



***TOWARD  
THE MARK***

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE  
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”  
PHILIPPIANS 3:14***

*A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS  
OF ALL AGES*

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Dear Reader,

**“They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Hebrews 1:11-12).**

Years come and go; time and circumstances change. But He remains “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Conditions may possibly change outwardly, and “difficult times” characterize these closing days where we see the collapse of the moral condition of professing Christianity, but He changes not. And hence the Second Epistle to Timothy, foretelling as it does these very days, presents to us Christ Himself as the foundation Who stands steady, whatever may come. “Remember,” it tells us, “Jesus Christ...raised from the dead.” He remains as the HEAD, let us hold fast to Him; as LORD, let us obey His word; as the only CENTER of gathering, let us gather to His all-sufficient Name; as the still REJECTED CHRIST, let us humbly cleave to Him and His cross. Let us not forget our heavenly calling and that this world with all its fake attractions is not our home. Let us feed on Him daily as we read His Word in order that we may display His life and characteristics in this present evil world. Let us remember that He “remaineth” in view of a ruined creation and He is “the bright and morning star” of His church. He is our all-sufficiency—our resource, our center today as at all times. He is “the same” in the days of Laodicea as He was in those of Ephesus. He is God’s “Amen” today, maintaining, in undiminished power, all the counsel and purpose of God, in spite of the fearful drop from the bright apostolic period to the low conditions of our day. Let us remember that He is the soon-coming BRIDEGROOM, let our hearts, in all the glowing affections of a faithful bride cry, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Dear Friends,

Our hearts are full of thanksgiving to the Lord who is the Faithful and True for His good hand upon us in the past years. To you, dear reader, who is praying for *Toward the Mark* and to those who are helping in producing this exercise, you are known by the Lord and He is the reward of your quiet labor of love.

It is our prayer that the Lord will use *Toward the Mark* to help you as you face the daily challenges of school or work, as we are dependent on Him to feed and strengthen His people. **Thank you for your overwhelming response and encouragement to this exercise. Please keep us in prayers.**

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

*Emil S. Nashed*

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# TOWARD THE MARK

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***Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or the J.N. Darby translation.***

MILK

*"The truth shall make you free"*

ZECHARIAH

THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE

PART 1—CHAPTERS 1 AND 2

The object of this series is to develop some of the major features, themes, and trends of the book of the prophet Zechariah.

There are those who claim that the study of prophecy in the Old Testament is merely academic because it doesn't directly concern the Christian church, or the present dispensation. But matters dealt with in the Word of God are for the glory of Christ, and for the fulfillment of the will of God. They must, necessarily, be of interest and concern to those who love the Lord Jesus.

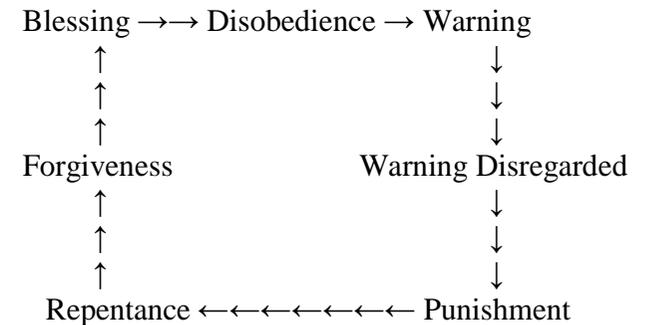
Zechariah had received a revelation from God. This aroused his interest and engaged his attention. These exercises were for his own blessing, to fit him for his service, and also for the ultimate spiritual blessing of those amongst whom he served God.

Old Testament prophets were very carefully selected, with their names, their lives, their service all characteristic of the work they had to do. In the Bible, names are very often characteristic of the person. Zechariah was the son of Berachiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet. Here we have three successive godly generations. Iddo means "the appointed time." Berechiah means "Jehovah will surely bless." Zechariah means "Jehovah will remember." This combination gives the overall message. At the appointed time, Jehovah will remember His people, and He will surely bless them. God's plans will not be frustrated, either by the opposition of His enemies or even by the disobedience of His own people. Israel, as a nation, had to learn that lesson.

Zechariah was not only a prophet. He was also a priest. He was ideal for the job he had to do.

Verses 3–6 of chapter 1 give us an important outline. The prophet exhorts the godly minority to examine the history of the nation. There is a certain, continuing, repetitive, cyclical succession of attitudes and events. The cycle properly begins with God choosing to bless His people. He does so. Before very long, the nation is disobedient to their God Who has blessed them in a wonderful way. As a result, God raises up a prophet to warn the nation of the need to mend their ways.

Sadly, the mass of the nation ignore the warnings given. God called other prophets. They intensify the warning, but with little effect. Inevitably, the threatened punishment comes. God disciplines the nation, not only for going astray, but because, being warned of the error of their ways, they had refused to abandon their disobedience and idolatry. There is eventually a measure of repentance in a godly minority who are seeking to be true to their God. Their faithfulness is rewarded. God is pleased to lift the discipline for the moment. Having been restored to a measure of communion with their God, the blessing that God in His wonderful grace grants to them is even better than what they had enjoyed before. But, before long, the cycle begins again, as shown in the illustration.



In many cases in the nation's history, repentance is induced in at least some of the Lord's people by giving them, through the

words of a prophet, a long-term view of what God has had in mind for them. The principle is very much in line with Proverbs 4:25, "Let thine eye look right on." There's always spiritual blessing in getting things happening at the present time in proper perspective by looking forward to see what God has in mind. Zechariah does that. In telling them what is going to happen in the future, as a result of the grace of God, repentance is produced, and a measure of restoration given.

The background of the prophecy was the return from Babylon of a godly remnant, a small proportion of the nation. They had responded to the permissive decree, issued by Cyrus the Persian, to return to Jerusalem. This is a preview of a greater opportunity; a greater return; a greater prosperity and peace, than the remnant of Zechariah's day could ever know. This will occur when the Lord Jesus Christ appears in power and great glory. Then, and only then, will true peace and true prosperity be enjoyed by the nation.

The opening message, verses 2 to 6, is a call to repentance. The prophet says: "Learn the lesson of history. Your fathers have been subjugated to the gentile powers because of their disobedience to God. Repent. Cast yourselves on the mercy of God. There is no other way back to God."

Then from the beginning of verse 7 of chapter 1 to the end of chapter 2 we are given the record of three visions given to Zechariah. The first vision is of the man among the myrtle trees. The second vision includes the horns and the carpenters at the end of chapter one. Thirdly, in chapter 2, the man with the measuring line.

First, the man among the myrtle trees. The lesson is plain. When His earthly people go astray, God uses the Gentile nations to discipline His people. Israel, who should be at the head of the nations, is subjugated to one Gentile nation after another. They bitterly resented this. It was certainly a disgrace to them. Even more, it is a dishonor to Jehovah, their God. That

is the real disgrace. But these Gentile powers had gone far further in this disciplinary exercise than God had intended. He will take them to account for that. The Jews had been subjugated because of their disobedience. Gentiles were allowed to be on top for the moment, but they are accountable to God for what they did.

The second vision involves the horns and the carpenters. Horns are symbolic of power. In verses 18 and 19 of chapter 1, he says, "Behold four horns." What did he mean? These are the four Gentile nations that had and would scatter Judah and destroy Jerusalem. God says, "This is not the first time, and it won't be the last." Taking a panoramic view of the history of the Gentile nations, first one, then another and another and another; there will eventually have been four Gentile nations who have been brought in successively by God in a disciplinary way, to subjugate His earthly people.

Babylon had come and gone. The Medes and the Persians were in power at the time. They would be succeeded by the Greeks, then the Romans, and eventually by the revived Roman Empire. Here Zechariah surveys the whole thing. His eye looks right on. He is holding this up as a warning of necessary discipline, but ultimately, as a promise of peace and blessing.

What are these carpenters then who will throw out these Gentiles? Evidently powers that are brought in which will successively deal with the four horns. He says first a horn, then a carpenter; then a horn, and then a carpenter, and so on. The second horn was also the first carpenter, for certainly it was Darius the Mede who conquered Babylon. Certainly it was Alexander the Great of Greece who conquered Persia, and it was certainly the Romans who brought about the downfall of this Grecian Empire. This takes us on to the downfall of the final form of the Roman Empire, which will be brought about by the personal intervention of God Himself in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, when He appears in

power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). So, it would be consistent with this to take the four horns to be the four Gentile world empires, and the four carpenters as the last three of those empires and finally the Lord Jesus Christ personally. At each stage God brings in another power to limit the previous power. He will only allow them to go so far and no further.

In chapter 2, we read about the man with the measuring line. It is a great comfort to suffering saints in any dispensation to realize that God has His overall plan. Man cannot negate it. What God has decreed will ultimately be brought to pass. God reserves to Himself the ultimate, overall control. He is the One depicted as the man with the measuring line. God's plans will not be thwarted.

Zechariah says, in effect, "Let thine eye look right on." God will finally intervene in the Person of His Son, who will exercise due retribution on the enemies of God and His people. Having put down all enemies He will introduce His Kingdom. Then comes in "that day" which God has looked forward to for so long. It looks on to what Zechariah calls "that day" (2:11), the glorious day when the Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, ushers in His Kingdom. Not until then will the world will be ruled, administered, in righteousness, by God's appointed man (Acts 17:31). "After the glory" (2:8), that is, after His appearing, there will be a kingdom of peace, prosperity, and glory that this world will never have seen, the culmination of God's ways on earth, when all these long term prophecies given in the time of Zechariah will be fulfilled literally.

These partial repentances, partial recoveries, partial restorations, look on to the time when there shall be national repentance, national deliverance, national elevation, national blessing.

**Ernie Brown**

## MEAT

*"Sanctify them by the truth"*

## "THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS

### CHRIST"

Acts 7:55-60

These verses bring the cross pointedly before the soul. Many have read them and have never seen it; many read them still and do not see it. There are two new facts found here, which the cross and the cross alone can explain. The glory of God and the inability of man on earth even to look on it are old facts; a man in the glory of God, there too as alive out of death, the death by which He glorified God and made atonement for sin, and a man on earth having in consequence a title and a capacity to look at it steadfastly, are the new things found here.

If we turn to Isaiah 6, there the glory of God carried terror and conviction and self-judgment into the breast of a real prophet of God: verse 5, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." As if he said, prophet and people are exposed before Him, and I have no standing ground; and because of what he is, a provision is made as in verses 6-7. Again the same with Ezekiel, as he tells us in chapter 1 of his prophecy, and after describing it says in verse 28, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." There is no sense of a title whatever, he falls down on his face, he cannot stand, there is no place for him to stand on, therefore his falling on his face only expresses his moral standing or condition.

I turn to Daniel and I find the same with him, "a man greatly beloved" as he was, yet when he saw, he tells us, "there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in

me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words; and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And behold an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands” (Daniel 10:7–10).

Is not this all very striking? Each of these servants of God—Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel—in themselves declaring their unfitness, as well as their sense of it, when in the presence of the glory of God; and let me draw especial attention to this one point: with each and all of them, it is not a question for an instant of what they had done, but of what they were, and this as told out to themselves by the glory of God.

Now, in striking contrast with all this, I find in Acts 7 that Stephen, not overtaken or surprised by the glory of God, so that he falls on his face and says, “woe is me,” but full of the Holy Ghost, he himself looks up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; there is no fear or terror, either with regard to what he sees in heaven, or to what is going on round about him on earth! What a wonderful sight, a poor weak lonely man as he is, able to look steadfastly at the glory of God, and able patiently to endure the murderous hatred of men.

Will you, my reader, say wherein Stephen’s power consists as compared with the inability of the prophets of old? One word will answer the question, namely, the CROSS—that Jesus whom Stephen saw in the glory of God, had on the cross borne all the wrath of God against sin, and had so fully and perfectly glorified God, that God had glorified Him; He Himself had said so, “If God be glorified in him, God shall glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him” (John 13:32). And scripture now bears testimony to the fact, namely, “raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father” (Romans 6:4); “God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory” (1 Peter 1:21). Stephen sees in the glory of God then, his Savior; He,

that same Blessed One, who had been on the cross bearing the judgment, and in that hour had been forsaken of God, is now seen by Stephen in the glory of God; the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ was that by which Stephen had a righteous title to look at what could but repel previous to the death of Christ; and it was from Jesus glorified that blessed Spirit came down, who now turned Stephen’s eye up. Such then is the divine fullness of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who once was there crucified by man now lives in power, glorified out of the place He took as the substitute of His people, and they have in virtue of His death a righteous title, and through the Holy Ghost a power to look up steadfastly into heaven.

The Person of the Christ,  
Enfolding every grace;  
Once slain, but now alive again,  
In heaven demands our praise.

Oh fix our earnest gaze,  
So wholly, Lord, on Thee;  
That with thy beauty occupied,  
We elsewhere none may see.

**WTT**

### **Search the Scriptures!**

1. Who was the first daughter mentioned by name in the Bible?
2. Who was the first Judge of Israel?

3. Who was the first apostle to be martyred?

### EXERCISE

*"Exercise thyself unto piety"*

## SOCIAL MEDIA!

### Q&A

## SOME HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIANS!

### **1. Are you seeking to glorify God through social media?**

*"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).*

The foundational question, "Are you seeking to glorify God?" can be addressed to any situation in life because we were created to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7). When we stray from our life's God-given purpose, we quickly fall away from where God wants us to be.

The following questions probe specific ways that we can glorify God through social media and will be a good measure of how your social media use is helping/hindering your spiritual growth and purpose to glorify God.

### **2. Can social media lead you into sin?**

*"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:29).*

Social media is itself a morally neutral thing, neither inherently good nor bad. But when put in the hands of sinful human beings, it should be no surprise that it can be used for a host of sinful behaviors: bullying, sinful relationships, sexual perversion, worldly ideas, and allowing yourself to be influenced by bad influences.

Like question #1, this is a foundational question that will be in the background of questions 3–15. There are really only two honest

answers to this question: Yes and Maybe (or sometimes). Pray that God would reveal your sins and the idols that may exist or be fed through social media, and then pray for the grace and power to repent from that sin. That may mean removing friends or changing who you follow, but you can be sure of this: you will never regret any sacrifice made for the Lord.

### **3. Does your speech build up or tear down?**

*"Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so" (James 3:10).*

Social media is rampant with gossip, bullying, pessimism, and complaining. Instead of being just like the world, be a light in the world by using your words to build others up. Think about what situations or topics might tempt you to speak negatively, and be on your guard when a friend might post something that pushes one of your buttons.

Before you post, pray the prayer the psalmist prayed in Psalm 19:14: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."

### **4. Do people see the light of Christ in you based on what you post?**

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).*

The phenomenon of social media is a rare and powerful thing in today's world. Never before could you so easily keep in touch with people you have met over the course of your whole life around the whole world!

It presents a unique opportunity to let your light shine before others and use it as a ministry. With your updates, you are able to show people the hope that you have in Jesus Christ, and how someone transformed by the gospel lives and thinks. You are also able to challenge and encourage your online connections to believe in Christ and follow Him. Don't forget the awesome opportunity you have to proclaim to the world the unsearchable riches of Christ!

## **5. Is social media your master?**

*“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12).*

It can be easy to become a slave to the beeping of your phone or computer and always be checking your notifications online. Do you really need to check each notification, or can you check a few times throughout the day? Don't let the beep control you.

Also, if you have a few extra minutes throughout your day, do you always pull out your phone to check social media instead of reading Scripture, praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17), or dare I say, letting your mind rest from technology?

“The internet is a poor master, but a useful servant” (Adrian Warnock).

## **6. Does your use of social media help you redeem the time that God has given you?**

*“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).*

Let's be honest: some social media sites act as a black hole—sucking up our time and attention like a powerful, mind-numbing vacuum. It can be easy, or even normal, to just go on Facebook or Pinterest to “check one thing” and to stay on for an hour or longer.

What else could you have done with that hour? Was that making the best use of the short life God has given you?

## **7. Does your use of social media help you renew your mind in God's truth like you should?**

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).*

God can use little moments we give to Him throughout our day for our growth. This can include time on social media. You can use your

Facebook and Twitter streams to grow your faith by following people and organizations that honor God. I have sought to develop the discipline to stop and read bits of Scripture whenever I see it posted. This helps me remember that everything else posted is of very limited importance, but the Word of God has eternal importance in the world and my life (1 Peter 1:24–25).

## **8. Do you use social media as a platform to complain?**

*“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14–15).*

The apostle Paul sure knew there were things to complain about in this fallen world and yet he still tells us in Philippians 2 to “do all things without grumbling or disputing.” Some turn to social media to complain, but God's will for His children is that they give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Which characterizes you: complaining or giving thanks?

## **9. Do you use social media for unprofitable arguments?**

*“A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart” (Proverbs 18:2).*

There is no shortage of social media arguments about politics, sports, religion, you name it! While some conversations can be profitable, many others can be a waste of time and energy (see Proverbs 18:2 above).

Instead of “feeding the trolls” (that is, answering fools only interested in expressing their opinions), invest your time and energy into something useful and profitable.

## **10. Do you value social media interactions more than real-life relationships?**

*“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).*

God made us for relationships. Increasingly today, these relationships can take place through digital technology and can make people less social in real life. So much for social media!

Instead of merely “liking” a picture of someone’s new shoes or writing a witty comment on a status, invest in real relationships by having meaningful conversations. A “Like” or a “Poke” isn’t the same thing as a message that shows you really care about someone. Take the extra step by letting people important to you know that you care about them and your relationship. Or take an even greater extra step and actually get together with your friend face-to-face!

### **11. Does social media make you a healthier and more productive person?**

*“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5).*

As if the time-sucking nature of social media isn’t enough, social media causes some people to have a shorter attention span, lose sleep, and can even lead to depression. Is that you?

God desires that we honor God with not only our body, but our entire being. Don’t let social media suck away your ability to follow that command.

### **12. Do you have any relationships through social media that you should cut off?**

*“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits” (1 Corinthians 15:33).*

Social networks like Facebook and Twitter make it easy to connect with everyone you’ve ever known in your whole life—for better or for worse. Some of our connections can discourage us in our faith or lure us into sin. Social networks can be a gateway for gossip, bullying, and rekindling unhealthy relationships. Many divorces today are caused by discontented spouses rekindling old flames via Facebook.

Don’t let this happen to you. Exercise godly wisdom and cut off “bad company” that could corrupt your good morals.

### **13. Does social media help you be content?**

*“Now godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6).*

Social media can be a contentment killer. You see someone post a new pair of shoes—you automatically want a new pair and think your old pair isn’t good enough. You see a friend share about a great vacation he took and you automatically think you need to book a vacation yourself.

Social media can add fuel to the fire of covetousness and insecurity because we so often compare ourselves to others. We should be concerned with what God thinks of us, not man, and follow what God values, not what man values. Have you ever thought that your friend posting pictures of new shoes or information about their vacation might not be content?

The secret to contentment is not having everything you want but being thankful and satisfied with what you have. A discontented heart is never satisfied but has a continual lust for more (Ephesians 4:19). The apostle Paul said that he learned to be content in every situation: hunger, abundance, and need (Philippians 4:11–13). May we learn to do the same.

### **14. Do you use social media to boost your ego and feel good about yourself?**

*“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).*

One lie that social media subtly tells us is that you only have value if people follow you or like your photos. If your mood depends on the number of “Likes” or “Retweets” your status or photo receives, that means you care too much about gaining the approval of man.

Don’t fall into that trap! While there may be some benefit to building a following and developing relationships on social media, you may find building your mood and self-esteem upon the shaky foundation of Instagram and Twitter not as satisfying as you may think.

Instead of treasuring up worldly things like Twitter follows or Facebook friends, store up for yourself treasures in heaven that will have eternal value. This will also help you escape the people-pleasing trap that is so common on social networks.

## 15. Do you use social media to hide?

*“Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain” (Proverbs 25:14).*

Have you ever known someone who seems like the coolest person online but is a radically different person in real life? They can have cool Instagram pictures, post status updates every five minutes, and have a thousand friends on Facebook, and be a very different person in real life.

Unfortunately, social media can act as a mask, hiding our true identity and causing others to look at us differently than we really are. The root of the issue is pride. We want people to think we are cool and have it all together. Instead of basing our decisions on what people think, we should base decisions on what God thinks.

Trying to exalt yourself on social media will only leave you disappointed and at odds with God (James 4:6). Seeking to honor God by being humble before Him is what truly pleases Him.

*“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10).*

**Remember dear Christian: “whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”**

### *Answers to Scripture search!*

1. Naamah, daughter of Lamech (Genesis 4:22)
2. Othniel (Judges 3:9)
3. James (Acts 12:1–2)

## REST

*“Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?”*

## WHO GLORIES IN TRIBULATION?

*“We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us” (Romans 5:3–5).*

Who glories in tribulation? Most of would us would run miles to escape it; yet if we know the grace in which we stand, and if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us, and if we know the end to be secured by the tribulation, we shall glory in it. The One who loves us has supreme control of all things; and if so, what then? Well, we reason, if He permits tribulation it must be for our good and blessing and in view of what is to come. Therefore we will go through it with Him.

R.C. Trench in his “Study of Words” has a very interesting explanation of the word tribulation. He says, “The word is derived from the Latin *tribulum*, which was the threshing instrument or roller whereby the farmer separated the corn from the husks; and the *tribulatio* in its primary significance was the act of separation. But some Latin writer of the Christian church appropriated the word and image for the setting forth of a higher truth; sorrow, distress, and adversity being the appointed means for separating in men of whatever in them is light, trivial and poor from the solid and the true; the chaff from the wheat.”

No figure could be more striking and nothing could be more encouraging for us than the thought that tribulation is to get rid of the chaff that is in us that the wheat may remain. It is evidently necessary, and we need not fear. We shall not be the losers in any way for we are assured that if we are in God's hands, "yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (Amos 9:9).

Tribulation tests the metal of the soul, it does more, it tempers it, as steel is tempered, and it works endurance in us, and "Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12).

Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. As we endure in tribulation we come to an experimental knowledge of ourselves, and of God's way with us, and in subjection to His holy will we have the compensating grace that He pours into our souls. Moreover we begin to see the end He has in view. We are not like Job was, for he, poor man, went through his tribulation without knowing the "why" of it; but we, who have heard of his patience, have also seen the end of the Lord. He has not kept us in ignorance as to our destiny. He has predestined us to be "conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

Tribulation purges the soul from earthly-mindedness; and unseen, eternal things become more real to us; hope becomes strong. Our hope will not disappoint us, for we know the love that has promised and prepared the glory yet to come. We are assured of this by the indwelling Spirit, who is the Earnest of the glory, and who makes the love of God real to us now in the midst of tribulation.

Really hope lies behind this rejoicing in tribulation: the ultimate, the goal, becomes great before our eyes and we measure the immediate in the light of it. It was this that Paul

meant when he wrote, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17–18). If the hope that faith awakens in the heart were not in a man he could not rejoice in tribulation; to be in tribulation without hope would be a miserable experience. Faith and hope and love go together and they grow and develop in the soul as we go through tribulation with God.

This hope that makes not ashamed and carries the Christian triumphantly through all his tribulation is not like the "hope that springs eternal in the human breast" and that withers and perishes at the breath of death; it is directed towards God and His Word, it is sure and certain, with a sure anchorage. The word has taken on the meaning of uncertainty in human language, for as likely as not, the best hopes in this life end in disappointment. But the Christian hope is something guaranteed to him by the immutable Word of God, which he does not yet possess. He is a child of God, an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ Jesus, and the heirs *must* come into the inheritance; meanwhile, *he knows* that all things—every stroke of the tribulum—works together in God's ways with him for good. Just as surely as he will be conformed to the image of God's Son, so now all these things, while he waits for that glorious consummation, are working to a moral conformity to Christ now, they are removing the chaff that the pure grain may abide. Or to use the figure from the sculptor's studio, "As the stone wastes the image appears."

Let us dwell more upon the coming glories, and sing about them more, and turn the attention of our brethren in the Lord towards them, and more continually "look sunward, and with faces golden, speak to each other softly of our hope."

**J.T. Mawson**

## THE CROWD MAY BE WRONG!

Popular opinion is not always correct, especially in regards to man's relationship with God.

- People said that Christopher Columbus would sail off the edge of the earth, but in 1492 he discovered America.
- People laughed at the Wright brothers' attempts to create a flying machine, but in 1903 they flew the first airplane.
- Albert Einstein's teachers failed him in school, but he went on to be the most famous scientist of the twentieth century.
- Musicians and critics booed the music of Richard Wagner, but his compositions transformed the music world.
- Westinghouse was called a fool for daring to stop a train with wind, but today his airbrakes are used the world over.
- People called Abraham Lincoln a country bumpkin, but he went on to become one of our most respected presidents.

**We smile at the crowd's failure to appreciate something new or different. But being wrong can be a serious problem when it comes to our eternal destiny. Too much is at stake.**

**Because you and I have sinned against God and man, we deserve God's punishment. The Bible says that "the wages of sin is death," eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23a).**

**But God offers us "eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23b). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).**

**You can be wrong about many things, but you dare not be wrong about Christ. Through faith in Him you can be saved just as you are. Your sins can be forgiven and the peace of God can fill your life: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).**

**Whom will you choose? The crowd or Christ?**