

The Gospel News

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A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

I AM GOD

We believe in God, the eternal Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. These three are the great and matchless power that rules all things visible and invisible, for it is of Him and through Him that we receive all things both for this life and that which is to come. (Article 1, Faith & Doctrine, The Church of Jesus Christ)

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55: 8-9). The prophet Isaiah speaks this way concerning the magnitude of God versus man.

It is with these two defining statements, one a simple description of our belief of the Almighty God and one a scriptural truth of the vast difference between Creator and creation, that we begin a consideration of our place today in the plan of God.

Although we have a very limited understanding of all the significant events since the dawn of creation, scripture gives us a glimpse of God's ways, thoughts, and actions through time. The exit of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, the great flood in the days of Noah, the confounding of language at the Tower of Babel, the call of Abram to be separated from the land of his birth and the eventual designation of a promised land and a covenant people are just a brief summary of significant interactions between God and His creation. The list of these special events could go on and on. There is an Almighty God and a master plan for His creation. A glorious and perfect balance between creation's free will and the Master's loving hand at work.

The greatest of events in this master plan must be the wonderful love demonstrated through the redemption of mankind by the Son of God entering creation as a child born to a virgin. Oh, how the ways of the Father were so much different from the thoughts and imagination of men! The Savior of the world, the hope of all creation, being born as a baby in a humble stable. Angels declared His arrival, but very few actually understood the magnificent unfolding of the Almighty's master plan. Then, a short few years later, how very hard it was to comprehend that this King of Kings had to be placed upon a Roman cross to suffer and die.

(Continued on page 4)

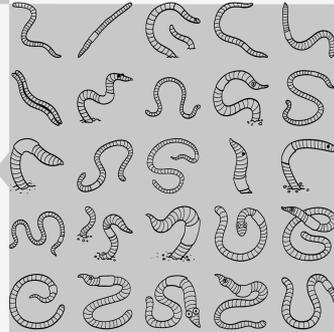
THIS
INTERACTIVE
GRID
REQUIRES YOU
TO CRACK
THE BOOKS,
BUT YOU'LL SEE,
IT'LL BE FUN IN
THE END.

Can you figure out
the dates
that all these
scriptures have
in common?
Promise not to groan.



Alma 56:30

Ether 14:22



Helaman 1:19

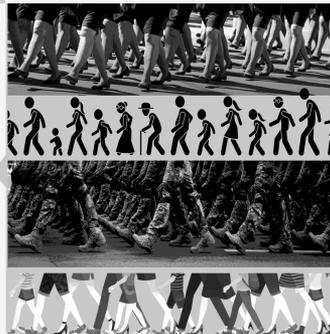


Mormon 6:4



Alma 47:27

III Nephi 3:22



Google
"Stripling Warrior Day."

Apparently,
it's a real thing.

Can you guess
which day it falls on?



BFTP Blast From The Past

The General Church Mission Board

Sixty-six years ago this month, March 21, 1959, leaders of the church met in Monongahela to coordinate what was fast becoming the expanding missionary work of the Church. From this meeting a proposal to "establish a mission board to get pertinent data on methods of control" emerged for submission to the upcoming April General Church Conference. It would be from this group, as well, that missionaries were elected to oversee the burgeoning work in Africa; the Grand River (Six Nations) Indian Mission in Ontario, Canada; the Muncey, Ontario Indian Mission; the work among the Indians in Wakpala, South Dakota; and the spreading of the Gospel in Italy.



Pictured are: Brothers William H. Cadman and Joseph Bittinger (Africa); Clifford Burgess (Grand River); Querino "Reno" Bologna (Muncey); Thurman Furnier (Wakpala, South Dakota); and Anthony Corrado and Rocco Biscotti (Italy).



Purpose Statement

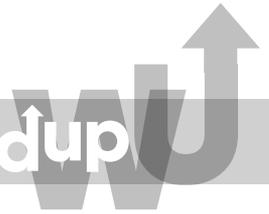
- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

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.



"The Blame Game" By Brother Doug Obradovich

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matthew 7:5)

Why do we blame? Are these our attempts to control situations, our unwillingness to accept responsibility, learned behavior, or simply denial? I am subject to any of these indictments (which ironically, are pointing fingers of blame at causes of blame). So, in answer to the question, I'm checking off D) All the above...but it's not my fault I'm answering this way. Keep in mind; blaming can be appropriate when accurately identifying the responsible individual and preventing a repeat of future mistakes. However, if utilized only to mask the true culprit (self), then it is useless, both today (no personal accountability) and tomorrow (no behavior change).

How long has mankind been playing the "Blame Game?" Records (Genesis 3) prove out the earliest evidence to such behavior dates back to "In the beginning!" When God exposed Adam and Eve in their sin, they immediately deflected responsibility (and yes, we appear just as silly when we do this). Eve blamed the snake ("**The**

serpent beguiled me"), Adam blamed Eve ("**The woman...**") and then went on to audaciously even point at God ("**...whom thou gavest me**"). Genesis 4 shows the "Blame Gene" making a smooth transition to the next generation, when Cain's sacrifice to God proved insincere. Cain, unwilling to accept responsibility, instead blamed Abel for his own failure and then destroyed (murdered) the evidence, which, sadly, was Abel. This led to physical scarring ("**a mark upon Cain**"), symbolic of the mental/emotional/spiritual scars of sin and blame that too often remain with us throughout our lives.

Blame is the offspring of sin, yet blame goes on to bear more sin. Jesus identified such deceitful blaming as duplicitous and judgmental, "**Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.**" Finger-pointing skews one's view of self and others, and leads to defensive posturing. Ultimately, it justifies one's avoidance of personal accountability.

Blamers claim being victimized by others' past mistakes (e.g., Adam's "original sin"). Blamers dismissively state being coerced into actions (e.g., "The devil made me do it"). Blamers hide behind their surroundings (e.g., "It's his fault," "her fault," "their fault," "its fault"). And blamers

even point to God (e.g., "How could a loving God let this happen?"). Until personal culpability is embraced and one's own "**beams**" are addressed, growth cannot occur.

Please accept my "No Shame Accepting Blame" challenge:

- Identify one "beam" you would like to "cast out"
- Write it down
- Identify a strategy to resolve your issue
- Write it down
- Take this to God in prayer
- Immediately implement resolution plan

As you experience success in overcoming this undesirable behavior, the positive momentum will begin to build. Like an old photograph, your "**beams**" will slowly fade away and diminish into "**motest**" and eventually, disappear from view completely ("**cast out**"). The void left can then be filled with the new, improving you. Christ will replace misery with fresh, restored joy.

Jesus Christ, innocent of all charges, taught us how this is accomplished when He accepted the largest portion of blame for each of us. The least we can do is acknowledge and "**cast out**" our remaining "**beams**" for Him!

(I Am God - continued from cover)

Unbelievable! Was all hope lost? No, the scriptures declare the story. "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11: 10-11) The Redeemer of mankind taking the punishment of a sinful creation to be the pinnacle of the Father's plan of His creation. Jesus Christ, glorifying the Father in His obedience and completing the action to make creation's free will a reality.

After the resurrection of Jesus, momentous events continued to unfold with creation changing and eventually suffering through a separation or apostasy from God's will and His desire for mankind. However, as God has revealed throughout His word to faithful men and women, His plan for creation involves an eventual glorious conclusion to our world and creation's mortal time. This concluding event is not an event for a moment or even a year or two. God's master plan involves a period of time, years in the making, resulting in the spiritual culmination of willing creation living in the ultimate desire of God, a kingdom of heaven on earth, glorifying the Savior of the world.

*"Remember the former things of old: for **I am God**, and there is none else; **I am God**, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46: 9-10).*

The Church of Jesus Christ, in our period of creation, has been blessed with remarkable understanding of the precepts and wisdom of God. *"For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have." (2 Nephi 28:30)*

There are many in our world today that say, "we have enough". We are wise enough. God has spoken and now refuses to speak, or we don't want to even consider that our knowledge and understanding of God's master plan may be incomplete. However, just as the majority of creation could not comprehend or conceive the coming forth and eventual glory of the Savior, we must be careful to not limit God today. Individually and collectively, we must believe without one shred of doubt that God is omnipotent and omniscient. He has declared the end of creation since the beginning of creation. He will conclude His creation as He deems and

wishes it to be done, even though we do not know all of His counsel.

The Church of Jesus Christ has been blessed with a unique and miraculous understanding of the word of God, the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Having the word of God and understanding the plan of God contained therein are two very different things. Since the restoration event began over 200 years ago, this church has been a recipient of a special understanding of God's plan. Line upon line, precept upon precept, little by little, the Lord has revealed scriptural knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Most recently, the following instruction was given to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles:

"Thus saith the Lord: As long as your hearts, as long as your hearts are open and your minds are open and your ears are open, because some of the things now that will come before you could be concerning to the fleshly mind.

But know now that I God am in control, and I see and I know all things! And if you but just trust, if you but just trust and obey, then now you will see, you will see these promises come and unfold before your very eyes. You will know that I am God and that I will fulfill all things! You will see in this dispensation the coming forth of knowledge and truth through the records that will be restored! You will see these things! You will see the children come home, My children, My covenant people. For I will lower the scales and remove them from their eyes of the unbelief that plagues them so! And yes, as I gave, as I gave the disciples in that day with My Son, you will have that same fullness of power! And yet you must be ready to receive that fullness of power!

So know now this day, My sons, know now this day, that if you just humble yourselves before Me, if you just humble yourselves, I will make it all clear! I will provide, and I will do all for I am God, thus saith the Lord!"

(Revelation of the Lord to The Church of Jesus Christ. Reviewed and approved, October 2024)

Oh, the mercy and greatness of the Lord unto His people! Let us all be aware, instruction and wisdom such as this is incredibly important, special, and marvelous. As the Lord gave men and women of God in the past great understanding and instruction to the glorious events of the creator's master plan (Brother of Jared, Abraham, Isaiah, Lehi, Nephi, Samuel the Lamanite, etc.), so too has our God spoken and revealed to us many of the marvelous works and wonders that will unfold in the final event, the Peaceful Reign.

(Continued on page 6)

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By Brother Brett Gibson

As I write this, we are days away from the United States installing its leader for the next four years. Our God-given right was exercised by every citizen who chose to cast a vote. We may not realize that this right is God-given, but according to the word of God, it is. In 2 Nephi 10:11 it states: "And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles." Throughout history, kings have declared their authority by divine right, whether that be God or some other claimed higher power. Some kings even declared themselves to be a divine being. We believe that our leaders derive their power by the will of the people. This concept seems counterintuitive—how could power given by mankind be more perfect than that given by God?

In Deuteronomy 1:13, God instructed the people to "[t]ake you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you." So we see here the example of a nation that serves God choosing their leaders, and God in turn directing those who were chosen. The architects of our government were religious men. It appears that they put their knowledge of His word and His inspiration to good use. God commands that we have no other king but Him.

Samuel, the prophet and judge of Israel, appointed his sons as judges when he was too old to rule effectively. Their wickedness, along with surrounding nations exhibiting their strength through kings, led Israel to desire a king. Samuel warned that the support for the king would take away from what should be given to God (see 1 Samuel 8:4-22). There are numerous examples of kings on this land in the Book of Mormon; mostly evil, but some good. Before King Mosiah died, his sons all refused the kingdom, choosing instead to preach the Gospel. Rather than appoint a king, he advised the people to collectively appoint wise men as judges (Mosiah 29:11-41). We see in verse 38 a model of what we enjoy today: "Therefore they relinquished their desires for a king, and became exceedingly anxious that every man should have an equal chance throughout all the land; yea, and every man expressed a willingness to answer for his own sins."

We might not always agree on our leaders and the policies they represent. However, when disagreements arise, we must remember that the struggle is not between individual viewpoints, but rather it is larger: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). God knows that we are experiencing this struggle against a power that can overcome us if we allow it. He reminded us recently that He knows of these struggles and has given us His Son as a means to overcome it if we but "Look Up And See Your Savior's Face" (see the *October 2020 message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles*).

Now that the election is over and the leader has been installed, does our role stop once our vote has been cast? Should we rejoice or mourn depending on the result? No—The word of God says that we are to pray for our elected leaders, no matter who they are, no matter your vote. In 1 Timothy 2:1-2 it instructs us that: "...first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." So, let's pursue a 'quiet and peaceable life' by praying for those in leadership positions, being knit together in unity, and looking up and seeing our Savior's face.

(I Am God - continued from page 4)

Please note the experience begins with conditions, assurance and instruction. Our hearts must be open, our minds must be open, our ears must be open. Open to what? Open to the Almighty God. Open to the final and glorious part of the Master's plan. Do we have preconceived ideas and notions as to how God must perform the tasks to bring forth Zion? He says, be not concerned. Be open that God knows and will do what is best, and do it absolutely perfectly. Will natural events that we see take place cause us to trust, or to fear? The Lord says, Trust. Our God knows that there are going to be concerns in our mind because of conditions and events in our world. He says, "I GOD AM IN CONTROL." He says, "I KNOW and SEE ALL THINGS." Trust and obey.

Oh, the mercy and greatness of the Lord unto His people! The Lord instructs that we will see God's promises come and unfold before our very eyes! What promises does He proclaim?

We will see... "the coming forth of knowledge and truth through the records that will be restored". Additional records—additional scripture—will be given to the Church, and through us, to the world. The sealed portion of the gold plates given to Joseph Smith, Jr. will come forth and be revealed. The record of the brother of Jared is promised to the Gentiles. *"And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are"* (Ether 4:7). Knowledge and truth being expanded to mankind.

We will see... "the children come home, My children, My covenant people." The House of Joseph will be reconciled to Jesus Christ and accept the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ. *"Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine"* (Isaiah 29: 22-24). We will see the great work of

restoring the entire House of Israel back to the true and living God. The scales of unbelief and of false belief will be removed. Our God has said it will be done, so IT WILL be done.

We will see... "you will have that same fullness of power! And yet you must be ready to receive that fullness of power!" The priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ will be granted a full measure of the Spirit of God. The same power of Jesus Christ that was bestowed upon the Apostles in Jerusalem, and also upon the Disciples of Jesus on the land of America will be upon the ministry of the Church. "And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus, insomuch that they did heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cause the lame to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear; and all manner of miracles did they work among the children of men; and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus." (4 Nephi 1: 5)

We are encouraged and strengthened... "know now this day, that if you just humble yourselves before Me, if you just humble yourselves, I will make it all clear! I will provide, and I will do all for I am God."

I AM GOD. As The Church of Jesus Christ, all should be humbled to be spoken to by the Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. He acknowledges us as a people and gives continued wisdom, instruction, and understanding of His great master plan. Let us never take for granted what we have been given as the final glorious event in God's master plan unfolds with our knowledge and involvement. May we always listen, trust, and obey.

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

James Crudup, Joel Gehly, Pete Giannetti, John Griffith, Scott Griffith, Paul Liberto, Thomas M. Liberto, Leonard A. Lovalvo, Frank Natoli, Paul A. Palmieri, Peter Scolaro, Jerry Valenti

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Hollywood Ladies' Uplift Circle

By Sister Helen Catone

The Ladies' Circle of the Hollywood, Florida Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ is small, consisting of six members, with two visiting, making eight in our Ladies' Uplift Circle meetings. We are blessed to have Sister Vi Catone in our midst from time to time as well.

Our meetings are held in the kitchen of the Hollywood Branch. There we have an evening of love and fellowship among our Circle Sisters, with inspiring lessons and participation. We enjoy fellowship, our coffee, snacks, and a lesson that inspires us to go forward in God's work. I have used the Ladies' Circle pledge to highlight our Circle.

The Ladies' Circle pledge is beautiful and when asked how we fulfil the challenge and promises in the pledge, we search the scriptures in the Bible and Book of Mormon, and teaching literature of scriptures from previous brothers. Our recent lessons have been Jesus' Birth, God's power, The Ant and the Contact Lens, Mosiah 5th chapter, and the inspiring writings of Brother Russell Cadman.

God has blessed and directed our Circle as we take time to fast and pray on Thursdays. With God calling two of our sisters home, (Sister Eileen Coppa and Sister Susan Moraco) and some in our branch moving away, our spirits were low.

One of our sisters was given a beautiful dream to not only encourage us at the Hollywood Branch, but for other Circles and The Church of Jesus Christ. We thank God for this experience.

"I was where the Hollywood branch has our Ladies' Uplift Circle meetings, in the kitchen and Sunday school room. It opened to a bigger room. I saw the tables joined together at the ends, seeming longer in length than they are at the branch. There were many ladies/sisters at this meeting. It surprised me how many attended the meeting as I had to have them share the copies of the lesson.

I realized the lesson was the same material I was going to use for the March 1st Circle meeting. My topic for the lesson was "Love." In the dream, I proceeded to walk around the long table, passing out my lesson, I said "they will know the Church by your love." In the dream there was a young woman that I didn't recognize. She had very long dark hair. I told her to stand and introduce herself, since some may not know her. At the end of the table were three beings. I can't

tell you anything about the beings except that they were female, and I saw the late Sister Pauline Ritz sitting between them. Sister Pauline looked beautiful, with a big smile upon her face and a bouffant hairdo!" This was the end of the dream.

One of our elders had the gift of interpretation...

This seems to represent the growth of the Church. The women of all different ages are the future of branches or missions that will come to embrace the Gospel of Christ. Our sister in the dream, who also is a deaconess, shows us that the Church will begin to spread in our time. The vision of our past sister, Pauline Ritz, who also was a deaconess, reveals the unchanging teachings of the Gospel that continue today. The request for the new young sister to introduce herself is confirmation that these will embrace the name of the Church so all will know her. Confirmation of the truth came with the scripture, John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Visiting (and caring for) the sick is a constant in our Circle, by providing visits, sending cards, making phone calls, or bringing food for them to take home. Our advice for not finding fault in word or deed, are three words: Compliments not complaints!

To address the promise of helping each other and helping others to the best of our ability, the Hollywood Circle held a special Sunday morning meeting entitled "Sister Sunday School" to share our Ladies' Circle with the elderly sisters who are unable to attend our regular night meetings. Sister Kathy Kirschenpfad presented a lesson, "The Mountain of the Lord Grows," based on the interpretation Daniel gave of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Brother John Catone was there to help with the chronological summary of events and as Sister Kathy closed the lesson, Brother John was given the words of the Lord. "Thus, saith the Lord... My Kingdom will be established, and you will see it. Be prepared My people, prepare, prepare, all that has been said is true, it's coming! You will see it! My heart yearns to establish the Kingdom for My Son. And you shall take part. You shall see the fruits of it. Thus, saith the Lord."

Our Circle has truly been blessed and will continue to do our best to uphold the pledge of the Ladies' Uplift Circle.

New Year, Same God

By Sister Sydney Lovalvo

We are a few months into the new year; all the Christmas cheer and holiday magic is now a distant memory (at least it is for me), and it is back to reality. I have always struggled once the holidays have ended, because it seems that when they end, there is nothing in the distant future to look forward to. If you're a student, it's usually the start of a new semester and Spring Break seems like a time that won't come soon enough. If you're working, it's back to the grind of the regular day-to-day things that happen at your job, with no time off in sight. And if you live in Michigan, snow is wonderful during Christmastime, but then you brace yourself for colder months ahead. You spend plenty of time with family, friends, brothers and sisters, eat too much food, and then it seems to end in the blink of an eye. The transition into a new year after the holidays is a big change that can come with unknowns about what the future holds.

I have found comfort knowing that while many things change, and going into a new year/chapter of life can be scary, God is still the same.

Ephesians 2:20-22 says "... with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." Christ is the cornerstone of all of our lives. He is our firm foundation, and that doesn't ever change.

In this new year, or at any season of change, there are always unknowns: "What does my future look like? Will this situation turn out okay? Will the outcome be what I want?" Our whole lives are filled with questions and uncertainty about the future. But the steady, solid, and unchanging rock in life is Christ, which provides such solace in my life.

There have been many times where I felt like my world was falling apart at the seams. I have faced great unknowns about my health, changed career paths during the last semester of my undergraduate degree, and have questioned what my future will bring. As a young person, these instances were probably the most overwhelming feelings I have ever felt. I know young people can relate, but I also know that everyone can reflect on a time where they felt like they are at a crossroads, questioning what path to take. Looking back, I feel grateful that throughout these moments, I clung to the Lord, and He was my strength. He provided me with peace, when truthfully there was no reason to feel it. He provided me with love and support from everyone in my life. And He provided me with understanding.

I feel that the Lord gave me these little "gifts" along my journey and throughout my tough times to remind me who is in control. He is my foundation, my cornerstone, and with Him as my solid rock, I will not fail. When I struggled, I knew that I could cast all my cares on Him and that He would listen to every word. All He wants from us is to lay our burdens on Him so that He can provide us with assurance. I know with every fiber of my being that the Lord wants to grant the desires of my heart and help me through life's challenges, and I feel so blessed to have that knowledge.

I feel grateful to go into this new year with God beside me every step of my journey. I have no idea what this year will bring, but I truly hope it brings blessings to all of you who read this. I also know that the Lord is the same today as He was in 2024 and in years prior. Things may change in our lives, but Him as our cornerstone does not. Let that be the confidence boost you need to go into this year (and in every step of your life) fearlessly, because of your solid foundation in Christ.

Think It Not Strange

By Sister Dianne Maddox

Originally published on the Blog November 2021

In the middle of a conversation regarding the death of a young sister in 1984, my grandmother said, "People call them the good old days, but we had problems too." She peered over her Scrabble tiles and added, "My mother died when I was 14."

This memory is etched in my mind and resurfaces when people ask why there is sickness around us and people die before what we deem is their time. "Why don't we see miracles like our parents did?" is a question I've heard asked. When you receive a Flocknote message bearing the news of a person under the age of 80 passing away, do you wonder how this can be a part of God's plan? Do you feel forsaken when you've prayed for someone's healing and your prayer isn't answered? Do you become frustrated with those who say, "She was healed; just not on earth." When you're in the middle of your grieving process, sometimes those words aren't the easiest to digest.

When I think about the things that my mother, grandparents, and many older brothers and sisters went through, I realize that I should "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try me, as though some strange thing happened unto me."

My mother's father died when she was 15 years old. My paternal grandmother's mother died when she was 14 years old. My maternal grandmother said goodbye to her mother at an Italian port, never to see her again, but to hear of her death a few years later through a telegram. At the age of 38, Joseph Smith died and left his pregnant wife, Emma, alone.

I don't have to go back to the generations before me to recall deep losses that have impacted myself and many that are reading this blog. We could write pages full of examples of misfortunes that don't seem right to our mortal minds.

Don't think that I have things all wrapped up in my mind and don't struggle with these incidents. The phone call that I

received at work a few years ago telling me that a dear friend who was also an apostle in this church was taken from us way too soon is as vivid as if it happened yesterday. As I wept at my desk, I wasn't thinking that it wasn't strange that this fiery trial had come upon us. Instead, I called it a day, went home and just cried.

Life very rarely follows the plan that we have constructed in our minds. I've provided several real life-and-death examples that have impacted my life in one way or another. The trial that you may be in may not be life or death, but that doesn't mean it is easy.

So, what do we do when our prayers aren't answered? Do we think we've wasted our time? Like a pouting child, do we walk away and say we no longer believe in God? I pray that the answer is no, and I pray that we hold on just like those who came before us. If my grandmothers hadn't been strong in their faith, the chances are slim that I would be counted among you.

Our prayers aren't always answered the way we think they should be. God answers our prayers in one of three ways: Yes, No, and Not Yet. Only one of those answers is acceptable to us.

During the darkest of nights, know that God will make a way. Our thoughts are not God's thoughts. Some days seem to be filled with much loss. It's not easy, but let's join together in unity, holding onto each other, believing that God will make a way. Not that He CAN make a way. But that He WILL make a way.

*"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need... I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
(Philippians 4:11-13)*

Editor's note: We share this article with you in loving memory of Sister Dianne Maddox who served on the Gospel News Team for over 13 years in many capacities including as a writer, contributor, administrator and through handling the finances. More than that, she loved this publication and serving the saints through her work on the Gospel News.



We Are All Parts of One Body

Dear Friends,

Do you ever look back on your life by a few weeks, months, or even several years and marvel at how God helped you again and again? Do you ever think about all the things that worked out good for you? Maybe you didn't even deserve things to be so good, but you have been blessed by God anyway.

At Church one day, we started going up and down the aisles and remembering the amazing miracles we had each received! I was able to adopt a little baby from far away across the world in India. She was able to have a little baby and our family knew that love. Two young people in our rows were hit by a car in parking lots and survived fine. A sister's car was hit by a train and she survived! Another family had a transplanted liver and the person is well now! Many sick people were healed over and over. People took hard tests and passed!

Kids were able to learn to play complicated instruments or sports or do so well in high school that they got free scholarship money to go on for training or universities and become amazing specialists in areas I don't understand! Brothers and sisters alike were able to survive heartaches or big troubles or get homes or jobs and make good livings. God loves to bless His people who serve Him. He also has given us each many talents and many abilities.

The Bible explains this. It says we are all parts of one body. (See 1 Corinthians

12th Chapter.) It is the Church, the body of Christ. Now everybody needs all the different parts! We all cannot be the eye, or the ear, or the foot that runs fast. The Bible says (1 Corinthians 12:21), "And the eye can not say to the hand, I have not need of you. Nor can the head say to the feet, I don't need you!!"

By the same way, in our Church, we are all different but still together one body—one group! And everyone is needed! Some are elders or apostles who lead our Church. Some are teachers, some work miracles, or have the gift of healing. Others have the gift of healing or of helping, or can speak in tongues, or interpret God's messages. (See Romans verses 27-31.) Everyone can be and is different, but has a place and is needed! We can all show love.

In the next chapter, the Apostle Paul teaches us all that the most important gift is the gift of love (also called charity). We all know how to love.

A baby with no love will die. So if you are alive, I say, someone, somewhere put love into you. And now we can give love to others! You can be loving and kind to the other kids, neighbors, and people. You can help, you can forgive others and be kind. You can listen to others, put up with others, and shine the gift of light and love that is in you!

What has God blessed you with? What are you interested in? You can also ask God to guide you and teach you to use the gifts that you are interested in and wish you had. You may get a chance to develop them. Or you may not. And then there will be something else for you!

Be grateful for all you have and who you are, and even what God has done for you! Tell others about God's love!

With Love,

Your friend and Sister In Christ,

Sister Jan

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What area of your spiritual life or service to God do you want to focus or improve on in 2025?

"Prayer life and being a better servant of God." -Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I want to keep doing what I'm doing, but I want to have a brighter, more joyful attitude about it all. I need to ask God to fill my actions with the Holy Spirit. Reading, praying, attending church, serving the saints —I want God's Spirit to breathe life into my works to His honor and glory." -Sister Michelle Watson, Pinetop, AZ Branch

"I want to increase my faith and humility. I want to be the best minister I can be." -Brother Dean Longrie, Washington State

"Reading the word of God more. I read the daily scripture and always have intentions to read the chapters but often fail, letting the busyness of life get in the way." -Sister Jan Offet, Bell, CA Branch

"I want to focus more on the youth, spending time going in the community, doing activities, and getting to know the Restored Gospel. I want to focus more on studying the Book of Mormon and work for the Lord." - Sister Katrina Hopkins, Quincy, FL Branch

"To have a closer relationship with Jesus and our Father, be more united so I can hear Him when He speaks to me. Be prepared for and welcomed in Zion!" -Sister Dienna Rogers, Irvine, CA Branch

"I would like to focus more on my spiritual strengths with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." -Brother Dan Roberts, Roscoe, PA Branch

"Staying well and getting my SSA." -Sister Kerri Mackley, Vanderbilt, PA Branch

"I aspire to deepen my prayers during feet washing and times of fasting and prayer. These prayers come from my heart and feel intensely personal. However, I occasionally struggle to be fully present in these sacred moments when I try to articulate my prayers aloud. Doubt and insecurity sometimes creep in, making me question whether my prayers truly express my inner feelings. This is why I often choose to pray silently. My goal is to clear my mind and engage wholeheartedly, embracing the courage to pray aloud. My love for my brothers and sisters inspires me to express my prayers for them sincerely." -Sister Ana Arreola-Benyola, Tse Bonito, NM Mission.



"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." — Genesis 1:31

Blessing Bits

BB A Healing from On High

I had been dealing with pain in my shoulder for over a year. Physical therapy helped, but the discomfort and limited mobility persisted. So, I consulted an Orthopedic Specialist who ordered an MRI. After the MRI, the online radiologist report I read stated there was a tear in my rotator cuff, and I knew from others that this likely meant surgery with months of painful recovery. I couldn't get back to the Orthopedic Specialist for several weeks, but I was anointed and gave myself over to the Lord's perfect will. At my follow-up consultation, the specialist came into the room and asked me about my symptoms. In that moment, I realized my range of motion was now essentially normal, and my pain was gone. He said, "Well, Mrs. Champine, I've looked closely at the MRI films. With all due respect to the radiologist, while I do see some minor wear, I just don't see any tear. I don't see any need for surgery." PRAISE GOD! I left there rejoicing with thanks for this miraculous healing and the Lord's faithful, tender mercies! - Sister Rosanne Champine, Detroit 1, MI Branch

BB The Lord Came to My Rescue

I have been suffering from arthritis in my right hip for some time and it occasionally flares up. Well, it did really severely while I was at General Church

Conference this past fall. After suffering with it through meetings on Thursday and Friday, I asked two brothers Friday evening if they would anoint me. When I woke up Saturday morning I was completely free of pain. Praise the Lord! - Brother George Kovacic, Middle Tennessee, TN Mission

BB He's In the Everyday

Just before the holidays a few years ago, I had one day off to prepare for my out-of-state family. My decorating was done, but I had to do the last-minute cleaning since I would be working up until their arrival. Everything was progressing well until I got to the bathroom. As I was dusting the window shade, the end of the shade came out of the bracket. I tried and tried to get it back in, but nothing I did made it work. Time was passing and I still had quite a bit to do. I was getting more and more frustrated because the bathroom shade had to work. It was the one window that had to be covered. I finally cried aloud, "Lord, please help me! I have so much to finish and I can't fix this!" Immediately the end of the shade fell into the bracket. I literally cried, realizing the Lord is so mindful of everything in my life. To this day, the shade has never fallen out of the bracket since. - Sister Marty Jumper, Aliquippa, PA 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.



Question for this month:

If you could go back and be present for any event in history, where would you go?



Answer from last month:

What area of your spiritual life or service to God do you want to focus or improve on in 2025?

Turn to page 11 for more answers.



"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." — Genesis 1:31