

The Gospel News

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*Happy
Summer!*



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Who Fulfills God's Promises?

By The Quorum of Seventy Evangelists

Our Almighty God makes promises to His people. The Old Testament contains over 7,700 promises, and the New Testament contains over 1,000. The Book of Mormon establishes an entire continent as a land of promise. Every rainbow should remind us of God's judgment and mercy. His promises are abundant, sure, and true.

God makes promises, but people inherit and often participate in their fulfillment. The rainbow came after Noah obeyed God in the ark. Lehi and Nephi traveled for years in a foreign wilderness before launching into uncharted seas and arriving at the promised land. God promised Abraham "...in thee shall all the families of the world be blessed." (Genesis 12:3) Jesus Christ fulfilled part of this promise by offering eternal salvation to the individual, while Christ Himself prophesied of a saving nation to come (see 3 Nephi 21).

Have you ever thought how God's promises to Abraham could have been hindered if any of the individuals involved had lacked faith during their important day?

- What if the harlot Rahab had not hidden and assisted the two spies from Israel?
- What if a heathen named Ruth did not convert and stay with Naomi, declaring "...whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"?

Rahab feared God more than her own life, and loved God's people more than her own. God used her to spare His covenant people. Ruth abandoned her pagan faith and willingly chose to follow her mother-in-law into poverty. We know the final outcome. Both gentile women became part of Jesus Christ's ancestral lineage (see Matthew 1). God used these sincere and faithful women to participate in His plan to fulfill. If anyone had disobeyed God's direction or inspiration, the lineage from Abraham to Jesus Christ could have been interrupted, and God's plan to bless the entire world through Abraham's lineage may not have happened.

Like Ruth and Rahab, we have beautiful examples of faithful individuals used by the Lord to preserve our Church and prepare us for our glorious future. Let's look at just a few examples in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ since the Restoration of the Gospel almost 200 years ago.

- What if Joseph Smith had not protected the plates and translation of the Book of Mormon with all the energy and carefulness that he did? As an impoverished and uneducated young man in his 20s, what if the task of translating, publishing, and printing the Book of Mormon became too burdensome for him to undertake?

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SUMMER FUN
(some real national days to get you smiling)

July 2
National Wildland Firefighter Day
(Kiss a fireman or woman.)
I Cor 3:13



July 6
International Kissing Day
(Kiss a brother or sister of your choice,... let's make it a holy kiss.)
Romans 16:16

July 9
National Dimples Day
(If you have a child with dimples, get kissin'.)
No scripture. Not surprising.



July 23
Gorgeous Gramma Day
(Do we have to tell you what to do now?)
II Timothy 1:5
citing Gramma Lois



August 10
National Lazy Day
(Whatever you're doing today, stop, put your feet up and say, "ahh, maybe tomorrow" but only for today.)
Proverbs 6:6



August 12
National Middle Child Day
(Aw, does someone needs a special hug today? Go take another picture of them, because you know there aren't enough of them.)
I Chronicles 6:3
Was Moses the middle child?

August 21
National Senior Citizens Day
(Finally, one for me.)
II Cor 4:16
Explains my knee issues.



August 22 and 25
National Be An Angel Day and National Banana Split Day.
(So be one, and get one for someone you love.)
I Nephi 8:11



BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck



Twenty-five years ago, on July 4, 2009 a vision was had by Brother Dan Buffington after the Song of Zion "Show Me My Vine and My Fig Tree" was give to Sister Arlene Buffington.

Brother Dan said, "Today at The Church of Jesus Christ in Imperial we had our 4th of July picnic in our pavilion. I was given a copy of the new Song of Zion called, "Show Me My Vine and My Fig Tree." As I began to read the new song, I had a vision. As the vision came before me I saw all the brothers and sisters inside the pavilion, and vines began to cover the roof trusses and the side of the pavilion with huge pods of ripe purple grapes. It looked to me as a huge grape arbor, and we were sitting in it." Sister Arlene stated, "The Spirit revealed to me the melody and the subject, and I sat down and read the fourth chapter of Micah. When I did, God just laid out the whole song." The Chorus reads:

**Oh, show me my vine and my fig tree,
That there I may rest for a while,
The sorrows of life here surround me,
Where every step seems like a mile.**

Experience from The Songs of Zion website, Experience Page



Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America



Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.



“Much Better Than Buried Treasure”

By Brother Doug Obradovich

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”

(Matthew 6:21)

better choice, and too often these “treasures” are nothing more than stuff.

Whether stamps, books, music, knickknacks, plates, or shoes, people can get caught up in collecting stuff. Some have attributed collecting as behavior by loved-starved individuals seeking comfort, while others believe by collecting specific items, a greater inner sense of value is created. Another psychoanalytical explanation includes those who believe belongings overcome the fear of death, as these possessions keep one’s memory alive long after they are gone. I just enjoy the authors John C. Maxwell and Max Lucado, so I buy up their books.

Jesus was warning us how the motivation behind our behavior provides forensic evidence, like an amateur criminal leaving behind the residual fingerprints of our actions. More specifically, Jesus spoke of treasuring our connection with God and not seeking the approval of others. He addressed our being sincerely driven and not doing anything for show, as it applies to donating (v 1-4),

praying (v 5-9), forgiving (v 14 & 15), fasting (v 16-18) and avoiding a focus on “stuff” (v 19-21). He summed this up with, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

We can all be vulnerable to becoming attached to things we “treasure.” Instead, we should never allow anything to come between us and our relationship with God. He is the giver of treasures, and His last much longer than a car, a house, or a high-paying job. Everything else is simply stuff, and stuff depreciates with time, while God’s promises appreciate with time, becoming more valuable the closer we get to cashing in on His greatest treasure of all: eternal life.

During my early years, my “heart” was on my “treasure,” but that car is long gone, leaving me fully engaged with my Savior. However I didn’t need to lose my car to gain my Savior; the treasure of Jesus Christ must, in fact, always be where our heart is.

Now where are the keys to my newest car? No, no, no. I’m just running out for milk, nothing more.

Through fresh cut arrangements of roses, carnations, and/or chrysanthemums, I hand-carried comfort, joy, and condolences to homes, hospitals, and funeral homes. Delivering flower arrangements throughout Palm Beach County, Florida for Dunn’s Florist created opportunity to fund critical add-ons for my 1976 5-speed Toyota Celica (e.g., Pioneer 8-track stereo, tinted windows, and two-tone black and silver paint job). In addition to the financial investment, each Saturday was given to cleaning and detailing my car. This was more than just a vehicle, as it had captured my heart and became my “treasure.” Jesus was addressing this behavior in the verse above.

The focus of spending money and/or time often exposes one’s truest desires. We are subject to many types of “treasures,” which can include cars, homes, education, fashion, power, prestige, etc. Often these “treasures” take precedence over God, a much

(Continued from cover)

- What if Sidney Rigdon never read the Book of Mormon and remained content as a successful preacher in Ohio? What if he never contended to carry the Church forward after the death of Joseph Smith, Jr.? What if he took the easier path and traveled west with Brigham Young?
- What if William Bickerton never got baptized in the very small, struggling church in western Pennsylvania? When this little group disbanded, what if he never went forward preaching the Restored Gospel alone?

The Church of Jesus Christ was built by the faithful in a sea of turmoil. The Restored Gospel came with power and hope to fulfill the latter part of Abraham's prophetic promise. We, The Church of Jesus Christ, have a hope for Israel's restoration to Christ. We hope to build a holy city alongside God's redeemed, and build a kingdom worthy of Christ's return in triumphant glory over sin and evil. How will these Latter Day promises be fulfilled? Who will God call and use to make it happen? God forbid, but could our inaction and lack of faith inhibit the miraculous birth of Zion?

The challenge for us to fulfill the Divine Commission today is enormous. However, looking back in scriptures and our recent history, there are example after example of men and women who were faithful and have been able to fulfill many of God's promises. From the promise of Jesus Christ Himself to bless all mankind, to the Restoration of the Gospel by a

few men who put their faith in God and obeyed His direction. Today there are over 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States alone. The Church of Jesus Christ has had missions in Muncey, Six Nations, Pinetop, San Carlos, and Tse Bonito for over 70 years in some cases. The Church was established in Mexico over 60 years ago, and we continue to expand into Central and South America. We are a relatively small church, with a small budget and only a few missionaries worldwide. HOWEVER, we have the power of Jesus Christ in our ministry, our members have great faith, and The Lord continues to reveal His direction to brothers and sisters of the Church of Jesus Christ. We will fulfill the promises of God in this day and time. We will continue to preach the Restoration of the Gospel to the indigenous peoples of the Americas, to such an extent that they will be ready to receive it when the Choice Seer comes forth to convince them of this message that we are providing.

We, The Church of Jesus Christ, are listening to The Lord, we are up to the task, we are faithful, and We Will Fulfill The Promises of God that He has entrusted with us. We know that our God will continue to use brothers and sisters just like you, and we will continue to see and hear of mighty miracles in your service to God as we all fulfill the Divine Commission, taking the Gospel to the House of Joseph in the Americas.

The Quorum of Seventy Evangelists

Unartificial Intelligence *By Brother Brett Gibson*

Artificial Intelligence, or "AI," may seem like a new concept, but in truth the pursuit of it has been around much longer. AI is defined as intelligence exhibited by machines, particularly computer systems. In this regard, AI is relatively new, but the concept of an inanimate object claiming equal or greater power than humans has been around since the fall of mankind.

Historians credit the Greeks and Egyptians (circa 2700 B.C.) with erecting idols powered by mechanical, natural, and supernatural forces. These 'automata,' whether real or legendary, are recognized as the first iteration of AI. The Bible is replete with examples of those seeking the source of their intelligence and attributing it to nature and manufactured gods for centuries.

Today, with the advent of unprecedented computing power and open-source data access, we are now firmly in the "AI Era." All of us are being influenced by AI, whether we know it or not. However, today's AI is different from making inquiries to an idol's statue; something inanimate is starting to 'think' for us. This isn't an attack against AI as a whole. As with anything, there are good uses for it, however, we must be careful in how we apply it.

"I want to talk to a human!"

Have you ever had to call a business for help with a product or service? Some of us can remember a day when a person would answer the phone no matter how big the company might be. Call any business today and it's a virtual guarantee that your call will be managed by an automated interface. Speaking to a real human is often not on the menu, with the systems seemingly being set up to make it impossible to do so. You will almost inevitably be stuck frustratingly muttering your limited choice of options to the disaffectionate, disembodied voice on the other end of the phone.

God—not a disaffectionate, disembodied voice in the sky

We read in the scriptures where God spoke to men and women directly, to name a few, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Brother of Jared. Even though mankind knew from the very beginning that we were created in God's image, our curiosity still gets to us sometimes. When Moses was commanded to go to Egypt, he remarked, when they ask who sent me, what should I say? God replied, tell them "I AM hath sent me unto you." As God led them out of Egypt, He appeared in the form of a cloud (see Exodus 13:21 and 40:34).

In October 2022, the White House published a "Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights." Here is a critical excerpt: "You should be able to opt out, where appropriate, and have access to a

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The First Great Commandment

By Brother Jerry Valenti

There were many occasions when people asked Jesus questions with the intention of trying to trip Him up — to try to get Him to say something that would be embarrassing or perhaps contradictory to the Law of Moses. On one such occasion, a lawyer asks Jesus to identify the greatest commandment in the Law of Moses.

Clearly, this is a loaded question. Picking any one commandment as the greatest could easily be seen as minimizing all of the others. But, of course, Jesus has the perfect response. He quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5 as follows:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first and great commandment." (Mark 12:30; also see Matthew 22:37-38 and Luke 10:27).

Now, at first glance, one might think, "Oh, this is easy. I don't have to worry about any laws or commandments. All I have to do is love God." And, in fact, many people do think exactly this way. They say they love God, but they live their lives in direct opposition to what the Word of God says. Is this what Jesus intended when He said this? No, it's not.

In order to understand what this commandment is saying, you have to read more than the first seven words. Think about what it means to love God with ALL of your heart, ALL of your soul, ALL of your mind and ALL of your strength.

- When you love God with all of your heart, He comes first in all things in your life. His commandments and teachings are written upon your heart. You keep His commandments not because you've memorized 600 laws — you do it because you love God so much that you would never want to displease Him.
- When you love God with all of your soul, you are trusting that His commandments (including repentance, baptism and enduring to the end) will bring your eternal soul to the paradise of God when you leave this life.
- Loving God with all of your mind might be the hardest of all because it's our minds that come up with thoughts and ideas that can easily be contrary to God's will. The enemy works through the minds of people who consider the Word of God to be meaningless or incorrect or obsolete. People who consider themselves intelligent need to be very careful to not get to the point of thinking that they know better than God.
- Loving God with all of your strength means you are willing to do your best to work for the Lord and His Church and the Kingdom of God on earth. You don't work for the Lord to earn your salvation — that's a gift from God — but you work for Him because you appreciate that your sins have been forgiven; plus, you want to help others to learn to love God as well.

So, while the first great commandment of Jesus simplifies things by making it unnecessary to be a doctor of the law to gain salvation, it definitely shouldn't be taken as "do whatever you want as long as you say you love God." If you really love Him as much as the commandment indicates, your entire life is dedicated to being a servant of God — keeping His commandments, working for Him, and representing His teachings to the world. This is what the Lord wants from us, so let's do our best to live up to that.

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person who can quickly consider and remedy problems you encounter. You should have access to timely human consideration and remedy if an automated system fails or errs."

Based on this blueprint, if we have any problems, the exception is human interaction. The default is interacting with an inanimate object. We don't emotionally connect with computer-generated interfaces. Sometimes all it takes for us to feel better is an empathetic listener, even if our problem isn't solved. Moses was no different. He was persistent in his desire to see God, who granted that he could see His glory, albeit not His face (Exodus 33:22-23). Through faith the Brother of Jared saw the body that Jesus would take on when He came in the flesh (Ether 3:6-16). How fortunate are we that God sent His Son nearly two thousand years ago to dwell in the flesh so that He might have complete empathy for our lost and fallen spiritual state!

As humans living in this world, we might be subject to the effects, shortcomings, and errors of AI. Fortunately for us, we have a Savior in Jesus Christ who can quickly remedy problems we encounter. For those that understand Christ's sacrifice, the burden is not on us because Jesus took upon Himself the burden of our sin when He went to the cross.

Asking for guidance from an idol is not new

The first recorded evidence of idol worship in the Bible can be found in Genesis 31:19 where Jacob's wife Rachel took her father Laban's "images." We could go back further to the Garden of Eden where Eve listened to a talking snake rather than her heavenly father, in the likeness of whom He said that she and Adam were made.

God gave specific instructions against looking to idols in Exodus 20:3-5. Asking for guidance from an idol is an exercise in futility. David tells us in Psalm 115:1-8 that idols are works of the hands of men; having the appearance of the senses and abilities of men and women, but without the capability to use them. David said: "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."

Elijah proved this very futility of looking to idols in 1 Kings 18:27, 37-38: "Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

Don't be deceived

Recently a celebrity's mother was deceived by an AI image of her daughter attending an industry gala. The interaction of the mother and daughter via text went something to this effect: "Didn't know you went... what a gorgeous gown." The daughter's response was: "lol mom the AI got you too, BEWARE!" As stated above, one of the main intents of the White House Blueprint is to protect us from being deceived by a fake. We can imagine the many ways that fake images, documents, etc. can be harmful to us. Will we be able to spot a fake when presented with one?

In Luke 21:8, Jesus said, "Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them." Even the "very elect," the saints, were warned specifically in Matthew 24: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many...if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

Human memory has a '.tmp' file extension

I don't remember a lot of things. My wife, however, can remember the smallest of minutiae about things that happened decades ago. I do recall a time where she worked for days on a twelve-page paper for a college class and lost it all in one erroneous keystroke—the dreaded 'close without saving'. There was no cloud backup storage. This was even before the days of autosave. So she had to write it again, trying as hard as she could to remember every detail. Her second rendering shared the same intent, but certainly the content was different. Notwithstanding the occasional saving error, the internet—and thus AI—never forgets. Results may be slightly different based on new data, but everything remains somewhere.

We should always be vigilant about remembering the words of Christ. These things should be written upon our hearts and be in the forefront of our minds. At no time in history is that ever as meaningful as today. Consider that on this land at the time of Christ's birth, Satan tried to deceive many, but "the more part of the people did believe and were converted unto the Lord." Yet in the span of merely four years "the people began to forget those signs and wonders which they had heard...and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen". The Israelites took the words of Deuteronomy 11:18 literally, binding the commandments physically to their arms and foreheads. We must perform this same thing in the spiritual sense, laying up God's word in our hearts and in our souls.

Remember that we serve a true and living God

The God we serve never sleeps and is never distracted. His word never changes and He never goes back on His promises. Unlike AI, which will change based on human experience that is fed back into it, Jesus has experienced all things for us. Through His continued revelation we know that He is alive and unchanging (Mormon 9:19). The words of 2 Nephi 9:41 confirm that He cannot be deceived, which means that we too are kept from the deception of this world and safe in the path that leads to Him!

"O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name."

Camp Experiences *By Sister Sydney Lovalvo*

With Campout 2024 being at the end of June, young people from throughout the Church were asked about their experiences asking for their baptism (and for some, getting baptized) at previous Campouts. Here are their responses:

“My experience asking for my baptism really started at Campout in 2016. My sister got baptized at Camp and the baptisms that night were very special to me. I had never felt the Spirit move me the way that it did that night, and I couldn’t explain what I was feeling in that moment. That feeling carried over to the next Camp in 2017. All the seminars were confirmations of the question that I had in my mind leading up to Camp: am I ready to serve the Lord? I asked for my baptism the night of the 5K run. Fast forward to my baptism, I remember listening to the water wash on to the shore and the congregation singing; it really grounded me and humbled me in a strange but amazing way. I felt connected with the Lord all the way through my baptism, but when I got out of the water, I really didn’t feel anything. When the baptisms ended and I got back to my room and I was very hungry, so I looked up the hours of the Subway down the road. They were going to close in 20 minutes, so I decided to run there, running in the middle of the road all of the way. While I was running, I felt like a feather and felt such peace and love. The Lord showed me what His love feels like while I was running down the middle of the road. It was such a random moment to feel that, but it didn’t matter about the place or time. God will always show you His love in places least expected. Since that experience I have had many others, and there hasn’t been a moment I regretted my decision to serve the Lord. He’s been so good to me when I least deserve His mercy and forgiveness. He will always be there for me and there for anyone who reads this.” – Brother Ozzy Gonzalez Jr., Middle Tennessee Mission

“In 2022, I had a dream of a man walking outside a truck asking me multiple times, “What are you waiting for?”. But not believing I was ready for baptism, I just pushed it aside. When I went to Campout in Georgia, I knew it was going to be different, and that I would see things differently. At Camp, my worries about my life weren’t on my mind, but I also wasn’t thinking about baptism. However, on Sunday the ministers passing sacrament asked me if I needed to take it and I said “no.” It made me feel so disappointed in myself, knowing that I could have done something about it. Immediately after church I went to talk to my friend Yannel, and all I had to say was three words until she interrupted me saying “Julianna, I don’t know what you are waiting for.” In shock, I immediately called my parents and told them my feelings and they said that they knew this was going to happen, and that I was ready all along. They then said to pray about it. As I ended the phone call, I started praying, hoping that I was going to get more confirmation on my decision. Of course, I started second-guessing and overthinking. I talked to my cousins and friends who all told me the same thing: “Jesus doesn’t want you to be perfect. When you go to Him, He wants you to be broken. He wants you to ‘run to Him.’” At that moment, I knew I was

ready. But throughout the night, I had a pit in my stomach, not knowing if it was me being nervous, if it was the Devil trying to push me back, or me thinking that I was just on a spiritual high and not quite ready. I continued praying, asking for one more confirmation. I went to bed hoping I’d get a dream, but instead I woke up at 4:30 and called my brother, who is also baptized. He said he knew I was ready, but the decision is up to me and my relationship with God. That morning, the meeting was all about baptism. I knew at that moment that this was the confirmation I needed to walk up to the ministers and tell them that I wanted to be baptized. It had always been my desire for my dad to baptize me, and with God’s timing, my dad ended up being stationed in Georgia only 30 minutes away from Campout. That will be the week I will never forget, and that I will love and cherish forever.”- Sister Juliana Miller, Kinsman Branch

“I have always gone to GMBA Campout, but never thought I would ask for my baptism at Camp. When arriving, I felt a peace I had never felt before. After two days of Camp, I wasn’t feeling the Spirit and I thought something was wrong with me. Tuesday, I felt peace when walking into seminar, but completely ignored it and listened to the lesson. They spoke about our worries and asked us to write it down. We made heavy necklaces with washers that we wore, carrying our worries around all day; I couldn’t take it. I ripped it off and wrapped it around my wrist, since it was weighing me down. However, the next day in seminar, I had peace again. We threw the washers in the middle of the room, replacing them with a single washer that read: HOPE. The brothers shared about giving those worries to God, spoke on repentance, and shared the verse Alma 37:37. We then sang “Sheltered in the Arms of God,” with the Spirit hitting me so hard. Next, a special prayer was said for everyone in the class so that they would feel the spirit of God, or if God was calling them to be baptized, that they would know.”- Sis. Elizabeth Tenorio, Edison Branch

“I asked for my baptism at a Campout in 2018. During a night meeting, the young people were called on stage to sing and testify. The music and testimonies were so beautiful that night, and I felt overwhelmed with joy. As we were singing, I began to think about baptism and all of the blessings the Lord had given me in my life. I felt an urge to ask for my baptism but was ignoring God’s calling. I had always thought that I needed a clear “sign” or miracle from the Lord to let me know it was the right time to be baptized. We began to sing “Blessed Assurance,” which has always been one of my favorite hymns. As I listened to the chorus, I began to cry and felt an overwhelming peace. Suddenly, I had a clear mind and knew I wanted to be baptized. I didn’t need an obvious sign because I knew I loved the Lord and would serve him for the rest of my life. I knew the Lord was directing me because I am usually very nervous to testify, but that night I gave my testimony and asked for my baptism in front of hundreds of people. I’m so thankful that I put aside my doubts that night and gave my heart to the Lord.”- Sister Brooke Lambert, Farmington Hills Branch



Where Did We Get That Saying? *By Sister Karen L. Progar*

We recently enjoyed a lesson on Biblical phrases that have become part of our daily speech. This article is an insight into that lesson, which I hope you will enjoy. I know some of the information will surprise you, because it surprised me. I have told the Ladies' Circle sisters many times that I have a great love for history. During visits to various historical sites, I heard a number of sayings that have made their way into our everyday life. We use these phrases, but may not know their origins. Here are a few:

Burning the Candle at both ends, which means to be exhausted, and could be explained as a candle lit at both ends will burn up more than twice as quickly as one lit on one end alone.

Sleep Tight. In the 1700s, bed mattresses were suspended on

the frame by ropes, which were tightened on a regular basis to keep the mattress from drooping and provided for a firm bed and allowed the person to "sleep tight."

Now to get to the scriptural phrases we use. Some will make you say, "I knew that," but others will completely surprise you that they have a scriptural background.

This one is the one that caused to me create this lesson. I have often heard. "Red sky at night, sailors delight, red sky at morning, sailor take warning." Well, here you go, read Matthew 16:2-3. I thought it was just a truism, but it turns out it is biblical in origin.

There are so many of these, I have decided to just give you a brief list. Look them up; you will be amazed:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Forbidden Fruit | Genesis 2:16-17 | 15. At wits' end | Psalms 107:27 |
| 2. Fallen From Grace | Galatians 5:4 | 16. Pride goes before the fall | Proverbs 16:18 |
| 3. By the Sweat of Your Brow, Ashes to Ashes and Dust to Dust | Genesis 3:19 | 17. Nothing new under the sun | Ecclesiastes 1:9 |
| 4. An eye for an eye | Leviticus 24:19-20,
Matthew 5:38-39 | 18. For everything there is a season | Ecclesiastes 3:1 |
| 5. Manna from Heaven | Exodus 16:15, Psalm 78:24 | 19. Eat, drink, and be merry | Ecclesiastes 8:15 |
| 6. Scapegoat | Leviticus 16: 8-10 | 20. A drop in the bucket | Isaiah 40:15 |
| 7. A Man after my own heart | I Samuel 13:14 | 21. No rest for the wicked | Isaiah 48:22 |
| 8. How the mighty have fallen | II Samuel 1:25 | 22. Like a lamb to the slaughter | Isaiah 53:7 |
| 9. Put words in someone's mouth | II Samuel 14:3 | 23. Baptism of fire | Luke 3:16 |
| 10. Feet of Clay | Daniel 2:31-33 | 24. Head on a platter | Mark 6:25 |
| 11. Writing on the wall | Daniel 5:5-6 | 25. Go the extra mile | Matthew 5:41 |
| 12. Weighed in the Balance | Job 31:6, Daniel 5:27 | 26. Cast pearl before swine | Matthew 7:6 |
| 13. Skin and Bones, Skin of my teeth | Job 19:20 | 27. Wolves in sheep's clothing | Matthew 7:15 |
| 14. Bite the dust | Psalms 72:9 | 28. House divided cannot stand | Matthew 12:25 |
| | | 29. Blind leading the blind | Matthew 15:13-14 |

This list is not exhaustive, and you may have known a lot of those. If so, great job knowing your scriptures, but if not, enjoy looking them up.

A few I didn't include were: The Eleventh hour, Kiss of Death, Wash one's hands of the matter, Cast the first stone, Better to give than to receive, The love of money is the root of all evil

and Armageddon.

As I would always want to bring everything back to Circle, here's an idea: have your Circle find the references to a few of the ones I've listed and discuss them in your Circle meeting. I promise you a very active and interesting Ladies' Circle Lesson.

The Unknown Prayer *By Brother Owen Wilcoxson*

A few years back as I was driving I received a phone call from an older sister. She had asked that I come over and speak with her because she had someone that she wanted to bring to Church. Little did I know that it would be a moment that would help change my life.

I found myself wondering as I went to this sister's house why she would ask me to meet with her and why not just ask over the phone? In our branch at this point in time it was a common occurrence to pick up visitors and members to get them to Church. As our dear sister opened the door I distinctly remember her being in quite a joyful mood and was abnormally excited to see me. She quickly sat me down and handed me a piece of crumpled paper from a news article. As she gave it to me she said, "Here's the unknown prayer" with a big smile on her face.

Rewind, several weeks before this our dear sister called me about an experience. She said she was sitting in her house and she was reminded of an encounter with a woman in the grocery store from 20+ years prior. The woman was interested in going to church, and she had given our sister her phone number. As our sister recalled this encounter the Lord spoke to her and said "You never called her, find her number." Our sister searched her house for two weeks and sure enough, she found that crumpled piece of news article that she wrote this lady's number on 20+ years prior! It was a miracle in itself. How could this paper still be around?

Our sister quickly said to me, "See the unknown prayer! The Lord provided a prayer for that piece of paper to be

preserved so It could be used over 20 years later!" I was a little confused at first, but to my surprise, she began to explain that she had called the number and the same woman had picked up! And to her (and my) amazement, the woman had just been asking the Lord where she should go to church! It was truly a miracle! Twenty years later, with the same phone number, a small crumpled piece of paper, and still searching for the Lord!!

I was amazed and honored to pick up this woman the next Sunday for Church. For the next two years she came faithfully and was eventually baptized in the watery grave for the remission of her sins. Sister Marguerite Heath and Ruth Weaver became great friends and sisters till eventually they were both called home to their eternal reward.

I am reminded of the prophet Isaiah giving the word of the Lord, in chapter 65:24. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear." Way before this sister said a prayer to find that crumpled piece of paper, the Lord had seen the woman in the grocery store. The Lord knew the cry of the heart, for the redemption of the soul, and He answered!! He is still at it today!

Moments like these change our lives forever, and I will be forever grateful for this one that changed mine. I will forever be changed by my dear sister Marguerite Heath and how amazed she was when the Lord blessed her with an "unknown prayer."



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Gospel News Testimonies

"I have always enjoyed the print version of the Gospel News, and the ability it provides to be able to pass it along to anyone else to read. I always loved them being in our home, or seeing it on the table at my grandparents' house. For people who don't belong to our church, they may not want to go online to read it, and having it in print form, provides that ability to give it to them right away, and know they will "see" it. Plus, if we lose electricity in the craziness of the times we are in, it is accessible to read!"- Colleen Moore

"The Gospel News in print form is so very special to me. I read it from cover to cover. It sits on my nightstand to pick up and read again and again keeping me closer to the word of God and his entire church. I especially look forward to learning about our branches and missions throughout the world. When I need an extra dose of encouragement or inspiration through the week the Blessing Bits and even Children's Corner are my favorite quick reads. I also love to pass on particularly meaningful articles to those who otherwise wouldn't have access to its teachings. Having the printed version always on-hand and saving issues to look back on is a constant blessing in my home."- Sister Sandy Cotellesse, Irvine, CA Branch



Jehoshaphat Helps Evil Ahab

Dear Friends,

What would you do if you were a king or great leader facing a huge problem? Who could you trust? You would be surrounded by sneaky people who always wanted something from you. They might try to get on your good side. Others would want to be with you only because you were famous, rich, or had power. Some also would lie or give advice to hurt you or your people! Could they be trusted? No. And what if things went really wrong? Now who would help?

King Jehoshaphat remembered what God had done for his father, King Asa and their country, Judah. Countries would attack each other to rob all their gold and kidnap people they then sold as slaves! But even though the country of Judah was surrounded by enemy countries, their country had a powerful, secret weapon. It is the same weapon we have! We have God, the Creator, watching over His people to help! He answers us when we pray for advice. He can protect us!

Years before, after King David and Solomon died, the country was divided into two parts. Judah served God and Jehoshaphat was king.

Israel was ruled by King Ahab. He and his people worshipped horrible statues and did evil things. God was not on their side!

So this tricky king came to Jehoshaphat and asked him to join powerful forces and go against another place called Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat asked, "What has God said about this battle?"

King Ahab called four hundred of his prophets (not Godly prophets) and asked "Shall we go up to battle?" (See 2 Chronicles 18.) They all agreed it was a great idea.

But King Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there a prophet of God here that we can ask what to do?"

King Ahab admitted there was one named Micaiah who is a prophet of God. "But I never ask him what I should do. I hate him. He always prophesies bad to me." This was a king who did bad things! Yes, God hated what this man and his people were doing!

They brought Micaiah to the throne room in front of both kings and the four hundred fake prophets. At first he just pretended to agree. Then he spoke the truth. "I saw the future. All of the people of your country were scattered like sheep without a shepherd (no king) to lead them.

He continued, "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne surrounded by His heavenly hosts. God asked "Who will go down and entice (trick) King Ahab that he may go to Ramoth-gilead to war against Syria and be killed?"

One spirit said, "I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." And God told him to do so. When the prophet Micaiah told them this, one of the false prophets came up and slapped him, and made fun of him.

The angry King Ahab ordered his guards, "Take him out of here! Put him in prison, treat him horribly until I return in peace!"

And Micaiah replied, "If you do, then God has not spoken through me. Listen, all you people!"

So, the two Kings went up to war. And sneaky King Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and will go to the battle, but you put on your Kingly robes." So King Ahab disguised himself and they went to war against God's warning.

But their enemy, the King of Syria, had told his

captains of the chariots, "Don't fight with everyone, only with King Ahab!" He wanted Ahab.

And when the Captains of the chariots saw King Jehoshaphat, they surrounded him in the battle to capture him and fight. But Jehoshaphat called out to God, and the Lord helped him.

The Captains saw it was the wrong king. Ahab would never call out to God! So they turned back from chasing Jehoshaphat to hunt King Ahab.

As they hunted the disguised king, one of the soldiers just shot his arrow at a passing chariot. It was where Ahab was! And he was hit! And the wicked King Ahab died that night!

God's prophet, Micaiah told the truth. He had the power of God which protected him. We serve and love the same God. He is our "secret weapon"! Can you imagine how sorry and scared Jehoshaphat was to realize he had not listened to God's warning not to go? He returned to his country to lead his people of Judah the right way!

Love,

Your friend and Sister in Christ,

Sister Jan

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At what place other than at Church, do you feel closest to God?

"For me, I feel closest to God in my bedroom. It is quiet, and I can focus my conversation on my God. I need to speak out loud to Him. It is just how I do it." -Sister Joann Cotellesse, Pinetop, AZ Branch.

"I feel closest to God in nature and in parks." -Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I feel closest to God when I'm outside enjoying the nature He created." -Sister Colleena Eutsey, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I feel closest to God when reading Holy Scripture, both Bible and Book of Mormon. I also feel close to God when I am in prayer, speaking unto Him, and while listening to hymns praises unto Him." -Brother Michael McGuire, Cape Coral, FL Mission.

"That's a tough one, considering my Brothers and Sisters in Christ are the Church. But a place I feel closest to God would be reading and studying His Word no matter where I am." -Sister Heather Escobar, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I always feel closest to God when I am at the ocean or Great Lakes. There is something so beautiful and majestic about God's creation when it comes to the water. I find

myself praising Him for the gift!" -Sister Carolynn O'Connor, Farmington Hills, MI Branch

"During a spiritual dream or experience." -Brother Sal Azzinaro, Bell, CA Branch

"I enjoy communing with God when I'm out in the Great Outdoors. There is an awesome sense of peace and joy when you get to enjoy the majesty of His creation in nature. It is a time to reflect on the grandeur that surrounds you and also gives you time to pray." -Brother Duane Werley, Liberty, OH Branch

"I feel closet to God in nature." -Sister Sandy Capone, Irvine, CA Branch

"Waterside — creek, river, lake, ocean — the flow reminds me of my sins being washed away!" -Brother Mark Kovacic, North Georgia Mission

"When I find a quiet place to meditate and listen for God's voice." -Sister Kathleen Pastorelli, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"I feel closest to God when I'm flying in an airplane." - Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr., Forest Hills, FL Branch

Blessing Bits

BB Brother, Step Out on Faith, Now! - One of the biggest concerns I had going on my missionary trip to Dominica was I didn't know what God wanted me to do for the people of Dominica...I didn't know what I could do. As we were traveling a brother had been sick and we went to give him some medicine. I spent my time making sure everybody was OK, checking on everyone in the group. Brother Patrick Monaghan took notice and even though I hadn't realized it, I was utilizing the gift of compassion and was able to serve the saints in Dominica exactly the way God created me. If you step out on faith, God will reveal things to you about the gifts He's giving you so that you may serve others to glorify Him. - Brother Joe Gomez, South Bend, IN Branch

BB A Humble Petition - Every Sunday my back would start hurting so badly. I couldn't get to church, or I'd go there but I'd have to come right back home. After doing this for about a year, one night I was reading my scripture. Then I started praying and asking God if He could take this pain

away so I could get to Church. As I was praying out loud, I had a beautiful feeling that God was answering my prayer. It has been four weeks, and I'm still pain free. Thank you, God! - Sister Joann Cotellesse, Pinetop, AZ Branch

BB Let Our Focus Be On You - I have lived with diabetes for many years, and have grown to know the feelings in my body if my sugars are high or low. One particular Sunday, as I stood at the table with my fellow minister and we'd uncovered the communion, I felt my sugar level begin to plummet. I knew instantly that I'd have to stop everything, excuse myself, and drink some juice to bring my levels up. I clearly did NOT want to do that and disrupt this holy ordinance. As we began to break the bread, I prayed silently, "Lord, in your name, allow this one morsel to bring me to normalcy. Let our focus be on you, and not me." We prayed for the bread and passed it. The moment I was served my little piece, my sugars rose. I could feel it, as if I were seeing a thermometer rising. After we passed the wine, I bore witness of this personal miracle.- Brother Ken Lombardo, Metuchen, NJ Branch

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at eksanchor@gmail.com. [in approximately 150 words]. Answers to Question of the Month to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org.

Q

Question for this month:

For those who attended Campout 2024, tell us what was your favorite camp moment was.

A

Answer from last month:

At what place other than at Church, do you feel closest to God?

Turn to page 11 for answers.

Thou art my hiding place; ...thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Psalms 32:7