



***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,

**“Pray without ceasing”** (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

This sounds like an extreme statement—one that needs a good deal of explaining away. But, dear Christian, you know that our needs are constant, so why should the expression of those needs be less constant? Prayer expresses our sense of dependence upon God, and our faith in Him. We will be like the men of this world if we do not pray. How can we grow in grace and holiness without prayer? For sin tempts us, the world allures us, and Satan attacks us. Prayer brings God in: without Him our boasted strength is worse than useless. If we realized these things would we not be more constant, more earnest in prayer? Life is very busy and there is little time to enter into the closet to have time with our Father at the beginning of the day, and at night we are so weary that sleeping takes over; then we wonder why we are not a reflection of our Lord Jesus at school, work and at home.

Dear Christian, let us remember how the Lord, our example, was often found in prayer; He was the dependent man. Let us cultivate a habit of “praying in the Holy Spirit.” Have we deep needs, decisions to make, action to take and longing desires about which we have not spoken to God as we should? The limitation is not in God, but in ourselves. The Lord Jesus loves us, He gave himself for us, He is in heaven for us and He care for us more than we ever think.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). May we be awakened to our great need for prayer.

Our prayer is that the Lord will use this issue of Toward the Mark to help you grow and become Christ-like and be established. Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement. We love hearing from all of you. Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on Toward the Mark!

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

### Part Four: Chapters 12–14

#### Chapter 12

"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced" (v. 10).

This prophecy is all future, referring to events that will occur "IN THAT DAY" (vv. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11).

The Climactic Confrontation (vv. 1–3).

#### Verse 1: The Burden

Messiah has long borne the heavy burden on behalf of Israel (Isaiah 53:4). It must be borne in spirit by the nation itself before it can enter into the blessing that God has decreed for it. But first the nation, which rejected Christ and will accept Antichrist, must plumb the depths of the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:1–9).

#### Israel

God has the whole nation in view now, not just Jerusalem and Judah.

Man is the highest point of God's creation on earth. The spirit is the highest point of man; the part where man's sinful rebellion against God is most sadly manifested and reaches its climax.

Verse 2: Jehovah takes complete control.

Jerusalem is the focal point of God's ways on earth. All Gentile nations will come against it to swallow it up. They will say, "We've had enough of this difficult, obstinate, infuriating nation. Let us deal with it once and for all." But they will be

caused to tremble in fear. Judah and Jerusalem will be the immediate objects of the siege, but will also be the "burdensome stone" by which the hostile nations from the South, North and the East will be crushed. Those from the West will have been dealt with previously when the Beast and Antichrist are removed summarily at the Appearing. They will have played a special role, against Judah, as such, not all Israel, and will suffer a special judgment.

Jehovah delivers His people (vv.4–9).

#### Verse 4: "In that day"

The discipline of Jehovah on His disobedient people will have been fully expended. The roles will now be reversed. God will now judge the nations at Jerusalem. They will be "astonished" startled, petrified (cf. Isaiah 52:15). They will suffer judicial blindness at the hand of God.

#### Verses 5–6: Governors of Judah

The people of God are not completely passive at this stage of their deliverance. After the Appearing, Messiah will raise up, as leaders, but subordinate to Him, those whom He has specially fitted to take part in the vanquishing of the enemy.

#### Verse 6: "wood" and "sheaf"

Ready for burning, in judgment (cf. the tares in Matthew 13:30). Jerusalem will be restored to "her own place", which God has always had in mind for her—the hub of activities on earth, first in (purging) judgment (1 Peter 4:17), then in blessing.

Verses 7–9. The challenge cannot be ignored. Jehovah takes account of the remnant and delivers them first. Without His personal intervention their doom is inevitable and imminent. He says, "I will...destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

The revelation of Messiah to the delivered remnant, and the repentance produced (vv. 10–14).

Verse 10: spirit of (1) grace (pure divine favour) and (2) (dependent) supplication

All thought of deserving anything will have been abandoned. The grace that wrought their deliverance will have also wrought in their hearts.

“They shall look on me, whom they have pierced.”

Grace shows them Him Whom they had pierced. “They shall mourn” (repent). The cry of distress (for themselves) becomes a cry of repentance (for their sins). Deliverance in their circumstances gives them time to reflect on the reason for the situation from which they had been delivered.

All their enemies, The Beast, Antichrist, the Nations, particularly the King of the North, have now been dealt with. No fear of subjugation, disciplinary judgment or punishment comes in to impair the character and reality of their sorrow (Isaiah 53:1–6). They now have eyes to see. They now accept their responsibility and mourn for their part in it. They now say “we” not “they”.

As for His Only Son, His Firstborn (cf. Genesis 22).

They will have deep sorrow that the One Who was now the object of their love and devotion had been so abused.

They shall mourn

The repentance is comprehensive, complete, thorough. They must and shall mourn (afflict themselves) as (1) Individuals, (2) Families, (3) A Nation. There could be no Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23) without first The Great Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).

National Repentance leads to National Blessing and Celebration.

Zechariah 12:10–14 leads to Zechariah 14:8–21.

They were unwilling and rejected Him in The Day of His Poverty (Psalm 109:21 – 31).

They are still unwilling now in The Day of His Patience (Psalm 110:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:5).

They shall be willing in The Day of His Power (Psalm 110:3).

Zechariah chapter 13

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd” (v. 7).

Verses 1–5: The Basis of all Justice and Blessing.

The deep, true repentance detailed in chapter 12:10–14 leads to the revelation of God’s work in them and for them in chapter 13.

The justice of God demands that sins are fully dealt with once and for all. This necessitates judicial cleansing, judicial expiation, by the blood of Christ, and gives a clear judicial standing before a righteous God we could never achieve for ourselves (1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:14). We enter into the good of this by faith (Romans 5:1).

But that, in itself, is not sufficient. It is not only what we have done (our sins) that must be dealt with, but also what we are. Sin has corrupted our very nature. Wherever true repentance exists, a fountain is available to deal with this moral uncleanness. This is moral purification by the water of the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit of God, conferring a new nature and a moral state we could never earn or deserve. It relates to what we are, rather than what we have done. It is complete moral cleansing, giving us the capacity to live a new life well pleasing to God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is foretold in Ezekiel 36:22–32 and made plain by the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3:1–8. What is necessary for us Christians as individuals now will be just as essential for Israel as a nation when they are brought to God by national repentance. The result is referred to in Isaiah 66:8: “In one

day...shall a nation be born at once.” This is the national regeneration of Israel referred to in Matthew 19:28, Israel’s national equivalent of the new birth that we Christians must have as individuals now.

#### Verses 2–3

On the basis of the cleansing of the nation before God, inward purification leads to outward practical sanctification (Psalm 119:11). Impurity is no longer acceptable (Titus 1:15). What they (the remnant) have arrived at morally will show in what they do.

Verses 4–5: They no longer have high thoughts of self.

#### Verses 6–7: The shepherd slain

The righteous basis on which blessing will be available to Israel is covered in what God did to the Lord Jesus (v. 7; Acts 2:23b) and in what man/the Jews did to Him (v. 6; Acts 2:23a). The sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man are both seen at the Cross.

#### Verse 7

“The man that is my fellow.” Jehovah so speaks of Messiah. The New Testament affirms that in Person the Son is in every respect co-equal with the Father. Equally true is the fact that in His holy manhood the Son is administratively subject to the Father.

Verses 8–9 give us the result of the Gentile invasion under the Roman Beast (cf. Ezekiel 20:34–38). That terrible time of persecution for Israel will result in the apostate two thirds of them being slain, only the faithful one third of them being spared.

#### Zechariah chapter 14

“His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives” (v. 4).

### The Great Climax

1. Jehovah and Messiah are spoken of synonymously and interchangeably throughout.
2. Note Psalm 76:10 and Acts 4:26 – 28.

Verse 2: All nations with the King of the North at their head as the leading antagonist.

Verse 3: Only the direct intervention of Jehovah Himself prevents the utter defeat and complete extermination of His people.

Verse 4– 5b: Manner of Intervention and Identity of Deliverer (Isaiah 25:9).

Verse 5a: Method of escape. Earthly saints delivered from enemies. Heavenly saints manifested in glory.

Verses 6–11: Millennial conditions (see also chapter 8).

Verses 9, 16, 20–21 involve the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 40:1 – 47:1).

Verses 12–15: Provision made for maintenance of due order (Chapter 10:4 Exactor).

Verse 16: Regulation of homage by the residual small proportion of these hostile nations (Psalm 76:10). The apparent obedience by some will be feigned, not real (Psalm 66:3).

Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated and FULFILLED. Each nation will be represented each year in the celebrations (Revelation 21:24–26). God will be at rest among His people, and they in Him and with Him.

Verse 20: HOLINESS will be the norm. All will be according to God and demonstrably suitable to Him.

The Canaanite (the habitual enemy) will be “no more in the house of the Lord of Hosts.” They have always plagued the Land and its People. Never again! They will be finally and permanently expelled (Revelation 21:27).

As the poetess Mary A. S. Deck wrote:

There is a city bright,  
Closed are its gates to sin;  
Naught that defileth,  
Naught that defileth.  
Shall ever enter in.

Glory be to God!

Ernie Brown

## MEAT

*"Sanctify them by the truth"*

## THE RED HEIFER

### Numbers 19

In Numbers 19 we learn the excessive jealousy of the Lord about sin, not in the sense of guilt but defilement. This He measures by His sanctuary. We have to do with it, and nothing unclean can be allowed. We are clean every whit, but the feet-washing is needed. We belong to the sanctuary and yet are in the world, though not of it; we need to have a just estimate of both. If we but touch evil, a remedy is required. Still it is not the question of justification, but of communion. Sin hinders that—hinders my coming boldly into the holiest. How was this met? The blood of the unblemished heifer, representing Christ who knew no sin and could not be brought under its power, was sprinkled before the tabernacle seven times, that is, before the place of communion, not of atonement. The sin-offering was burnt without the camp. But the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times where we meet God in intercourse. This marks the full efficacy of Christ's blood when I meet God. The body was reduced to ashes, as Christ was judged and condemned for what I am apt to be careless about; but God is not careless, and would make me sensible of sin. Christ had to suffer for it, and it is gone; but the sight of His suffering shews me the dreadfulness of it,

God has an eye that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart; He would have us discern them too, and without this there can be no communion. But we do not get back into communion as quickly as we get out of it. Seven days elapsed in the type before there was full restoration. The Spirit takes and applies the ashes (that is, the remembrance of Christ's agony,

and what occasioned it), and makes us feel practical horror of sin.

When I look at my sin with horror, even in the sense of the grace which has met it, it is a right feeling, but not communion: it is a holy judgment of sin in the presence of grace. Hence, there was a second sprinkling—not on the third day, but the seventh, and then there is communion with God. We see that perfect grace alone maintains the sense of perfect holiness. The result, in the end, is that we increase in the knowledge of God, both as to holiness and love. We must have been out of communion before we sinned, or we should not have yielded. How came I to fall? Because of the carelessness which left me out of God's presence, and exposed me to the evil without and within.

J.N. Darby

### **Search the Scriptures!**

1. Which king's acts were recorded in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani?
2. What book in the Bible end with this verse "Remember me, O my God, for good"?
3. What city was home to Philemon?

### **EXERCISE**

*"Exercise thyself unto piety"*

### **"DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**

**JESUS"** Colossians 3:17

"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). Here I get the whole course of everyday life. There are constantly difficulties that I find in passing through this world. I say, Ought I to do this thing or that, or not? I am uncertain as to the right course, or I may find great hindrances to doing what I think to be right. Now, if ever I find myself in doubt, my eye is not single; my whole body is not full of light, therefore my eye is not single. God brings me into certain circumstances of difficulty until I detect this. It may be something that I never suspected in myself before which hinders me from seeing aright; but it is something between me and Christ, and until that is put away I shall never have certainty as to my path. Therefore "whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." This will settle nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand. If you are questioning whether you shall do a thing or not, just ask yourself, Am I going to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus? It will settle it at once.

Thus if a person says, What harm is there in my doing such and such a thing? I ask, Are you going to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus? Perhaps it may be something of which you will answer at once, Of course not. Then it is settled at once. It is the test of the state of the heart. If my eye is single, if the purpose of my heart is all right, I get here what settles every question—it

tests my heart. I wanted to know the right path, and it is as simple as A-B-C. If my heart is not upon Christ, I shall endeavour to do my own will; and this is not God's will. There is the constant uniform rule which clearly judges every path and circumstance. Am I simply doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus?

But what do I find with it? "Giving thanks to God the Father through Him." In another place it is said, "In everything give thanks." (1 Thessalonians 5:18.) Where my heart can take Christ with me, my mind is on God, and I can say, "He is with me," even if it is tribulation. I have got the path of God, I have got Christ with me in my path, and I would rather be there than in what is apparently the fairest and pleasantest thing in the world. As it is said in Psalm 84, "In whose heart are the ways of them."

This chapter (Colossians 3) begins with the great truth, that we are dead and risen with Christ—the judgment of the old man absolutely and completely, and our reckoning it practically to be dead. People have talked about dying to the flesh, and of its being a slow death, etc., which is all nonsense. It is a simple fact that is true already; and if I died with Christ, I shall live with Him. It is the power of this that works in my soul. The root of all Paul's doctrine is, that we have been crucified with Him (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20), and have died with Him (Romans 6:8); and it is not now we who live, but Christ that lives in us. Then Christ becomes the object of this life. Having laid that ground—that the old man is put off and the new man put on (Colossians 3:9-10), which is Christ—he draws the consequence of the blessing in which we stand, and the fruits which spring from Him; and then there is this simple but blessed rule for him that is in earnest—to do nothing but what can be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.

One great thing here practically put before us is this—Christ is all. He is in all; but this is the great thing we have to look to, Is He practically all? Can you honestly say, Though a poor weak creature, notwithstanding that, I am not conscious of having a

single other object in the world but Christ? You find many difficulties, you are not watchful enough, your faith is feeble, you know your short-comings; but can you, notwithstanding all this, honestly say, I have no object in the world but Christ?

First, the root of all is Christ as the life; then we pass over to the outward conduct in the man's walk. And let me remark, that while a person may be walking outwardly uprightly and blamelessly, it may be very feebly as a Christian, and without spirituality. You will find many a true Christian who has Christ as his life, and nothing to reproach him with as to his walk, and yet is not spiritually-minded. (Romans 8:6; 1 Corinthians 3:1.) You talk to him about Christ, there is nothing that answers. There is, between the life that is at the bottom and the blamelessness that is at the top, between him and Christ, a whole host of affections and objects that are not Christ at all. How much of the day, or of the practice of your soul, is filled up with Christ? How far is He the one object of your heart? When you come to pray to God, do you never get to a point where you shut the door against Him? where there is some reserve, some single thing in your heart, that you keep back from Him? If we pray for blessing up to a certain point only, there is reserve; Christ is not all practically to us.



## REST

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

## THE SUFFERING HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

The suffering of the household of faith is on the increase: trials abound. But the moment of release is at hand. The heavenly shore is in sight. Weak, broken up, and troubled as God’s people are on every hand, yet God is for us, all along the way from ruin to glory, and in counsel from eternity to eternity. We are treasure to Him (Matthew 13:44), yea, “one pearl of great price” (v. 46). We are compared to the most precious and costly materials—silver, gold and pearls. We are predestinated according to the eternal purpose of God, to be conformed to the image of His Son in glory (Romans 8:29)—a blessed purpose which no power can possible frustrate. To be like Him and with Him is our sure destiny. But the furnace in the meantime is needed to purify and purge from dross and grit and the precious metals. The breaking and bruising is a painful process, but it cannot be dispensed with, if the divine Refiner would see in every bit of silver the reflection of His own image (Malachi 3:3).

He sits at the mouth of furnace, while Christ Himself, absolutely pure and as tenderly sympathetic, takes a place in company with the sufferer in it (Daniel 3:25). Wisdom, divine wisdom, superintends every detail. There will not be a blow of the hammer too many or one too severe: nor will the furnace be heated one degree beyond what is absolutely necessary. The duration and intensity of the fires of affliction are limited and controlled. God measures our difficulties, prepares and heats the furnace, and carries on the disciplinary process till the final result is reached—moral conformity to Christ on High. All, all is under a Father’s hand; He “will never cause His child a needless tear.”

Would we seek to escape the present and painful discipline of the Lord, as we reflect on the distinguished place we are each to occupy—a discipline, moreover, which is only for a season, and for which there is a need (1 Peter 1:6)? “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5). The Valley of Baca (Psalm 84:6) wet with the tears, and its silence broken by the sobs of the Lord’s redeemed, leads on to the rest and worship of the House of the Lord (v. 4). Tribulation is God’s appointed path for all His sons and daughters, but it ends in the Kingdom and fullness of joy. Besides, there are present lessons as well as a grand future. We are yet in the school of God, which is necessarily more or less one of sorrow. Our richest lessons are taught us in the shade which we never could have learnt in the sunshine. There are in the best of us many hidden roots of evil and it is a mercy when these are exposed to ourselves. “My soul is even as a weaned child” expresses a ripened condition of soul. A broken and chastened spirit is of priceless value.

“My times are in Thy hand” (Psalm 32:15). Is it a safe hand? An Almighty hand? An infinitely tender hand? Yes! The hand that holds you up is one of divine love and omnipotent strength. Our times, whether dark or bright, whether of sorrow, desolation, poverty, or death are in Jehovah’s hand, and that is enough for weakness to lean upon. Our life seems a tangled web. Who can unravel its mysteries or explain its apparent contradictions? But faith’s confidence is this—that our God holds the thread of life. All is perfect light before Him if dark and inexplicable to us. “He knows the way He taketh.” Ever interpret His actions, however in themselves insoluble, by His love, well known to our souls. The character of His ways is simply the reflex of His nature—light and love. “All things work together for good” (Romans 8:28). Trace all up direct to the source which is God—the God who gave His only Son; there rest. Occupation with second causes or agents and instruments shuts God out of the scene. No sorrow can reach

you till He bids it come; poverty cannot touch you till He allows it; friendships cannot be severed unless He permits; loved ones cannot die till He withdraws His hand; and hearts cannot break till He sovereignly allows. “As for God, His way is perfect.”

Christ was “a man of sorrows.” God had only one Son without sin, but He never had one who was without sorrow (Hebrews 12:8) “whereof all are partakers.” The Blessed Lord is with us in the wildest storm, in the darkest night. The most awful hurricane can no more engulf us than it can Him (Mark 4:37–41). He who walks on the sea (Matthew 14:25) as the Lord of the raging elements sleeps in the midst of His own, whilst winds and waves dash around.

Tribulation cannot separate us from the love of God, but the love of God will by and by separate us forever from tribulation and set us in eternal felicity. In the meantime the love of Christ leads us on and through life’s trials “more than conquerors” (Romans 8:35–39). Do not allow yourself to be wrapped up in selfish sorrow. God turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10) and gave him “twice as much as he had before.” Wilderness lessons are meant for others as well as yourself, see to it, that you learn them well, and hand over the fruit of them to fellow-pilgrims (1 Corinthians 1:3–6). The trying of your faith (James 1:3) will soon be over, then the trial of it “more precious than of gold” will be publicly recompensed in the coming day (1 Peter 1:7).

W.S.

## YOUR SKULL !

“I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Thy works” (Psalm 139:14).

A bare skull may not look very attractive, but it shows better than we can tell you how wonderfully the Creator has made this part of your body. Notice how openings for ears, eyes, nose and mouth are designed so that these parts make a pleasing, balanced appearance to a person’s face without interfering with one another. Also notice how the upper jaw is immovable, but the lower jaw is hinged so we can chew and talk. If it were otherwise, how difficult it would be to do those things.

Important as these features are, the main purpose of the skull is to protect the brain that the Creator has given us—a brain so superior it puts man on a level of life far above all other living creatures on earth. The skull is remarkably strong, 1/4 inch thick at the top and thicker at the base, making a lightweight, strong armor. Over its top and sides is a scalp of tough skin, and over that is a protective mat of hair. Both coverings are helpful in protecting what is under them.

Inside the skull is a thin but tough lining between it and the brain to help protect important nerves and blood vessels. This is called “dura mater.” But that’s just part of the story. As further protection against bumps, blows and falls, the skull holds a special fluid cushion in which the brain “floats.” The rigid casing of the skull surrounds the brain very closely, and all empty spaces are filled with this important fluid.

Nothing has been overlooked. Even the nerves that take care of smell, hearing and sight are sheltered in special notches of the skull to protect them as they attend to their duties.

Though an opening in the bottom of the skull, the spinal cord enters the brain with a marvelous system of nerves that carry

messages between the brain and all parts of the body. This opening has been so carefully placed that the head of a man is perfectly balanced to enable him to hold it upright and for his whole body to stand in an erect position. The spine itself becomes the main support of the entire head—skull and all.

## YOUR SPINE!

### An Engineering Marvel

"God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over ...all the earth." Genesis 1:26

"In Our image" and "after our likeness" does not mean man looks like God, but he is the representative of God on earth. He has an everlasting soul and intellect and authority over all earthy creation. Man in this honored place is set apart from other creatures by his upright body - something no other earthy creature ever had or will have.

It is the spine (backbone) that gives man his upright body. It is an amazing column of vertebrae which provides a flexible, strong support for the body. If it were one solid bone, a person would be as rigid as a toy soldier. This is why God provided 36 separate vertebrae, reaching from the base of the skull to the hips. The spine is also formed in curves to act as a shock absorber and to provide maximum strength. *Cervical vertebrae* support the head, *thoracic* (chest) *vertebrae* have the 12 pairs of ribs attached to them, and *lumbar vertebrae* near the base of the spine carry most of the load. The vertebrae are held together by *discs* (or pads) which look something like washers on a garden hose. The top and bottom surfaces of these are cemented to the bones above and below them. Their centers are filled with jelly-like material, allowing the spine to move this way or that and yet retain proper form. The edges of the disc are made of tough layers of strong, elastic gristle to keep the "jelly" from leaking out.

The whole column of the spine is hollow, to allow space for the one-half-inch thick *spinal cord*. This cord connects 31 pairs of nerves from the brain to various parts of the body, carrying nerve impulses (messages) back and forth. Many things that go on in our bodies between our necks and the soles of our feet are controlled by the brain through the nerves coming down the spinal column. The skull (at the top of the spine) has an opening for the spinal cord and is placed so that it does not interfere with man's erect posture. This is different in an ape, whose cord passes through an opening that forces its head forward and over-balances it. Because of this, an ape cannot stand erect (except very briefly) and must go on all fours or use its arms for support. This is another evidence that man and the ape are not related.

The first chapter of Genesis tells us He made them separate creations. To believe anything else takes our thoughts away from a loving God and Creator. David followed his God-given thoughts, in our opening Bible verse by declaring: "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!" (v. 17). And God's loving thoughts are the very same toward you today.

No wonder David could exclaim, "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Thy works" (Psalm 139:14). Then he added, "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! (Psalm 139:17). Have you ever thanked Him for His thoughts toward you?

### Answers to Scripture search!

1. Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:34)
2. Nehemiah
3. Colossae (Colossians 4:9)

## **THE TREE WHICH MARKS THE CENTER OF THE WORLD!**

It was a perfect day for taking pictures. There were many beautiful and interesting subjects for the camera, but everyone was occupied by a fine old tree surrounded by an iron fence and marked by a bronze plaque. A young man stopped to ask, "What's so interesting about that tree?" A man replied, "The inscription says this tree marks the center of England. Tourists come from all over to take a picture of the center of England."

With interest, the young man read the inscription on the plaque. His face lit up with a smile, and he turned back to the man. "This is interesting," he proclaimed, "I never heard of this tree. But it makes me think of another tree which means a great deal to me, although I have never seen it." Others stepped over to listen. "The tree I refer to marks the **center of the world**," he continued. The listeners responded with surprise and unbelief: "The center of the world! Impossible! What do you mean?" "All those on one side of the Tree are saved and on their way to Heaven. All on the other side are lost and on their way to eternal darkness and punishment in Hell."

Some looked puzzled; others sneered and left. "This Tree I speak of is mentioned by Peter, and it was a happy day for me when I read about it and believed. Listen to his words, "Christ...who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). That Tree is the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I thank God that I stand on the side of those whose sins are washed away in His precious blood—a saved sinner on my way to glory."

Reader, there are many interesting monuments, but the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ divides this world. You stand on one side or the other of this great Tree—the true "center of the world." Your home and work occupy your thoughts, as do world events. Have you considered that your home and work, even this world, must be left behind when you step out into eternity? Then the only question that really matters will be, "On which side of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ do you stand." Perhaps you shrug this question off by saying that you are not a heathen, but a good citizen, and a respected church-member. But what does all this mean if your sins are not washed away in the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus?

Face the most important question of time and eternity right now. Have you bowed your knees to God's beloved Son, owning yourself a needy sinner? Have you been washed from your sins in His precious shed blood? Have you taken your stand with those who own no other ground of safety but "redemption ground"? The Tree of Calvary marks the center of the world. On which side do **you** stand?

"How long halt ye between two opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21). "He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son SHALL NOT see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3).