

**AUGUST 2021 – DAVID RENWICK**  
**Renewing Your Life in Christ**

August 18, 2021

- August 11 How Can I Find God?
- **August 18 How Can I be Sure that I am Loved and Forgiven?**
- August 25 How Can I Grow in Faith?
- September 1 How Can I Serve God Faithfully?

**VARIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD**

1. Is There A God At All? – *In A World of Science*
  - a. *Beware the God of the Gaps.*
  - b. *God is in all things not just the unexplained “gaps”*
  - c. *Science is GREAT!! But . . . There are questions science does not explore or answer. Beware scientists’ hubris*
2. What Is God Like? – *In A World with Evil?*
  - a. *God’s inanimate creation is morally neutral*
  - b. *God loved us & planned to suffer for us before the foundation of the World*
  - c. *God will sort things out in the end*
3. How Can I Find God? – *When I Feel God’s Absence?*
  - a. *Vibrant Committed Christians experience times of God’s absence (M. Teresa; “dark night of the soul”)*
  - b. *Listen – God is speaking . . .*
    - i. *In Creation (Ps.19)*
    - ii. *In the Bible*
  - c. *God’s Passion is To Be Close (not just “out there”)*

**GOD’S CLOSENESS IN SCRIPTURE**

**OLD TESTAMENT**

i. *Tabernacle/temple/people*

Deuteronomy 1 -- <sup>30</sup>*The Lord your God, who goes before you*, is the one who will fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your very eyes, <sup>31</sup>and in the wilderness, where you saw how *the Lord your God carried you*, just as one carries a child, all the way that you traveled until you reached this place.

**Footprints** – *a little sentimental . . . but Biblical*

One night I had a dream...  
I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord, and across the sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand;  
One belonged to me, and the other to the Lord.  
When the last scene of my life flashed before us, I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
-- I noticed that many times along the path of my life, there was only one set of footprints.  
-- I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life. This really bothered me, and I questioned the Lord about it.  
*“Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, You would walk with me all the way; But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why in times when I needed you the most, you should leave me.*  
The Lord replied,  
*“My precious, precious child. I love you, and I would never, never leave you during your times of trial and suffering. **When you saw only one set of footprints, It was then that I carried you.**”*

**NEW TESTAMENT**

**Jesus . . . God in Jesus**

**Matthew 1<sup>23</sup> -- God is Close/Present in Jesus**

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” -- which means, **“God is with us.”**

**Matthew 18:20 -- Jesus is where his people are**

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, **I am there among them.**”

**Matthew 28:19-20 -- Jesus is with us when we serve**

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And **remember, I am with you always**, to the end of the age.”

**Matthew 25:40** “What you did to the least of these **you did for me**”

**Jesus is the New Temple – The Place Where We “Find” God**

John 2:19-21

19Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

20The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” 21But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

Luke 17 (The Grateful Samaritan)

<sup>11</sup>On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee.

<sup>12</sup>As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance,  
<sup>13</sup>they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”  
<sup>14</sup>When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”  
And as they went, they were made clean.  
<sup>15</sup>Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God  
with a loud voice. <sup>16</sup>He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he  
was a Samaritan.  
<sup>17</sup>Then Jesus asked, “*Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where  
are they?*” <sup>18</sup>*Was none of them found to return and give praise to God*  
*except this foreigner?”*  
<sup>19</sup>Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made  
you well.”

### **1 Corinthians 3.16, 17 – The Church as the New Temple**

Do you not know that **you all (the church) are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you**? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.

### **1 Corinthians 6.19 – Our Lives as the New Temple**

Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit** within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?

## **Q. WHY IS THIS “3<sup>rd</sup>” QUESTION – “How Can I find God?” SO IMPORTANT?**

### **A. It’s the fundamental question (“problematic”) of all of Scripture**

#### **Genesis 3** -- After eating the fruit . . . Adam and Eve

<sup>8</sup>heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>*But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”*

**Not: Where *is* God?**

**But: Where *are* we?**

<sup>23</sup>The LORD God sent Adam forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup>He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

## **WHERE ARE WE?**

**Answer: Locked Outside Eden/God’s Presence!!**

#### **Isaiah 59:1-2**

The Lord’s hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

Rather, *your iniquities have been barriers/made a separation between you and your God*, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

#### **Romans 3:23**

For all have sinned and **fallen short of *the glory of God***  
*= lack the presence of God*

### **WHERE DOES GOD BRING US BY FAITH IN JESUS?**

#### **Romans 5:1-2**

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have **obtained access** to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in **our hope of sharing *the glory of God***

#### **Romans 8:1, 14-16, 31-32, 38-39**

<sup>1</sup>There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus  
<sup>38</sup>For **I am convinced that** neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

## **AND IN THE END**

#### **Revelation 21:3, 22**

<sup>3</sup>and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, *the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them*, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them.

<sup>22</sup>But I saw no temple in the city, because *the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

## **SO GOD WANTS US TO HAVE CONFIDENCE in His LOVE and CLOSENESS**

#### **1 John 5:13**

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **so that you may know** that you have eternal life.

#### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>19</sup>since we have **confidence** to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God,  
<sup>22</sup>**let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith,**

#### **Hebrews 6.11**

We want each one of you to show the same diligence so as to **realize the full assurance of hope** to the very end

## 2 Timothy 1.12 (Paul)

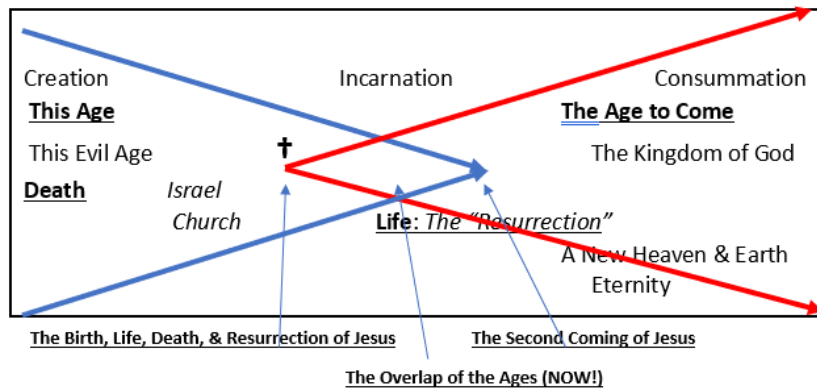
I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and ***I am sure*** that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.

## John 10 (Jesus)

27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. ***No one will snatch them out of my hand***

**BUT WE'RE NOT IN HEAVEN YET!! -- Struggle is a part of life**

### THE TWO AGES OF ANCIENT JUDAISM



SO . . . this means **STRUGGLE . . FOR ALL CHRISTIANS . .**

## STRUGGLE -- True for Jesus

In The desert (Matthew 4:1-11)

In the Garden (Matthew 26:36ff)

On the cross (Matthew 27:46; Psalm 22)

Psalm 22

<sup>1</sup>My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

<sup>2</sup>O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

### Really Important (both Jesus & Job)

*Jesus was sinless*

*We cannot say that "dark times" or "unanswered prayer"  
or a sense of distance from God  
are always punishments for sin  
or a sign of the withdrawal of God's love*

## STRUGGLE -- True for Us too

### The Human Struggle -- Galatians 5:17

The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit,  
and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh,  
for these are opposed to each other,  
to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

### The Struggle with Evil – Ephesians 6

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, ***so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*** <sup>12</sup> ***For our<sup>[b]</sup> struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*** <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm

### The Impact of Lack of Preparedness for Struggle – Matthew 13:20-21

<sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and ***immediately receives it with joy;*** <sup>21</sup> ***yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while,*** and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.

### The Impact of Poor Choices -- Matthew 13:22

<sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but ***the cares of the world and the lure of wealth*** choke the word, and it yields nothing.

### The Impact of Unconfessed Sin

#### Psalm 32:3-5

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin

#### 1 John 1:6-8

<sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; <sup>7</sup> but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

## The Impact of Jesus' Passion for our Sanctification/renewal

### John 15:1-2

<sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. **Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.**

### Hebrews 12

4In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children— "**My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished by him;**

**6for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.**"

12Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. 14Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord

## DON'T WE HAVE TO BE PERFECTLY OBEDIENT? What if we fail?

### 1 John 2:3-5

<sup>3</sup>Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. <sup>4</sup>Whoever says, "I have come to know him," but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist;

### Hebrews 10

<sup>26</sup>For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. . . . <sup>31</sup>It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

### Matthew 7:21-23

<sup>21</sup>"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' <sup>23</sup>Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'

## **SO HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THESE SCARY PASSAGES?**

### **DOES OUR SIN BOTHER US?**

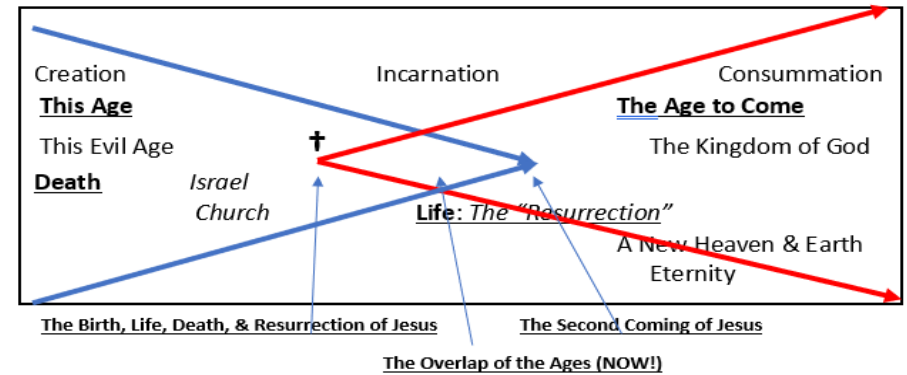
. . . perfection is NOT possible this side of heaven: Direction not Destination  
**Think "AA" recovery . . . NO MORE HIDING or DENIAL**

### 1 John 1:8-10

<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

## Psalm 139:23-24

23Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.  
24See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting



## **REMEMBER God Loves to Use people who are "Failures"**

### **PRODIGAL SON -- Luke 15:11-32**

### **SIMON PETER -- John 21:15-17**

<sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."  
<sup>16</sup>A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."  
<sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

### **PAUL -- 1 Timothy 1:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, **13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.** But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup> and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.** <sup>16</sup> But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

## KING DAVID – Confession After Adultery -- Psalm 51

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

## JONAH – Jonah 2

<sup>1</sup>The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time

## 2. REMEMBER (last week) God’s passion is to be close, despite our sin

### Romans 5:1-2

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in **our hope of sharing *the glory of God***

### Romans 8:1, 14-16, 31-32, 38-39

<sup>1</sup>There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that **we are children of God.**

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** <sup>32</sup>He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

<sup>38</sup>For **I am convinced that** neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

## John 3:16

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that ***everyone who believes*** in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

### The essence of belief/faith

Is Not “gritting our teeth trying hard to believe”  
But begins by setting our attention on God

### Remember Peter walking on Water?

#### Matthew 14

<sup>25</sup>And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea.

<sup>28</sup>Peter said, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” <sup>29</sup>Jesus said, “Come.”

So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. **<sup>30</sup>But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!”**

<sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

## 3. REMEMBER: To Focus on Who God is and What God has done for us

### Galatians 4:4-6; 3:2

<sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, **God sent his Son**, born of a woman, born under the law, **in order to redeem** those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

### Colossians 2:13-14

<sup>13</sup>**When you were dead in trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made you alive** together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses,

<sup>14</sup>erasing **the record that stood against us** with its legal demands.

**He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.**

### Ephesians 2

#### GOD AS PARENT

#### Romans 8:15-16

<sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. **When we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.**

#### Galatians 4:6

<sup>6</sup>And because you are children, **God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”**

### HOPE

#### Romans 5:5

<sup>5</sup>hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us

#### Romans 15:13

<sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.