

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

Mar 2003

Volume 17, No. 1

Bible Explorations Online:

email: info@bibleexplorations.org www.bibleexplorations.org

...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

God Requireth That Which Is Past # 1

After experiencing the emptiness of the world's wealth and pleasures, King Solomon declared matters that he had come to understand. We find those in the book of Ecclesiastes, where among other things he said, "**That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.**" (Eccl. 3:15) What is the meaning of, "**God requireth that which is past.**"? Does God demand something that no longer exists?

This puzzle begins to unravel when we see that the word rendered "**requireth**" here, is not used of an absolute demand, but of a searching for or a striving after something. It is the Hebrew "*bah-kash*" and is used of a strong resolve that moves one to action. The word occurs in 1 Samuel 23:14 where we read that King Saul sought to kill David. We read, "**David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought (*bah-kash*) him every day.**" Saul pursued David, searching every day for him in desert caves and canyons.

"*Bah-kash*" occurs 7 times in Ecclesiastes and is rendered, *to get, seek out, seeketh, sought out, and sought to find*. Examples are: "**A time to get, and a time to lose.**" (3:6); "**God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.**" (7:29) "**Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it.**" (8:17)

From its usage we see that the English word "**requireth**" is misleading. God is not demanding something; He is *seeking* something. He is seeking something

which is past. Rotherham's translation reads: "**God seeketh that which was chased away.**"

What is past that He seeks?" we may ask. There is a hint of what God is seeking in Job 14:15. Job, who had learned something of the heart of God and of what He is seeking said, "**Thou (Lord) wilt have a desire (longing) for the work of Thine hands.**" A metrical version of this verse reads, "**For Thou wilt yearn toward Thy handiwork.**" In this context Job is speaking of the future day when God would call him from the grave as a new creation, holy and without sin, as Adam was when God created him. Have we considered that God might yearn for man as he was when they walked and talked together, before sin ruined him and all mankind?

Scripture reveals that God not only yearns for a holy people, but He searches for them. It is not man who seeks God, but it is God Who seeks man. When Adam sinned it was God Who sought him calling, "**Where art thou?**" (Gen. 3:9) It was not Abram who sought God, but it was God who called Abram out from among an idolatrous people. It was not the nation of Israel that discovered God, but God who found Israel. We read, "**He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.**" (Deut. 32:10)

In addition, God sought some in Israel who would come to Him. He said, "**Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?**" (Isa. 50:2) "**I have spread out My hands all the day unto a rebellious People.**" (Isa. 65:2) "**...when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear.**"

(Isa. 66:4)

When God was manifest in flesh He called to those of Israel who trusted in religious acts saying, "**Come unto me**" (Mt. 11:28); turn from religion and come unto the One Who is your Savior. And again He cried, "**...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!**" (Mt. 23:37)

We see the heart of God again when Christ spoke of His death and resurrection. He said, "**And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.**" (Jn. 12:32) Our Lord Christ draws all men unto Him, but not all men will come to Him and be made new creations.

Instead, when man is said to "seek God", he performs acts that he thinks will make him acceptable to God. He may say prayers, give offerings, do rituals, embrace a creed, or join a church. All of these things focus on *self* and what one may do to be approved of God. Man ignores Scripture that shows, from Genesis to Revelation, that no man is acceptable to God unless a substitute pays the price for his sin.

A substitute has paid for the sin of the world; God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Before sin ever entered the world God foresaw its ruin and Christ was appointed to be the Lamb of God, the Redeemer. It is God's goal in the ages to bring back a new and perfect creation by means of Christ. In Ephesians chapter 3 we read of God's plan We read, of, "**... the eternal (age-time) purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" (3:11)

"**God requireth that which is past...**"

J. Heltzinger

London Visit

Though miles may separate us who are members of the church which is Christ's body, in Christ we are knit together in love. This was most evident recently when three of us from the Bible Exploration's assembly in Phoenix USA visited fellow members in England.

We were welcomed, not as strangers, but like family members who had been away and have returned home. Our every need and pleasure was provided, above all we could have imagined.

We were built up in the faith at the Chapel of the Open Book by Alan Schofield's message taken from Acts 23. He showed from that chapter and other references that the Apostle Paul could say that he had, "...lived in all good conscience before God." We were thus challenged to live so that we also may have consciences void of offense.

Fellowship after the meeting with Alan, his wife Sheila, Errol Palmer, John and Emma Porter, Jim Cliff, Nicolas and Andrew Kafouris, gave us opportunity to get to know them and to embed their faces in our hearts. Now we may recall them when we hear or read their names again.

While there, we came to understand

something of "the work" and ministry shared by those in many parts of England. We realized that each has his own peculiar contribution in the task of holding forth the word of truth, even as that which each member supplies builds up the Body of Christ.

Visiting Wyn Carpenter at Sunningdale, we learned of her valuable work in typing, proofing and editing material for books and articles for publication. We were blessed by the thankfulness she expressed to her Heavenly Father, Who has given her this work in her golden years. We were reminded that those who long to serve the Lord might be fruitful to the end of their lives. In conversations with Wyn about her father, Mr. C. H. Welch, we learned more about his journey from artist to Bible scholar, writer and teacher, and about his steadfast fight of faith.

We are grateful for the privilege of visiting those in England and we rejoice to think that one day, when we appear with Christ in glory, we shall meet all the other members of the Body of Christ. There will be no more separations; we shall be all together, at home above the heavens with our Heavenly Father.

Jean Heltzinger, Kelley Bagby, and Kathleen Cottrell

He Is Able

"I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able..." (2Tim.1:12)

"Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph.3:20)

"Able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." (2Cor.9:8)

"Able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb.2:18)

"Able...to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb.7:25)

"Able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 24)

"Able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (2Tim. 1:12)

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil.3:21)

"Believe ye that I am able to do this?...Yea, Lord. According to your faith be it unto you." (Matt.9:28,29)

In Memory Of Deborah Jo McWilliams Cozad

Debbie, wife of Timothy, and beloved daughter of Jim and Jan McWilliams, died in a fatal car accident near her home in Dewey, Arizona, just after midnight, March 10, 2003. She was nearly home after a 10-hour work shift and 80 mile drive from Phoenix where she worked for the American Express Corporation.

Debbie's name tells the story of her life. Named "Deborah", like the woman in Judges 4 who led Israel to victory in battle, our Debbie gave the Lord the honor for every victory in her life.

She was named "Jo" after her grandmother, Josephine McWilliams, a woman of unfeigned faith. And as the New Testament Timothy learned the Scriptures from his grandmother, Lois, so Debbie learned the Scriptures from

her Grandma Jo.

From childhood, Debbie's parents taught her to embrace the calling in Christ above the heavens, and that appearing with Him in Glory was her hope.

The name "McWilliams" brings recognition to many all over the world who have learned these truths from the deceased Grandma Jo and from Jim and Jan who continue faithfully with a Bible tape and letter ministry.

A son, Jacob, was born to Debbie and Tim only one year ago. Now it is the prayer of all who knew and loved Debbie, that little Jacob may come to know Christ as his Savior at an early age and that he may carry on the word of truth that was guarded by his mother, Debbie.

The saints in Arizona will miss Debbie greatly for she was a "sparkler"; she was a light that warmed a room by her smile and warmed hearts with her words of cheer. Her death may seem untimely to the world, but we know that the Lord has promised to work all things together for good to those who love Him...and we know that she loved Him.

For the child of God there is a time to be born and a time to die, as acknowledged by our Lord when He had finished His work, "**The hour is come.**" (John 17:1) Debbie's hour has come, and now rests from her labors as she waits to appear with Christ in Glory.

We rejoice in anticipation of that glorious day.

The Hopes Of God's People # 10

The Wife, The Bride of the Lamb and The Body of Christ Features Common in Their Hopes: Judgment

In previous papers we looked briefly at the judgments the Wife and the Bride will realize when they enter their hopes. We turn now to the judgment of members of the Church which is Christ's Body. For this we must confine our search to the last seven epistles of Paul which are, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. It is only in those books that we read of God's creation of this company and of things concerning them.

In those seven epistles we find that, in contrast to the Wife and Bride who will realize their hopes on earth, the hope of the Church which is the Body of Christ will be realized *above the heavens*. Christ is concealed in heavenly places now, but when He steps forth there to exercise His dominion over all things, the Church, His Body, will appear with Him. We are told, "**Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.**" (Col. 3:2-4)

At that appearing, members of the Church who have died will be raised and those living will be transformed. The righteous Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ, will assess their service. Paul reminded young Timothy of this judgment and urged him to be faithful to his ministry and complete it in spite of trials that would surely come. We read, "**I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; ... watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of (complete) thy ministry,**" (2 Tim. 4:1-5)

This message was to Timothy, but we too have a ministry that God has planned

for us. He created us to walk in good works that He outlined before the ages began. Ephesians 2:10 tells that, "... **we are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**" We are chosen to be, "**to the praise of His glory**" (Eph. 1:12), and we can do that only if we walk in the works that He has planned.

The good works God desires are described in those seven epistles concerning us. It may surprise many Christians to learn that the works that some men count good, such as, church attendance, tithing, fasting, water baptisms and musical performances, are not those God planned for us. Instead, we find God's desire is that we do not have a mere casual acquaintance with His Son, but that we go on and get to know Him intimately from His Word and our experiences with Him. Paul expressed this when he prayed that members of the Church would walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work, and "... **increasing in the knowledge (acknowledgment) of God.**" (Col. 1:10) This "knowledge of God" is not simply an accumulation of facts, but our recognizing Him and His glory more and more in all things.

An increasing acknowledgment of Christ should produce an increasing love for Him and greater discernment. The Apostle Paul understood this and wrote the Philippians, "**And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.**" (Php. 1:9) We are to express that love of Christ with love for our families and those we meet especially fellow-members of the Body of Christ. It is in these things that we will be judged.

We are not to remain infants in the knowledge of Christ, but to "... **grow up into Him in all things**" (Eph. 4:15)

We are to, "**walk in love**" (Eph. 5:2); "... **speaking the truth in love**" (Eph. 4:15). We may have the truth of the Mystery and "rightly divide" the

Scriptures, and yet not walk in love toward those around us.

We are to, "... **walk as children of light**" (Eph. 5:8). Having received the light, and understanding God's purpose for us today, we are to show the worship that is now acceptable unto the Lord.

We are to, "**walk circumspectly**" (Eph. 5:15), that is, carefully, precisely, not tripped up by things of this world so that we waste our lives on things that pass away, things that rob us of opportunities for Christ, and will keep us from rewards.

We are to walk in a manner fitting our membership in the Church which is Christ's Body, "**With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**" (Eph. 4:2,3)

We are not to walk as many believers did whom Paul called "**enemies of the cross of Christ.**" (Phil 3:18) They lived, not for the Lord, but for themselves and things of earth. Like the Children of Israel who were delivered from bondage in Egypt, who were saved by the blood of the Lamb, but who lost their reward because they did not endure. Members of the Church may prove unfaithful and lose the eternal rewards they could have had.

Some may be ashamed because they failed to handle the Scriptures with care, not noting things that differ in God's messages, but mixing together His instructions to different families. (2 Tim 2:15)

Some may suffer loss because they were entangled with the cares of this life or with the pleasures of this world. (2 Tim. 2:4; 3:4)

Some may have no reward because they practiced immorality or were idol worshippers, loving people or things more than God. (Eph. 5:5)

Some may be beguiled of their reward by worshipping (trusting in) the false doctrines of men. (Col. 2:8)

...cont'd on page 4

Hopes # 10 ...cont'd

On the other hand, there will be rewards for those who loved Christ more than things of earth, who continued with Him, obedient to truth as it was revealed to them. We read, "**And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.**" (Col. 3:23,24) "...whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be bond or free.*" (Eph. 6:8) "***It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: If we suffer (endure), we shall also reign with Him.***" (2 Tim. 2:11,12)

The Apostle Paul suffered mental and physical pain while he continued faithful to truth as it was revealed to him. He never swerved from his desire to know Christ better. He pressed on for the "prize" of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Even late in his life he wrote that though he had lost all things of earth, those were trash compared to the knowledge of Christ that he had gained. His desire even then was, "**That I may know**

Him..." (Phil. 3:10)

When Paul's death was near, he could finally say he had completed the ministry that the Lord had planned for him. He wrote, "**I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.**" (2 Tim. 4:7,8)

If we are among those who love and long for Christ's appearing, we will seek to please Him by walking in the good works that the Father planned for us. Whether our service is in the home, the business world, or in a pulpit, we will do all things as unto Him. We will walk worthy of His calling; we will complete our course so that at the end of our days we may say, as Paul did, that we have fought a good fight, have finished our course, and that the crown of righteous awaits us in heavenly places.

J.Heltzinger

Bible Explorations is a joint effort by a group of believers. Articles submitted are not necessarily the view point of the group collectively. Free to anyone upon request.

Phoenix Spring Bible Conference April 4-6

The Spring Bible Conference in Phoenix, AZ will feature Richard Haskell of Chatsworth, CA. Other speakers include Philip Bagby, Forrest Cottrell and Barnabas Bagby. Friday evening and Saturday meetings will be held in the basement of the Condos at Glencroft Retirement Center, 8611 N 67th Ave, Glendale, AZ. Sunday meetings will be held at the Glendale Community Center at 14075 N. 59th Ave, Glendale AZ. For further information please call Jean Heltzinger at (623) 972-7234. The meeting schedule is as follows:

Friday: (Glencroft)

7:00 pm

Saturday: (Glencroft)

9:30 am and 10:30 am

11:45 - Lunch Break (furnished)

1:15 pm and 2:15pm

Sunday: (Glendale Community Ctr)

9:30 am and 10:30 am

03-2003

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 48
SUN CITY, AZ

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS
P.O. BOX 26608
Phoenix, AZ 85068-6608