

# The DEFENDER - May 2017

“... defending the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)

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IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast.



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK: Many are Called

But few are chosen. These are the words of our Lord in **Matthew 22:14**. I'm reminded of this verse every Easter. But maybe not in the way you would think. Actually, it's usually the week after our Resurrection Day service that the point I want to make is driven home. Those of us in the ministry know that there are certain days on the Christian calendar that people make a point to attend. Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day are easily the most well attended church services each year. And the week **after** Easter usually witnesses the largest drop-off in attendance from one week to the next. I even spoke to that matter from the pulpit on Easter Sunday this year.

I was making the point that you have to believe the Easter story if you want to go to Heaven. And if you don't believe that Christ alone paid the penalty for your sins with His substitutionary death on the cross and subsequent resurrection from the dead, then you'll go to Hell when you die. I tried to be as blunt as possible, while still showing some compassion. But I told them that to get their attention, because there are too many people in the world today that don't believe the Easter story. I also said that Easter and Christmas were the two days that churches see the most unbelievers show up. I then went on to clearly share the gospel message of salvation and hope with them because it would be a long time until Christmas, when I would hope to see some of them again.

There are so many people today who call themselves Christian but clearly are not. Jesus said we would know them by their fruit **Matthew 7:16**. They may wear crosses and quote familiar scripture, leading some to believe they're following Christ, but sadly, they are only fooling themselves. Reality will set in for them when they hear the words of Jesus from **Matthew 7:23**, "I never knew you, depart from Me...". Those final words will haunt many people throughout eternity. Jesus will expose those who sound religious but have no personal relationship with Him. Or as Paul said in **2 Timothy 3:5**, "...having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof...". The appearance of godliness includes going to church, knowing Christian doctrine, and using Christian clichés, but if the inner commitment to Christ isn't there, then the outer appearance is meaningless.

Only our relationship with Jesus Christ, our acceptance of Him as Lord and Savior, will matter. Many people think that if they're good enough they'll be rewarded with eternal life in Heaven above. In reality, faith in Christ is all that will count at the Judgment. There are unsaved people whom we all know and love. Pray for their salvation. Talk to them about it. And don't wait until Christmas, it may be too late.

*Rev. David Lewis*

# **The Sovereignty of God's Word**

## **Part I – Believing is Seeing**

**By Robert Luthardt, Sr.**

“Jesus saith to him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have NOT seen, and yet believed” (John 20:29). Thomas had exclaimed, “Except I shall see the print [scars] of the nails ... and thrust my hand into his side I will not believe” (vs. 24).

Eight days later when the disciples were behind closed doors, Jesus appeared ... greeted them all, then turned to Thomas, “behold my hands and reach ... into my side ... Thomas answered ... My Lord and my God” (vs. 27-28). “Many other signs are not written ... these are written that ye might believe ... the Son of God ... and have life through His name ...” (vs. 30-31; 1 John 5:13).

Jesus Himself affirmed and His Apostles proclaimed His divinity. So when Jesus gave assent to the divine origin of the Old Testament writings, that confirmation could come from no higher authority. Furthermore, Christ and the Word of God cannot be considered separate entities since Christ is the eternal embodiment of the Word (John 1:1-3, 14) and the Truth (14:6).

God's revelation to mankind runs from Genesis through Revelation in what some theologians have termed, “The Scarlet Thread of Redemption.” Man fell into sin and death in the garden and God provided a symbolic covering of their sin by the death of an innocent (Gen. 3:21). Later in time would come the actual eternal sin covering effected by the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29) to all believers (3:16).

Scripture reveals the Living God who spoke to mankind through chosen men (Heb. 1:1-3) from a chosen nation and then through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:23). God revealed Himself in deeds and in the words which He inspired Moses and others to set to writing. A living witness to God's redemption plan was evident in faithful believers such as Abel, Enoch and Noah, and most manifestly of all in the life of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:1-4; Rom. 4:1-3, 16).

The Lord's first prophetic promise (Gen. 3:15) reached fruition in the life, death and resurrection of the second person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ. The baby born of Mary was the “Mighty God” and “Everlasting Father” of Isaiah (9:6-7) through the miraculous conception and birth of God's only Divine Son who laid aside His eternal glory (John 17:5; Heb. 1:1-3, 8).

Surely, God's ways are not man's ways (Rom. 11:33). He allowed Israel's bondage in Egypt for 400 years and inspired an Israelite mother to put her baby son in an ark in the Nile river to be providentially rescued by a princess and raised in Pharaoh's house. Then in rejection of human power, God sent Moses into a far country as a lowly shepherd. Most astounding of all, God

spoke to Moses from a burning bush and sent him back to Egypt to free His people. When Moses told them, they “believed” and “worshipped” (Ex. 4:31). They recognized Joseph’s prophecy at last fulfilled, “God will ... bring you out ... unto the land He swore to Abraham” (Gen. 50:24). Even as yet unwritten, God’s Word was sovereignly preserved.

At Mount Sinai God gave His Word to Moses “face to face” (Deut. 5:4) which he set to writing. The people had witnessed many miracles when God brought them out of Egypt and parted the Red Sea. Then Moses received God’s instructions for the tabernacle and the construction of the Ark of the Covenant over which God’s own manifestation would abide for 40 years, guiding them in the wilderness – a cloud by day and a fiery pillar by night. Though they were under God’s chastisement, He fed them with manna from heaven for 40 years until they finally entered the Promised Land.

They were first ruled by Judges and later by Kings, but God spoke His Word to them through chosen prophets. Later in the captivity of which they had been warned, God’s Word was still received and recorded in writings by His Prophets. Daniel’s visions that he recorded outlined the future history of successive gentile kingdoms and the coming kingdom of God the Son on David’s throne which is still future (Luke 1:32-33; Dan. 2:34, 44). After Malachi, God was silent for 400 years until the Apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit to record events concerning Christ and the New Covenant (Is. 55:3; Jer. 33:15-17, 31:31). Over 100 prophecies were fulfilled by “the seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15). The Son of God came as the living embodiment of God’s Word (John 1:1-3, 14) speaking again “face to face” to be recorded for posterity in our Bibles.

Jesus confounded scholars at 12 years of age (Luke 2:41-47) for His knowledge was one with that of His Father in heaven (John 17:6-8, 11). Christ spoke as no mere man could – with DIVINE AUTHORITY – adding to and enhancing God’s Word. At the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeatedly said, “you have heard it said ... but I say unto you” ... wise men “would keep His sayings” (Matt. 7:24-26). Even His enemies recognized His divine power (Matt. 27:42) for “never a man spake like this ...” (John 7:46).

Christ was the human instrumentality of God’s eternal purposes to: redeem and save His chosen nation (Is. 33:20-22) and to adopt children into His own family (Ep. 1:4-12) and out of Satan’s control (Ep. 2:2-3) those chosen by God before the foundation of the world (2 Tim. 1:9). The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New Testament – the Immanuel (Is. 7:14, 9:6-7; Matt. 1:23) who performed many tasks on earth to fulfill required prophecies (Matt. 3:15, 5:17).

Just before our resurrected Savior ascended to His throne in heaven, He directed His Apostles to wait for the “Comforter” (the Holy Spirit – John 14:26) who would “bring to remembrance” what Christ had taught them (John 16:13-14).

The final revelation from Jesus Christ was given to John (Rev. 1:1-3) and closed the canon of scripture never to be added to by dreams or visions or voices or tongues as if from God

(Deut. 4:2, 12:32; Prov. 4:20-21, 30:5-6; 1 Cor. 4:6, 13:8-11; Rev. 22:19). God's Word of salvation has always been mankind's most precious possession. The Kings of Israel were commanded to write it in their own book and to follow it for life (Deut. 17:18-20, 31:9-11). A copy of God's Word was placed in the Ark. Christ, speaking of the Old Testament and of His added words, said it would never be lost (Ps. 119:89; Is. 40:8; Matt. 24:35).

God's true Prophets always declared, "Thus saith the Lord." King David said, "The Spirit spoke by me" (2 Sam. 23:2-3). God's Word was and is always above and separate from the Prophet's will (Jonah 1:1-3, 2:9b). Jeremiah recorded God's Word, "Is not my word ... like a hammer that breaketh the rock ..." (Jer. 23:29). God commanded His Prophets to set His words to writing (1 Sam. 10:25) "... write it in a book" God commanded (Jer. 36:1-2) the very book Daniel read (Dan. 9:2). Zechariah warned of failing to heed God's Word (Zech. 7:12). God promises blessings to all who read and obey His Word (Rev. 1:3).

The scriptures are the only writings of men that record predictions that have had 100% fulfillment of the seemingly impossible. Isaiah wrote of God's methods, "I Am God ... declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done ... I will bring it to pass ..." (46:9-11). The Holy Spirit gave remembrance to the Apostles of the details of Christ's life and teachings. As to His promised return to earth (John 14:1-3), we have prophecies without minute details because the full unfolding is yet future. We are given, however, "signposts" to watch for, "... as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be ... they were eating and drinking, marrying ... until the day Noah entered the Ark." In Noah's day, "... the wickedness of man was great ... only evil continually ... the earth was filled with violence" (Matt. 24:37). These signposts do not allow us to know the "day or the hour" (Mark 13:32) of Christ's return. That only the Father knows (Matt. 24:44).

One Biblicist discovered over 1,000 prophecies in the Bible with over 500 fulfilled and over 100 by Christ in His first advent. The cross of Christ is the central point in human history because while the blood of a million men cannot forgive even one sin, the blood of God the Son is sufficient for everyone who has ever lived. In Matthew 24:29, we see more signposts relative to Christ's return to earth. "The sun will be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall ..." (Matt. 24:29). Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven ... then shall all ... see the Son of Man coming ... with power and great glory. This is the second coming to earth predicted in the Old Testament. Zechariah recorded, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives ... and the Mount shall cleave [split] in the midst thereof" (Zech. 14:4). This and other prophecies refer to Christ's rescue of national Israel culminating in the war of Armageddon.

As God's sovereign Word indicates, Christ comes for His Bride the Church – in the air and for this there are no explicit signs for it is in an hour that we "think not ..." (2 Thes. 4:16-18; Matt. 24:44).

Keep looking up.

# **This World is Not My Home**

**By Nancy Long**

Matthew 6:19-21 – *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

Colossians 3:1-2 – *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Hebrews 11:13b and 16 – They *“confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth .... But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.”*

James 4:14 – *“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”*

This World Is Not My Home  
Lyrics and Music – Albert Edward Brumley

“This world is not my home; I’m just a-passing through;  
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.  
The angels beckon me from Heaven’s open door,  
And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.

They’re all expecting me, and that’s one thing I know;  
My Savior pardoned me, and now I onward go.  
I know He’ll take me through, though I am weak and poor,  
And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.

Just up in Glory Land we’ll live eternally;  
The Saints on every hand are shouting victory.  
Their song of sweetest praise drifts back from Heaven’s shore,  
And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.”

## Chorus

“O Lord You know I have no friend like You;  
If Heaven’s not my home then Lord what will I do?  
The angels beckon me from Heaven’s open door,  
And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.”

Perhaps this song ought to state “this world is not my PERMANENT home. It’s not my FOREVER, ETERNAL place of abode ..... because, in truth, God **has** placed me on this earth for ‘such a time as this!’” My place of residence **is here**, at least temporarily. One day it will not be my home, but for today, it is. I’m here for a purpose, a special, unique, and wonderful purpose, for as many days/months/years the Lord has planned!

We, who are God’s children, are strangers and pilgrims in this world that is becoming more and more perilous and hostile to believers every day. Our religious freedoms are regularly under attack. Gradually, one by one, they’re being extinguished and destroyed. Biblical principles, sad to say even within many churches, are being threatened ..... but, **we are here**, living and breathing upon this earth ..... to diligently seek the Lord, to invest in the things of God ..... in eternal things ..... and to tell our fellow man there’s hope of a “better country”. Yes indeed, there’s a promised hope in Jesus!!

The Christian’s life is not supposed to feel comfortable ..... “**comfortable**”, as in adequate, suitable, sufficient, ample ..... **enough!** If it does begin to feel that way; **watch out!!** Too much enjoyment, dependence on, and love for this world’s goods can be harmful ..... connecting, even binding, one to this present world. Jesus gave an illustration of this in Mark 10: 17-22. This young man was very rich. His wealth had shackled him to this world in which he lived. He was so completely bound; he was unable to see beyond it! Jesus was giving him the tools to break the power the chains of his possessions had on him, but he was unable, or perhaps unwilling, to give up what he deemed so very important.

Our earthly lives are brief (James 4:14). Tomorrow is not promised or guaranteed to anyone! “*Only one life, ‘twill soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last*” (C.T. Studd – missionary). We’re constantly being bombarded with “stuff” trying to entrap, or trip us up with earthly pleasures, with situations and concerns, causing us to lose our one true and eternal focus.

The aforementioned song, particularly the chorus, reminds us to set our affections, our desires, our love, and our **hearts**, on that which is above ..... on that which is eternal. It’s imperative we lay up treasures in heaven, and continue to press on toward the prize, as Paul exhorts, “*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:14).

I'm praying, Defender Friends, that each one of us who has been given the faith to believe on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, will spread the good news of the Gospel, by way of our lips, and perhaps more importantly, through our lives. Please remember, "this world is **not** our home!!"



*Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.*

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**WRITE TO US!**

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**Upcoming Events!**

If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

Adult & Children's Sunday School	10:15 AM
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 AM
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	1:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 PM
Friday Night Youth Group	7:00 PM