its poison; truth is its food and healing medicine. The highest truths are those which should be imparted at the earliest possible period to a child. It is important that as soon as a child’s mind can admit the thought, she should be taught concerning Him who made her and all things, and who rules in heaven and on earth. You may train a fruit tree by tying it to a railing, but the tree whose branches have nothing to lean on but air is not trained at all (cf. Proverbs 29:15).

Much of what parents teach children is caught rather than taught. Children are far less influenced by precept than by example. Our character is a stream, a river flowing down upon our children hour by hour. What we teach here and there to carry an opposing influence is, at best, only a ripple on the surface of the stream. If we expect children to go with the ripple instead of the stream, we shall be disappointed.

Example teaches without a tongue. Precept may point the way, but example carries us along. The saying of “Do as I say, not as I do,” is reversed in the experience of life. All persons are more apt to learn through the eye than the ear, and whatever is seen makes a deeper impression than what is heard.

Whatever children see they unconsciously imitate. Thus, it is important that parents and grandparents set a good example for children. They must live near to God. The influence of a parent or grandparent should make it “easier to be holy than to be sinful, to do good than to do evil, to sacrifice than to enjoy.” Solomon said, “The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness” (Proverbs 16:31). What you are, your child will likely be.

Some do not get better with age. Some begin to murmur and complain (cf. Philippians 2:14). They exaggerate problems and minimize blessings. Someone said, “The older a man gets, the farther he had to walk to school as a boy.” At the funeral of a man prominent in the community, I overheard some elderly women talking about the deceased. “It’s really too bad about him,” one said. “He had the same thing I’ve got, only mine’s a lot worse.”

We should try to avoid this attitude, for it will not set the right example for the next generation. The road to success is always under construction, but a gray-headed Christian is someone worth imitating. —Author unknown

All Kinds of Surprises in the Bible!

A man was helping his wife for the fourth time that week, and he was tired of doing the dishes. “You know,” he said, “this isn’t really men’s work. I’m just trying to be helpful.” His wife answered, “You’re wrong, and the Bible says so.” She then told him to read 2 Kings 21:13, which reads, “I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.” You never know what you may find when you read the Bible, do you? There just may be a whole lot more that you never knew. It is worth spending time finding out!



God’s Plan for Saving Man

- Divine Love:** John 3:16
- God’s Grace:** Ephesians 2:8
- Christ’s Blood:** Romans 5:9
- Holy Spirit’s Word:** Romans 1:16
- Sinner’s Faith:** Acts 16:31
- Sinner’s Repentance:** Luke 13:3
- Sinner’s Confession:** Romans 10:10
- Sinner’s Baptism:** Acts 22:16
- Christian’s Love:** Matthew 22:37
- Christian’s Work:** James 2:24
- Christian’s Hope:** Romans 8:24
- Christian’s Endurance:** Revelation 2:10





BIG Payday!

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my four-year-old daughter on my rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced for the inevitable questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

"A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones."

PROVERBS 17:22

Homespun Wisdom

Troubles in marriage often start when a man gets so busy earning his salt that he forgets his sugar.

Too many couples marry for better or for worse, but not for good.

When a man marries a woman, they become one—but the trouble starts when they try to decide which one!

Remember, just because many couples "harp at each other" does not mean that their marriage is made in heaven.

"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser."

PROVERBS 9:9

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Restoring a Thing of Value

Lovely works of art are often marred by accumulations of dirt and grime. Specialists are employed to restore them to their original beauty. They carefully remove the foreign matter that obscures the painting's true nature. Fine furniture can become worn and damaged. Its beauty is hidden by tattered upholstery and layers of paint. To see it as it came from the hands of the artisan, it needs to be restored by a skilled workman. The paint and ragged upholstery need to be stripped away.

Christianity is two thousand years old. Its modern appearance is greatly marred and distorted by the accumulation of human doctrines and practices imposed upon it over the ages. A careful reading of the New Testament provides one with an accurate picture of Christianity as it came from the hands of Jesus. Comparing that with modern "versions of Christianity" reveals a stark difference. Hardly a single teaching or practice of the original faith has been untouched. Human hands have defiled its beauty with changes. But as with the work of art, we can restore the church to its original simplicity and beauty.

First, we look to the New Testament to determine just how Christ intended the church to be; what it was to believe; how it was to worship. We then resolve to follow those guidelines faithfully. Each item of faith and practice must be examined carefully. Anything not part of the New Testament must be discarded. Anything that has been left out must be put back.

We must be willing to endure the complaints, criticisms, and ridicule of those who love human traditions more than they do the original faith. We must be prepared to be a minority because Jesus said, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). We must resolve to hold fast that which we find, lest we drift from it (Hebrews 2:1). The labor will be intense, the cost high, but when we have done the necessary work of restoring, we will see the pure and holy church of Christ He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). We will have found the way that is right, which cannot be wrong.



Occupational Hymns

Astronaut: "Nearer My God, to Thee"

Baker: "I Need Thee Every Hour"

Barber: "A Parting Hymn We Sing"

Baseball Batter: "Seek Thee First"

Builder: "How Firm a Foundation"

Carpenter: "The Nail-Scarred Hand"

Civil Engineer: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Dentist: "Crown Him with Many Crowns"

Electrician: "Send the Light"

Fisherman: "Shall We Gather at the River?"

Golfer: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away"

Historian: "Tell Me the Old, Old Story"

IRS: "All to Thee [I Owe]"

Librarian: "We've a Story to Tell"

Lifeguard: "Come to the Water"

Mathematician: "10,000 Times, 10,000 Times"

Medical Technician: "Revive Us Again"

Mountain Climber: "The Rock That Is Higher Than I"

Obstetrician: "He Is Able to Deliver Thee"

Optometrist: "Open Mine Eyes That I Might See"

Philosopher: "I Am Thinking Today"

Politician: "Standing on the Promises"

Real Estate Agent: "I've Got a Mansion"

Steeple Builder: "Lift High the Cross"

Stonecutter: "Rock of Ages"

Switchboard Operator: "A Call Comes Ringing"

Trucker: "On the Highways and Byways of Life"

Voice Teacher: "Sing Them Over Again to Me"

Watchmaker: "Take Time to Be Holy"

Watchman: "Silent Night"

Weatherman: "There Shall Be Showers of Blessings"



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Bible Quiz

VOLUME 25:6

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Questions People Ask: Instrumental Music" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

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Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 25:4 Who Dared Ask God This? 1. Moses (Exodus 5:22); 2. Elijah (1 Kings 17:18–20); 3. Abraham (Genesis 15:2); 4. Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:20–22); 5. Solomon (1 Kings 3:5–9); 6. Moses (Exodus 3:13); 7. David (1 Samuel 30:3–8); 8. The People (Israelites) (Judges 21:2–3); 9. Moses (Exodus 17:4); 10. Joshua (Joshua 7:7).

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Christians: 1. Faith (2 Peter 1:5); 2. Virtue (2 Peter 1:5); 3. Love (2 Peter 1:7); 4. Self-control (2 Peter 1:6); 5. Brotherly kindness (2 Peter 1:7); 6. Godliness (2 Peter 1:6); 7. Perseverance (2 Peter 1:6)

V. 25:5 The Holy Spirit: 1. Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18); 2. Dove (Luke 3:22); 3. baptizing, name (Matthew 28:19); 4. Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1); 5. Blasphemy (Matthew 12:31); 6. Drunkenness or being full of new wine (Acts 2:13); 7. The third hour of the day (Acts 2:15); 8. Baptized, remission, gift (Acts 2:38); 9. Ananias (Acts 5:3); 10. Liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17); 11. Wind (Acts 2:2); 12. Tongues as of fire (Acts 2:3); 13. Spoke in tongues (everyone could understand in their own language) (Acts 2:4, 11); 14. Peter (Acts 2:14); 15. Simon (Acts 8:18); 16. Peace, joy (Romans 14:17); 17. Body, temple (1 Corinthians 6:19); 18. Moved (2 Peter 1:21)

Marriages and Weddings

Find answers in the following passages: Genesis 24:64–65; 34:8–9; Exodus 21:9; Numbers 12:1; 1 Samuel 1:2; Hosea 1:2; Matthew 22:1–7, 30; John 2:1–10; 1 Corinthians 7:33. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

1. What bride-to-be saw her future husband and covered herself with a veil? _____
2. What miracle did Jesus perform at a marriage feast? _____
3. In Jesus' parable, what did the king do to those who refused to attend his son's wedding? _____
4. If a Hebrew's female slave became engaged to marry his son, the master was obligated to treat her after the manner of _____.
5. God commanded _____ to marry a sexually immoral woman.
6. What advantage did Peninnah have over her husband's other wife? _____
7. What requests did Hamor make to Jacob? _____
8. What did Miriam and Aaron criticize about Moses' marriage? _____
9. Do angels get married in heaven? _____
10. A married man cares for the things of the _____—how he may _____ his wife.



Things about the Church of Christ That SURPRISE PEOPLE

A person can be baptized at any time, and it does not have to be performed by a preacher.

Many people believe that a preacher must baptize them, or it does not “count.” This doctrine comes out of medieval church tradition; the Bible places no such restriction on baptism. If a man can teach another what to do to be saved, then he can also baptize him. The great commission applies to all equally (Matthew 28:19–20). Many people, following a Bible study with Christian friends, are surprised to find out that they do not have to wait to be baptized. They figure that there will be a special “baptismal service” at the end of the month or six months. In the New Testament, in every case when people wanted to be baptized, there was no waiting (Acts 2:41; 8:36–38; 10:47–48; 16:14–15, 33–34).

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Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

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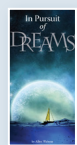
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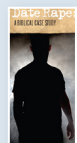
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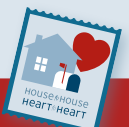


Women Glorifying God

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VOLUME 25:6



WHAT HAPPENED ON THE “LONG DAY” OF JOSHUA 10?

The “long day” of Joshua 10:12–14 is one of several miracles in the book of Joshua. The long day was a day that is unique in human history. “There has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel” (Joshua 10:14).

The passage emphasizes that Joshua and Israel achieved victory because of the prayer of Joshua and the power of God. The book of Joshua describes the conquest of the Promised Land by the Israelites. The battle in Joshua 10 came as the result of a pact made between the Israelites and the Gibeonites.

As Israel came to aid the Gibeonites, who were under attack by the Amorites, Joshua sought the Lord’s aid. God rained down huge hailstones on the Amorites, so that “there were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword” (10:11). After the miraculous intervention of God, Joshua “said in the sight of Israel: ‘Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon’” (10:12). So “the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So

the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day” (10:13). (The Book of Jasher, an ancient book that is lost and unknown to us, has never been considered a book of inspired Scripture.)

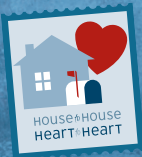
Scientifically speaking, this miracle, as is true with all miracles, is difficult to explain. The nature of miracles is such that they are outside the normal course of things, and as acts of God they are to be accepted whether or not they can be explained. The problem with this particular miracle is that if the rotation of the earth stopped, it would not just have an effect at this battlefield but would have catastrophic consequences for the whole earth. David said, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1).

Since God created the world, He certainly would have it within His ability to either stop or slow the rotation of the earth in such a gradual way that Joshua’s long day might have been forty-eight hours rather than the normal twenty-four. The text does not demand a sudden standing still of the sun.

Other explanations of how God might have caused a long day include a miraculous tilting of the earth on its axis or a miraculous refraction (bending) of the sun’s rays so that daylight continued for many hours beyond a normal day. (The normal tilting of the earth’s axis today produces twenty-four periods of sunlight near the North Pole.) There are also old Egyptian, Hindu, and Chinese sources that suggest observation of a “long day” by ancient astronomers.

While there likely are other good ways to visualize how God accomplished this miracle, one must remember that the long day of Joshua was unique. There has never been another day in history such as that one. That day was a demonstration of the omnipotence of God and His care for His people led by a godly man who remembered the power of prayer. —Bob Prichard





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6/20



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