

Overcomers for Christ

June 2019

in the

image

of

GOD

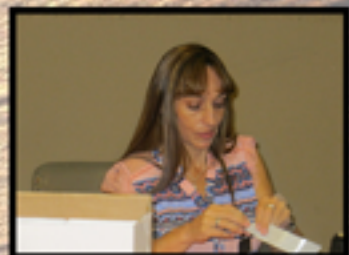
He

created them

Genesis 1:27

Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ

July 2018



Re Birth Day By Wade Anderson

Let's pray: *"Heavenly Father I invite Your Holy Spirit to be the teacher here today AND every day. Help me to relay the message that You were revealing to me this morning. I thank You Lord for Your love that is being revealed to me each and every day that I walk with You. Holy Spirit ... show me now what the Father has sent You to share with us all. Thank You Father for Your faithfulness, thank You Lord Jesus for Your obedience and thank You Holy Spirit for bringing the Father's Word to us. In Jesus name AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!"*

In the wee early of the morning I was awakened to some sort of awareness but not awake, with my eyes still closed. It seemed as though I was in the center of a huge crowd with so much going on around me. At first it was like I was at a big party but none like any I'd ever been too. Then it seemed that I was being drawn back a little bit at a time and no longer in the midst of it all. Remember, I felt somewhat conscious in all of this so as I was being drawn back I thought that I had seen all that was going to be shown to me. I remember thinking that maybe I was only supposed to see a glimpse, for the time being. Watching it all start to get smaller and thinking all of it was fading away, at first I was trying to squint to still see the picture but then I quickly realized I didn't have to. As I was being drawn back I then began to see from an even broader view, the bigger picture. And the further I got from what I believed was the actual event, the more clear I could see how HUGE the party was going on, around and now right in front of me. So, now let's see what the message is.

If I were to ask you all the question, "How many of you 10 years, 5 years, 2 years or even 30 days ago would have believed that you would NOW be serving Jesus would have your hands in the air?" WOW! Look around you, see all those hands in the air? You can believe that mine was the first to go up as well. Why do you figure that is? Well, I don't want any of you to think that I am the one throwing all of us under the bus so I'll use Scripture to explain.

Pretty simply Jesus explains my situation, *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."* (Luke 5:31)

First of all, before I asked Jesus into my heart my whole life was extremely a mess. For thirty plus years, I was on a downward spiral out of control. For the last ten plus years of that time, I knew and even acknowledged that mess but didn't truly know it was this relationship that I have with Jesus today that I was so much in need of. I did have some 'church' in a few of my early years. In probably the last 2-3 years of that 'mess', when I was in my shop alone, I would set and write trying to get what was in my head and put it on paper thinking that might help me. And truthfully I was so confused that I even titled some of those writings *Thoughts/Feelings*. Not realizing it at the time, but several years later after I gave my life to Jesus I found some of those writings and in them I also found that most of the things I'd tried to work through ALL seemed to have a prayer of great urgency in them. I want it to be known that my mother did her best to raise us five boys by herself, to treat other people the way that we would like to be treated, be respectful. Paul tells us in Romans, ***"Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know His law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right."*** (Romans 2:14-15) I hadn't gone so far that I didn't have a conscience. In fact, it was my own conscience that was haunting me so much. I knew the things I was involved with were wrong, and mom would NOT have approved. But I was the boss of me now ... and ... well as you are reading ... that didn't work out the way I believed it would.

Probably the most quoted Scripture in the Bible is found in the ***Book of John***. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16) But honestly, just because someone can quote something does not mean that they have an understanding of it. From infants and even into adulthood we are taught to memorize things or use our intellect, our 'minds'. The understanding that will truly make a difference in and throughout our lives is when we make a 'heart' connection to what we are confessing. Take this for instance. Many people are taught that 'eternal life' is what we receive when we leave this world and go to be with God in heaven. That is the truth, but it's NOT the whole truth. Jesus gives us the true definition of eternal life and it begins the second we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Listen. *"And this is the way to have eternal life-to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one You sent to earth."* (John 17:3)

I spoke a little bit about 'knowing God' in last month's newsletter. In context, the phrase *"to 'know' You, the only true God, AND Jesus Christ"* here 'know' is the Greek word (1097) *ginosko*, pronounced *ghin-occe-ko* and its meaning is; *to 'know' (absolutely) in a great variety of applications, as follow, be aware of, feel, have knowledge of, be sure and understand.* I personally believe this to be an intimate word/term. The reason I say this is because it wasn't until I developed a hunger and thirst to 'know' with a deeper understanding of who God and Jesus WERE/ARE that I began to sense and feel His presence in my own life.

It's as simple as the way this article was birthed. In spite of what some people might think, I didn't have too much pizza the night before I had this dream/vision/impartation. NO! I 'knew' it was God speaking to me even before my eyes were open. Holy Spirit stayed right there with me tapping on my heart until I became conscious enough to realize it. Because I wanted to 'know' more and I kept my head and heart right there where He could speak to me and show me things, He continued to pour Scripture after Scripture inside of me.

Not everyone agrees with me, and that's perfectly fine, but when I'm helping someone begin their new relationship with Jesus I always encourage them to begin reading the **Book of John**. The reason for that is first, I don't want them to get discouraged trying to understand the Old Testament begats, or why God is smiting so many people. And second, John had a revelation of who Jesus truly was, read **John 1:1-5,14**. If we truly desire to know His voice over the lies of the enemy or know that it's Him guiding us, then I always recommend John. John 'knew' by revelation of Holy Spirit that Jesus was NOT just a man or a prophet but that He was God. John said, **"In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind."** (**John 1:4**) Now listen how the NLT shares that same Scripture, **"The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone."** Isn't that exactly the way John began **John 1:1** (NLT)? **"In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God."**

The reason I'm explaining this in this way is NOT to make me sound like I'm some sort of 'special' spiritual person. NO! I share these things to show you how easy it is to hear and follow God, once we get to 'know Him'. Believe me I am no different than any one of you reading this. In fact, I still believe that I was the 'poster child' for these next Scriptures. **"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."** (**1 Corinthians 1:27-29**) Brothers and sisters, there is no way that I will EVER boast in my own abilities or qualifications. I just shared above that I was an out of control train on the fast track for complete destruction before Jesus came into my life AND He WILL do the same in each of your lives ... IF you will allow Him to!

In **John 3:1-15**, we find a story about a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee who was also a member of the Jewish ruling counsel. The Hebrew definition of a Pharisee is; *The Pharisee ("separatist") party emerged largely out of the group of scribes and sages. Their name comes from the Hebrew and Aramaic parush or parushi, which means "one who is separated." It may refer to their separation from Gentiles, sources of ritual impurity or from irreligious Jews. Google shares that a Pharisee was a member of an ancient Jewish sect, distinguished by strict observance of the traditional and written law, and commonly held to have pretensions to superior sanctity ... a self righteous person; a hypocrite.*

These men hung out in the synagogue (church) always looking for someone to come against with all their self-righteousness. They 'thought' they were the cock of the walk, strutting around the streets in their beautiful robes and gowns. They didn't like Jesus one bit and were always trying to catch Him doing ANYTHING they didn't approve of, in the name of the law, and quick in their attempt to get Him in the trick bag. All through the Gospels we find references of the Pharisees scamming and scheming to put an end to Jesus and His mission. They thought of themselves as 'law keepers' in every way and when others didn't believe the way they did you were considered a BLASPHEMER! Now without a show of hands how many of you steered away from 'church' in the past because of the way you had previously been treated by the 'religious' people in them? It is no different today than it was the days that Jesus walked this earth. There are still plenty of modern day Pharisees everywhere, and many unwilling to believe the message of Grace! Those that judge others by their wrong doings yet judge themselves by their intentions. Just saying ...

Even though Nicodemus was a member of the Pharisee he was different from the others. Because of his curiosity in the things Jesus spoke about and the many miracles he witnessed Him doing in the streets the Bible says, **"He came to Jesus at night."** Because of his curiosity, Nicodemus was becoming a believer but still unwilling to risk his position with the other Pharisees so he came to Jesus under the cover of night. In following 'their' standard procedure, in the daylight most every encounter with Jesus the Pharisees would ridicule Him and do their best to make a public spectacle of Him, comparing His speech and actions to the law. Between law and grace there is NO balance. This is exactly what Jesus was speaking about in **Matthew 9:16-17** when He said, *"No one sews a patch of an shrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."* Hopefully not since we've come to Jesus but I'm pretty confident that many of us can relate to 'under the cover of night to do something we sure hoped our 'crew' would NOT find out about. So there's no rock throwing here, right?

Watching intently as Jesus moved about fulfilling His purpose I believe that Holy Spirit was at work inside of Nicodemus. Now, standing face to face with Jesus, eager to learn and 'under the cover of night' he made a bold statement for a Pharisee. He said, **"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the**

... continued on page 9

THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE WE HAVE IN APPROACHING GOD: THAT IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US. AND IF WE KNOW THAT HE HEARS US - WHATEVER WE ASK - WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE WHAT WE ASKED OF HIM. 1 JOHN 5:14-15 (NIV)

Prayer Requests

To my Overcomers, please pray that God secures this new financial situation so that I can have a sure foot forward ...

J.L.

Please join me in prayer ... Heavenly Father, in Jesus' mighty name, we come to You in prayer, giving you all the praise and glory. We cast all our cares and worries upon You because You care. We're so thankful for the demonstration of Your power through our struggles and concerns overcoming adversity for the glory of Your throne. We shout Your name on high with love and worship, singing to You bringing delight to You. We love You and seek You first and all Your righteousness, trusting that all will be added to us. Protect us Father as we fight this good fight of faith in Jesus' powerful name ... Amen ... **A.A.**

Thank you and God bless you, can you please pray for me that God will give me the wisdom to live for Christ and be a Christ-like person. I am living for Christ ... **A.P.**

Now I'm seeking your help with my struggles with my walk with God. I really need assistance with help on walking a sober life and reconnecting with people. If you can guide me to a program that can be of help with living arrangements as well as a job but most of all reconnecting with my daughter and her mother. Please I ask for your prayers in my time of darkness. Thank you and God bless you all ... **H.C.**

I'm asking for prayer that the Lord will help me find the way forward in my life. I'm not sure what to do next. So, I ask for wisdom and confidence while thanking the Lord that His plans for me are always good. Asking God to help me trust in Him to guide me and to be patient to open new doors of opportunity ... Amen ... I'm grateful that I can write to you all and I can be sure that my letter will be read, that I will receive a response even if it's a simple prayer, and that is comforting in and of itself. So "thank you" to all of you, looking forward to what the Lord has in store for all of us ... **M.D.**

I beg you to please pray for my dear friend, Jeff B., who is at hospice right now, so I've been told. I do not know which one though. He is a believer in Christ, and I've been told he is alone. I want him to know that I will see him when I get home to heaven, and that I love him and not to fear. Please raise his name up in prayer with me. I ask and pray for this in the name of Jesus Christ, as God lives. God has me safely resting in His shadow (**Psalms 91**). Breathing in the breath of the Holy Spirit ... **J.S.**

I ask if you will pray for my sister, Verna Mae, she has incurable cancer and she is stubborn. My brother, Glen, he had a stroke and he needs an operation on his heart and he is stubborn too. My little brother was hooked on drugs, I don't know if he still is but he acts like he's talking to himself all the time. Please pray for them, thank you so kindly. Pray that I go home soon to be with my loved ones and that I keep the right path with the Lord's plan ... **B.T.**

Praise Reports

I wanted to let you know how I was doing. I'm now at Lewis, the church here has made me the worship and praise leader. I'm teaching them my music and drawing cards for them to send to their families. You are in my prayers ... **D.J.**

So here I am, in prison with my faith and hope in my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. My faith has not wavered. I believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for our sins and rose on the 3rd day ... **R.L.**

I want to say thanks for your monthly publications, I've been reading them for about two years now, since you came and seen me in the county jail. I still read them and they keep my head, spirit, and soul in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Especially at this time, I've been going through some health problems in this prison, I almost didn't make it. It could have been cancer, I had surgery and in recovery, I'm waiting to go back to the doctor in another month to see if I'm cleared of cancer and everything else. It was you that got me to put all my faith in the Lord and I want to say thank you for your knowledge and schooling to put my trust, faith and life in Jesus Christ. He is the one getting me through all this and letting me see another day. *Overcomers for Christ* are good people, who made me think and make that change and be saved. Thank you a lot. Without any of that who knows what would have happened to me ... **J.S.**

Today is my birthday and I thank God for the gift of life, and for loving me before I even understood what love meant. His mercy endures forever ... Amen ... **A.A.**

I got moved way out in south Tucson and more than ever I want you to have my address, so I don't miss a newsletter for I will be looking for God's blessings in them. I do not know why I was moved but it must somehow be God's will so it will be to God's glory. It is too far for my mom to drive, so I won't be able to see her here, but with God anything is possible even to go home. The truth can set you free. I'm keeping you in my prayers and thoughts and hope all the best for you ... **S.F.**

I wanted to let you know that I got the card that you sent me. I thank you so much for doing all that you guys have done for me. I also want to thank you for sticking it out with me over the years. I wanted to let you guys know that I am right with Jesus again. I know I have my struggles but I'm starting to realize that these are opportunities to get closer to Him and stronger in my faith. You guys have helped me out a great deal through my ups and downs as well. Your church is a big blessing in my life and I wouldn't ask for more. Thank you, all of you for the love, support, and affection you have given me. I love you guys and I know in my heart that you are my family from heaven. Thank you Jesus ... **K.H.**

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Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

God Will Help You Understand

By J.S.

Man, it feels good to have that spark back! And not to mention the way God worked it all out. Level 3's don't go to court with Level 2's. So, it took me being in the hole on Level 2. Running into M and not the first time that day, but the second time when we actually talked about God and our walks. Well played Lord, well played!

As of lately, I've been getting a lot better of an understanding of what I'm reading and not only in my new Bible but also that book I've been reading from Katie Souza has been very eye opening. So, Praise God for that because that's always been a struggle for me. So with that being said, I was reading through **Proverbs 28** a few days ago and want to share what I experienced through the newsletter.

My brothers and sisters, do you ever sit down and read your Bible and get such an understanding and sense of truth and importance of God's Word, and in a way that you want others to do the same? Well, today that happened to me! As I read through **Proverbs 28**, I felt several verses pop out at me more than usual. I couldn't help but to reread them, meditate on them, and get lost in thought about how true God's Word really is. After highlighting them, and even putting one on my wall to memorize - **Proverbs 28:14** - "**Blessed are those who fear to do wrong, but the stubborn are headed for serious trouble.**" I was overcome with the need to share them. I also want to mention that I'm reading out of an NLT (New Living Translation) Bible, and had I not been, I don't think I would have got the understanding I did. I'm not trying to knock any other versions of the Bible because it's all God's Word, but if you are like me, sometimes a little boost is all it takes to understand things the way God wants you to.

Proverbs 28:6 - Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and rich.

Proverbs 28:10 - Those who lead good people along an evil path will fall into their own trap, but the honest will inherit good things.

Proverbs 28:13 - People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.

Proverbs 28:14 - Blessed are those who fear to do wrong, but the stubborn are headed for serious trouble.

Proverbs 28:18 - The blameless will be rescued from harm, but the crooked will be suddenly destroyed.

Proverbs 28:19 - A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases fantasies ends up in poverty.

Proverbs 28:20 - The trustworthy person will get a rich reward, but a person who wants quick riches will get into trouble.

Proverbs 28:22 - Greedy people try to get rich quick but don't realize they're headed for poverty.

Proverbs 28:25 - Greed causes fighting; trusting the Lord leads to prosperity.

Proverbs 28:26 - Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.

Proverbs 28:27 - Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to poverty will be cursed.

My Father in heaven and on earth, thank You. I have asked You through prayer to help me understand Your Word so that I'm not discouraged and You have helped me to see things a lot clearer. In everyone of these verses if it wasn't at least one or two words, it was the whole verse that You used to speak directly to me and situations I'm dealing with, struggling with or need strengthened in. I ask Lord that You will do the same with all of my brothers and sisters that may be struggling as I have. I thank You for that because it has already been done. **Philippians 4:19** says, "**And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.**" If your need is for God to give you insight and understanding of the Bible, trust and believe that's a need He will meet! God bless you all and never give up, I have too many times and as you already know LIFE NEVER WORKS OUT THE WAY IT SHOULD WITHOUT HIM!!

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Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

THE CALLED

By K.P.

Thank you so much for every prayer, newsletter and card throughout the years. I'll tell you a rock solid truth about being 'locked up'. Our God chastises those He loves and if we realize that He causes ALL things to work for the good to them that love Him, those are THE CALLED according to His purpose. And we know that many are called, but few are chosen. I want to encourage everyone who reads this to get a hold of the book by John Burke called Imagine Heaven. It will make your hearts soar and your souls rejoice at the reality of our inheritance. I say often and you can too, something the world cannot say ... and that is that I am not afraid of dying - I've already done that. Smooth seas do not make good sailors. When you're down to nothing ... God's up to something! He who has ears hear what the Spirit of God is saying unto all of us. We are in a battle that has already been WON! That means we can all boldly fulfill our assignments and walk worthy of the vocation we have been called to.

Remember - we don't ever need to whine or spend time focusing on our shortcomings or weaknesses, we need to rejoice in the fact that He is made strong in our weakness ... meaning those are the very things He was beaten and crucified for, and when you realize in faith that you are a fellow heir and more than a conqueror and leave whatever behind His greatness is shown for all to see!! **"IT IS FINISHED,"** He said it, believe it.

Put My Requests/Fears in God's Hands

By S.A.

First off, thank you so much for your card and uplifting words of prayer, which I needed it the most at this time. I find myself at times losing faith or having doubt if God is working not only in my life, but Nicole's life also. I can't figure out how to put all my trust in His hands because to me that's like giving up on her, and I can't do that, and I tell God this. I also ask for a sign that she's okay and safe along with my babies. I so badly want to hear from her just to have her know I love her so much, and worry for her. I still write her, draw pictures and pray for her. God has given me a comfort and peace that I know is from Him. But I wonder if He's working on Nicole at the same time, building the love and peace back between us. The thoughts of giving up still come into my mind daily, but again I think if I do that I'll miss God's answer bringing her back into my life. I just want to hear anything from her so bad.

The **Book of James** is one of my favorite books in God's Word. The Message Bible really explains it good.

God Brings Peace and Purpose to Our Lives

By A.A.

Romans 8:28 - "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

I also love the **Book of Romans** and how wonderful Paul taught the message of grace inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures he wrote touch my heart in ways I never knew in the past. Since my re-birth in Christ, He has revealed peace in my heart and power in my weakness.

2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."

I have held on to those inspiring words of God through my current struggles with my second prison term and the separation of my wife and kids. I received divorce papers about a month ago and words of disappointment from my ex-wife and kids. Our adversary is trying to steal the joy and the hearts towards me, but through the power of love and Christ's victory over him, I declare victory and I am confident through the Blood of Christ that I have been redeemed and set free of condemnation. Please pray for Michelle, Carter, Christian and Cole to have a forgiving heart towards me and regain a peaceful relationship. I believe and receive God's promise for the future and count all sufferings as joy. Your card encouraged me and brought to my attention that I don't have to do this alone. Thank you for caring and taking the time to respond back. God has a special woman out there for me as long as I seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ... all things will be added to me.

Isaiah 1:1-7:25

When you feel lonely and separated from God, remember that God does not abandon you. Our sins cut us off from Him. The only sure cure for this kind of loneliness is to restore the meaningful relationship with God by confessing your sins, obeying His instructions, and communicating regularly with Him. Read **Psalm 140:13; Isaiah 1:16-19; 1 John 1:9. (1:4-9)**

Nothing can compare with or rival the place God must have in our hearts and minds. To place our hope elsewhere is nothing but false pride. Place your confidence in God alone. **(2:15-17)**

When God blesses you with money or position, don't flaunt it. Use what you have to help others, not impress them. **(3:16-26)**

Some people drag their sins around with them. Some do so arrogantly, but for others, their sins have become a burden that wears them out. Are you dragging around a cartload of sins that you refuse to give up? Before you find yourself worn out and useless, turn to the One Who promises to take away your burden of sin and replace it with a purpose for living that is a joy to fulfill. See **Matthew 11:28-30. (5:18-19)**

We need to discover God's holiness. Our daily frustrations, society's pressures, and our shortcomings narrow our view of God. We need the Bible's view of God as high and lifted up to empower us to deal with our problems and concerns. God's moral perfection, properly seen will purify us from sin, cleanse our mind of our problems, and enable us to worship and to serve. **(6:1-3)**

Often we use some excuse, such as not wanting to bother God, to keep us from communicating with Him. Don't let anything keep you from hearing and obeying God. **(7:12)**

2 Corinthians 11:16-33

The trials and hurts we experience for Christ's sake build our character, demonstrate our faith, and prepare us for further service to the Lord. **(11:23-29)**

Psalm 54:1-55:23

David said that God repays evil to his enemies. **Proverbs 26:27** warns us that those who cause trouble will reap trouble. What we have intended for others may blow up in our own face. To be honest and straightforward before God and others is simpler, easier, and safer in the long run. **(54:5)**

Nothing hurts more than a wound from a friend, there may be times when friends lovingly confront you in order to help you. Real friends stick by you in times of trouble and bring healing, love, acceptance, and understanding. What kind of friend are you? Don't betray those you love.

Proverbs 23:1-5

The point of this Proverb is to be careful when eating with an important or influential person because he or she may try to bribe you. No good will come from the meal. **(23:1-3)**

Don't spend your time chasing fleeting, earthly treasures. Instead, store up treasures in heaven, for such treasures will never be lost. **(23:4-5)**

“Foot” Notes

Hey Ya'll, when we say, "God use me," there becomes this line that we don't want to cross. Yet how many of us are guilty of stretching that line right up to its breaking point? I liken it to how one might finesse a 19 pound salmon on an 8 pound test fishing line, pushing the limits of that line.

Try to remember, we can't hustle God for we are called to separate ourselves from the things of the world.

Love to ya'll short and tall. Vaya con Dios ... Don't ride faster that your angels can fly!

signs you are doing if God were not with him." (John 3:2) Today we have the New Testament and can read of the many different encounters Jesus was in and we get to read A LOT of Jesus' responses. But try to put yourself in Nicodemus' shoes that night. The response he got from Jesus was most definitely NOT the one he ever dreamed he would get. How could he wrap his mind around this kind of a response? **"Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.'"** (John 3:3) What in the world does 'born again' even mean?!

Now very confused and maybe even thinking to himself, "Did I miss the mark? Is this really who I think it is? This sounds ridiculous." Nicodemus's response was, **"How can someone be born when they are old? Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"** And if that wasn't enough of an overload of information to take in Jesus answered him with, **"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."** (John 3:5-8)

WOW! Knowing that Nicodemus was a Pharisee, Jesus turned to him and said, **"You are Israel's teachers, and do you not understand these things?"** (John 3:10) One might think that's a little harsh, how could Nicodemus be held accountable for such understanding? Well, Nicodemus did have the Old Testament so he knew about the kingdom of heaven. He knew that God would be the Ruler, His kingdom would be restored here on earth and His plan would incorporate His people. In fact, I'm sure that Nicodemus had read **Ezekiel 36:25-26** where God had said, **"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."**

Not much more is known or recorded in the Bible about Nicodemus except he shows up again in **John 7** where the Pharisees heard of Jesus teaching in the temple courts AGAIN and sent the temple guards to arrest Him. Scripture says in **John 7:37-41**, **"On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. On hearing His words, some of the people said, 'Surely this man is the Prophet.' Others said, 'He is the Messiah.' Still others asked, 'How can the Messiah come from Galilee?'"**

Remember, these temple guards had been sent to seize Jesus and bring Him back. Standing there themselves and hearing the things Jesus was teaching, they instead returned without Jesus. The chief priests and the Pharisees seeing that Jesus was not with them asked, **"Why didn't you bring Him in? No one ever spoke the way that this man does', they replied. 'You mean He has deceived you also?' the Pharisees retorted. 'Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law-there is a curse on them.'" (John 7:45-49)** (Or so they thought) Here's when Nicodemus shows up again but this time we know that he had grown from his talk with Jesus and had a new heart understanding. Nicodemus was not under the cover of dark here AND he was right smack dab in the middle of all of his peers when he spoke up and asked, **"Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?"** Listen here what **Matthew 10:32** records Jesus saying concerning what I feel Nicodemus just did. **"Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven."** In the Message Translation **Luke 12:8-9** records Jesus saying it this way, **"Stand up for Me among the people you meet and the Son of Man will stand up for you before all of God's angels. BUT if you pretend you don't know Me, do you think I'll defend you before God's angels?"**

In the entire Bible, John is the only one that wrote anything about Nicodemus and here again in **John 19:38-42** Nicodemus is recorded as being with Joseph of Arimathea. It says Joseph was a disciple of Jesus but that he was fearful of the Jewish leaders when he went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. Yes, this was after Jesus was crucified and still hanging there on the Cross. The Bible doesn't say anyone else came that day. It was with Pilate's permission that they came and took Jesus' body away. Scripture tells us that, **"Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid."** (John 19:39-41)

So what's my point in all of this? As followers and recipients of Christ's invitation for Salvation and the promised eternal life with Him in paradise, we should no longer be fearful of death. In fact, my 96 year old grandmother knew in her heart that this earth was NOT her final destination. At her 'going home celebration' she had already planned for a dear friend of hers to sing an old hymn, **There Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down**. And let me tell you, when that lady sang that song the whole room filled with the very presence of God. Another request she had was for the pastor to give an altar call. Within a 50 mile radius I'd say that my grandmother won more souls for the Lord than anyone around. And I'm sure that

someone responded to her invitation that day. Again it's important that I say, "Eternal life doesn't begin the day we leave our bodies here and go to be with the Lord! NO! That is when we step into the presence of our Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus told us earlier what true eternal life is, *"that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."* (John 17:3)

I believe what God wanted to show me when He quickened my spirit that morning was someone, somewhere in the world had just given their life to Jesus. I believe that God wanted me to witness what the party looks like there when this happens. This is not simply my opinion. Jesus Himself bears witness to this fact in these two parables, *"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep. I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* (Luke 15:7-10) In the beginning, I tried to paint a picture for everyone so you could kind of visualize what God had allowed me to witness. My words could never do justice to what I actually seen and felt but I tried anyways.

Jesus also told us earlier in (Luke 5:31) that (my paraphrase), "Church is supposed to be like a hospital. Sick people come in search of the Physician because they know that they are sick." At the end of every service at our church there is always an invitation to receive Jesus. To me, that's always been the most precious time of the whole gathering. It's not that I don't love the whole service BUT I know that miracles are about to take place because it's now been 12 years since I too was one of them. That's why I also believe so deeply that it is so important for all of the 'saved people' to remain in their seats and don't be disruptive by getting up to hurry and leave just to beat the crowd. The praise and worship has set the atmosphere and cultivated the soil in people's hearts preparing it for the message/seed the pastor just brought. The message has been heard, the Holy Spirit has begun to massage people's hearts and people moving about THOUGHT-LESSLY might be all it would take to disrupt that person's eternal destiny!

Some of you might not agree with me, and that's just fine with me, but someone moving aimlessly to hurry away in the middle of this miracle event reeks of pride! It's like they are saying, "Hey, I've already done this. I got mine. I know where I will spend my eternity." And you know what? They're right. God won't remove their name from the Lambs Book of Life over getting up and being disruptive in the service. And I know this part is not Scriptural but this is the picture I see with my heart ... I wouldn't want to get to heaven and stand before God and have Him look down at me with sadness on His face and say, "See those two people over there in that 'other' line? I sure wish you hadn't gotten out of your seat in such a rush that day at church; their hearts were so ready for harvest. After that they never allowed their hearts to soften the way they were that day."

Brothers and sisters, I pray that you too would be shown this same party that was revealed to me. I know there's always a party going on in heaven but when someone gives their life to Jesus, I believe with all my heart that the party gets even louder!

Before I close this message, I want to give everyone reading this the opportunity to have a personal relationship with God through what Jesus sacrificed for the whole world (Titus 2:11). It's really simple on our end; Jesus already did all the work required by God. He purchased our freedom with His very own life. Paul tells us in Romans 10:9, **"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."** There are only two parts to this; first we confess with our mouth out loud that Jesus is Lord, and secondly we must believe in our hearts that what we just confessed is truth. That's all, and at that point the Bible clearly says, **"you will be saved"** and you too can get to know God in a more intimate way and begin to walk out your Salvation.

So, if you've never asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life before or maybe you have in the past and today after reading all of this you don't know for sure where you would spend eternity if you were to die in your sleep, say this simple prayer with me and believe it in your heart and allow God to write your name in His Book of Life TODAY. Say, *"Father God, I know that I have been a sinner and I don't want to live like that any longer. I believe that You gave Your very own Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross for my sins. I believe that Jesus lived, gave up His life for me on the Cross and has risen from the grave where He is now seated there in heaven next to You right now. TODAY I repent of all my sins. I'm turning to You and with my new faith I now receive Your Grace. I ask You Lord Jesus to come into my heart, come into my life; TODAY I receive You to be my personal Lord and my Savior. I thank You and I praise You. In Jesus name, AMEN!"*

If you said this prayer today for the first time or if you have re dedicated your life to Christ please write to us and share this good news, we would love to rejoice with you. If you don't write us that's okay, too. But I encourage you to tell someone

there around you. I'm sure there are many other brothers or sisters there that would be excited to hear of your new decision. It's not part of your Salvation and the only reason I encourage you to write to us or tell someone there is because of what Jesus said, *"Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven."* (Matthew 10:32) Writing to us or telling someone there is fulfilling what Jesus asked of us. And remember, if you just gave your heart and life to Jesus you can bet the party in heaven just got a little louder! **HAPPY RE BIRTH - DAY!**

ADDED NOTE: Late into the night, only two days later from finishing this article, I received message that one of my dear brothers in the Lord was in the hospital. He was in emergency surgery. Apparently a valve in his heart had exploded and he had a blood clot in one of his legs. I went to the Lord in prayer that He would be guiding the surgeon's hands and Elight would have complete restoration. I was headed to California for a few days that next morning so I was up at 3 am. I had received another text that said, "Unfortunately for all of us Brother Elight has gone home to be with the Lord. God has answered your prayers Wade, Elight has been totally restored, with no more pain or suffering." I must tell you, at first I was in shock. But as I stood at the bathroom sink washing my face I looked into the mirror and it was though I heard plain as day, "The same kind of party I showed you the other day also goes on here in heaven when one of My children come home." I knew that Elight loved the Lord and that he was there with the Lord. But I was in total awe when the Lord spoke this specific word to me that morning. There's no need for me to say "Rest in Peace" because Brother Elight has received a peace and a joy that none of us here on this earth, at this point, can only imagine. So until that day comes let's ALL stay busy building God's kingdom right here by sharing the Love of God with ALL those we come into contact with. **HAVE A WONDERFUL DAY!**

A Fit of Temper that Changed a Young Man's Life **By Steven Arterburn**

***"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."** - James 3:17-18*

When Benjamin Carson was a teenager he had a terrible temper. One day he got into a scuffle with another youth, drew a knife, and stabbed at the other boy. The blade, however, caught on the boy's belt buckle.

That fit of temper was a flashpoint experience for Carson. He went home and fell to his knees, praying for three hours for the Lord to take his temper away.

So, what happened to that young boy? Benjamin Carson retired last year as the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, known all over the world for his surgical skills and care for his young patients.

But if God hadn't prevented his blade from striking and Carson hadn't conquered his fit of temper that day, hundreds of patients would've been deprived of this physician's compassionate care and brilliant skills as a neurosurgeon.

Aren't you glad God is in control? Aren't you glad that His eyes are always on us, watching out for us. The hymn writer of old said it best when he wrote, "For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me."

I came to realize that if people could make me angry they could control me. Why should I give someone else such power over my life? - Dr. Benjamin Carson

Quote Worthy

"Creation discloses a power that baffles our minds and beggars our speech. We are enamored and enchanted by God's power. We stutter and stammer about God's holiness. We tremble before God's majesty... and yet, we grow squeamish and skittish before God's love."

- Brennan Manning (1934 - 2013) - an American author, laicized (loss of clerical state) priest, and public speaker

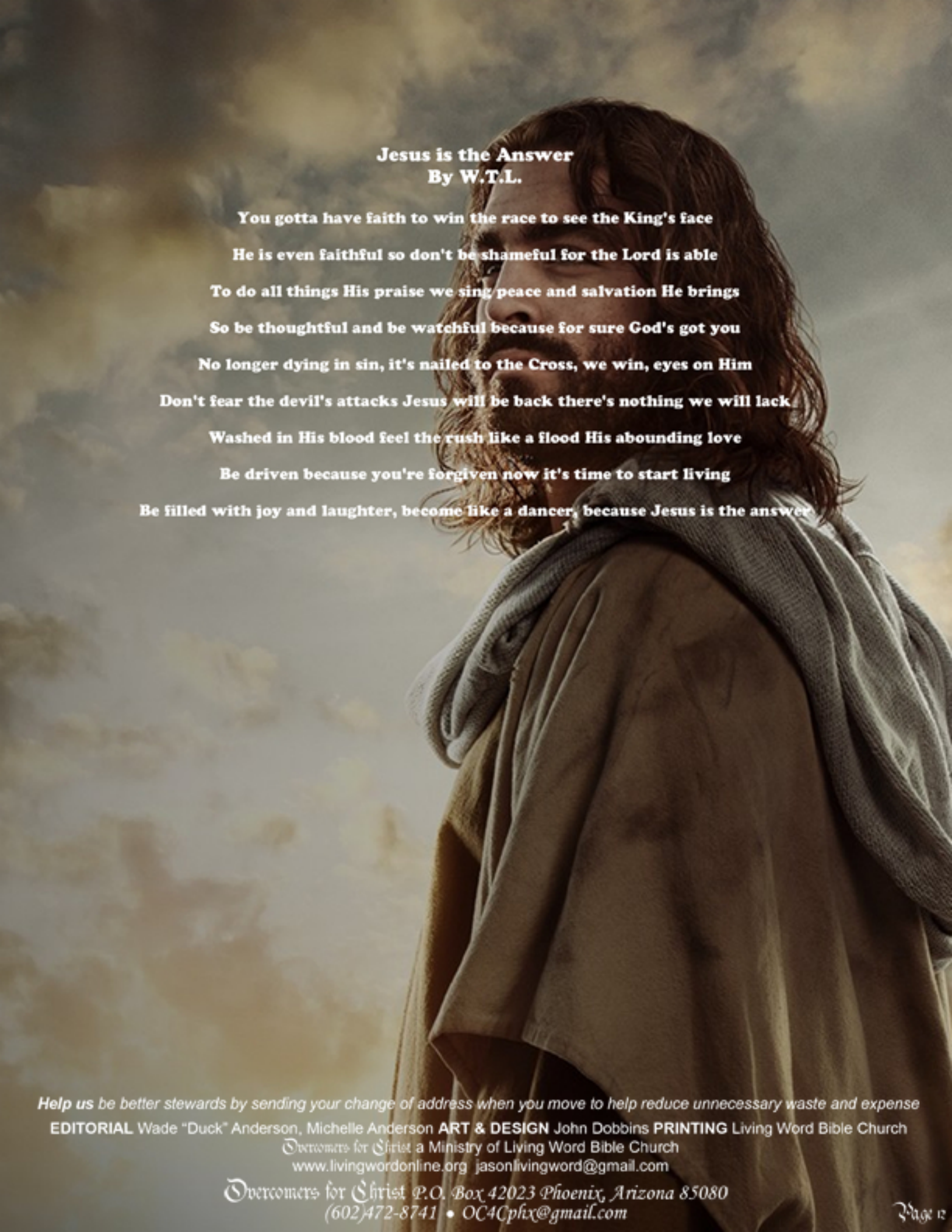
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Jesus is the Answer
By W.T.L.

You gotta have faith to win the race to see the King's face
He is even faithful so don't be shameful for the Lord is able
To do all things His praise we sing peace and salvation He brings
So be thoughtful and be watchful because for sure God's got you
No longer dying in sin, it's nailed to the Cross, we win, eyes on Him
Don't fear the devil's attacks Jesus will be back there's nothing we will lack
Washed in His blood feel the rush like a flood His abounding love
Be driven because you're forgiven now it's time to start living
Be filled with joy and laughter, become like a dancer, because Jesus is the answer

Help us be better stewards by sending your change of address when you move to help reduce unnecessary waste and expense

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