



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,

“Yea, I come quickly. Amen; come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

We have now entered a New Year, and the question in everyone’s mind, if not on his lips, is: “What will this year bring?”

It is not without reason that such a question arises, for the last few years have been filled with startling events. Never before in the history of the world have things moved with such lightning speed. In the past decade, we have witnessed changes that we might have expected would take centuries to develop.

Man’s inventions and cries for speed and more speed have brought all the inhabitants of the world closer together. There are almost no “remote” parts of the world left. Backward and hitherto unimportant people have suddenly become important. Jungles have proven to be anything but “impenetrable barriers,” and wide oceans now afford little protection and comfort. People may well declare, “What is next?” and “Where is all this leading?”

In the light of the Word of God, we can speak with real assurance. All these rapidly developing changes are leading to certain definite happenings of more than major importance.

Present strides are as but signposts pointing ahead. Events more astounding than anything yet seen are coming. Incidents without precedent are in store for this world, and there is nothing that man can do to stop them.

There is one sure and certain great event that is coming soon—very soon. The Lord Jesus is coming! He will give that shout in the air that will call all who are sheltered by His precious blood to meet Him in the clouds and accompany Him to the Father’s House, to be forever with and like Himself (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 John 3:2).

May He grant us grace to walk in the enjoyment of His love, trusting in Him for every need and for every step of the way in 2025, redeeming the time, for the days are evil

So, while we thus wait, may we live for Him, serve Him more faithfully, and demonstrate Christ in our lives before others. He is worthy of all we have and are.

Thank you for the encouraging e-mails that we often receive.

Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on *Toward The Mark*. Make sure that you visit our website to find many helpful articles.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

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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"

THREE APPEARINGS OF CHRIST!

The Past

1. "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

He has thus appeared, and He has done the mighty work for which He came from heaven to this earth. He will never thus appear again. The cross is eternal in its issues. What He has done can never be added to nor taken from. By the sacrifice of Himself He has accomplished this most mighty work, and for His people, sin is put away, and it will be put away from the earth by virtue of that sacrifice, and then the Father's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Present

2. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).

Risen from the dead, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, Jesus, the High Priest, has entered into the holiest by His own blood, and now appears in the heavens, the man Christ Jesus, in the presence of God for His people, for whose sins He died. He lives to die no more, and He Himself, once the sacrifice on earth, is now the Priest on high for His people. He appeared on earth to die for us; having died, He appears in God's presence to live for us. He abides there our priest.

The Future

3. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time apart from sin, unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

On the great day of atonement, the High Priest of Israel took the blood of the sacrifice into the holiest of all—God accepted the atoning blood, and Israel was free. The proof to the people that all was well was the fact that their high priest lived. And when he came out of the tabernacle, they saw in him salvation. He had made atonement, and, having made it, and it having been accepted, he appeared before them, a witness to salvation.

How graciously will the type be fulfilled! For the heavens, which now hide Him from our eyes, will presently open, and Jesus will come forth to bring His people into the full blessing of His accomplished work. He is coming to bring about the lengths and breadths of salvation—salvation from death, from the power of Satan, from this earth and its trials and its tears—salvation absolute and complete.

Christ has put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

Christ lives in God’s presence for us and bears us up through this life’s journey.

Christ will come and take us home to be forever with Himself.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who was the first shepherd?
2. What prophet spoke about a shepherd taking out of the mouth of a lion two legs or a piece of an ear?
3. Which epistle mentions the Lord Jesus Christ as “the Great Shepherd of the sheep”?

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

CRUCIFIED!

When the Lord Jesus was on earth His disciples expected Him to set up His kingdom and that they would have part with Him in it, but Jesus left them in no doubt as to what lay before Him, for He said, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day He shall rise again" (Matthew 20:18–19). Jesus also forewarned His own as to what they should expect, for He said, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

Everyone knew that a man seen bearing his cross was finished so far as this world was concerned. Nothing but a death of shame lay before him, and for such the things of this present world had no longer any appeal: not its pleasures, or its wealth, or its glory, or its ambitions, or any of the things that naturally attracted the men of this present age. One bearing his cross, and following Jesus, had something far better to fill the heart and mind than the things of this present world. There was the Lord Himself in all His attractiveness, and all that lay beyond the grave in the world to come where he would have part with Him in His kingdom and glory.

The young ruler who came to the Lord desiring to know what he must do to have eternal life was tested by Jesus. After Jesus had spoken to him about keeping the law, which brought out the natural beauty of his character, the Lord said, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me" (Mark 10:21). It was a severe test for

one who possessed so much of this world's wealth, and this young man, in spite of having such a lovely character, was not prepared to relinquish present things and follow a rejected Christ in a path of reproach and shame.

It was just at this juncture that Simon Peter said to the Lord, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee," and the Lord, in His grace, spoke to him and his fellow disciples of the blessings He would give to those who were willing to give up anything for Him (Mark 10:28–31). Simon Peter had a special place of privilege among the disciples of the Lord, and not least among them of literally taking up his cross to follow His Master into death, and into all that lay beyond death (John 21:18–19).

Christ Crucified

When Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth he said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1–2). As natural men the Corinthians set great value on the wisdom of this world, and Paul well knew that when he preached to them a crucified Christ it would have no natural appeal to them. Those who are saved know that there is divine and saving power in the preaching of the cross, but such preaching is foolishness to them that perish (1 Corinthians 1:18).

The wisdom of this world has not been able to bring to men the knowledge of God, or to secure salvation for perishing sinners, but it is in the cross we learn what God is in all the love of His heart and through faith in the crucified Christ that we obtain God's salvation. Had the Jews given heed to their Scriptures they would have learned that before Messiah could enter into His glory He must needs suffer and die: even the crucifixion had been plainly predicted in Psalm 22:16.

Israel's leaders used the ignorant multitude to cry to Pilate for the crucifixion of God's Son, but their very rejection of Messiah demonstrated how very ignorant they were of the wisdom of God. God's wisdom was seen in His taking the very occasion of man's hatred and wickedness in crucifying Jesus to work out in the cross His counsels of love and to provide salvation for ruined sinners. The princes of this world—the leaders of Israel, Pilate, and Herod—knew nothing of God's wisdom, "for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:7–8). How wonderful it is to apprehend that the very cross which brought to light the wisdom, and the power of God revealed the ignorance, foolishness, and hatred of the great of this world.

Our Old Man Crucified with Christ

The cross of Christ has not only dealt with the question of our sins, but also with the man that committed the sins. Romans 1:1–5:11 deals with sins, from 5:12 we learn how God deals with the root that produced the sins. "Our old man" (Romans 6:6) is the embodiment of all that is produced by the flesh, our old nature received from Adam, and when Christ was crucified God dealt in judgment with the nature that is at the root of all sins. Throughout man's history until the cross, man was under trial, but man proved to be incorrigible. Tried in innocency, he listened to the voice of Satan rather than to God. Left to himself, he filled the earth with violence and corruption. Under government in Noah, the governor gets drunk and fails in shame. Under law, which Israel undertook to keep, the law was broken while Moses was yet on the mount with God, man making a golden calf. The final proof was the coming of God's Son in grace, and man put Him on a malefactor's cross.

Man could not be improved; he was seen to be thoroughly evil and beyond restoration. How wonderful is the divine wisdom that puts away our sins in the cross of Christ and removes from before

His face in judgment the man, the old man, that committed the sins. Sin in its totality is annulled in the stroke of divine judgment that fell upon our old man in the cross of Christ. God finished with the old man in the cross, and it is our privilege to view him as gone from our eye as from before the eye of God. In consequence we are no longer to serve sin, for we too have died with Christ, having been baptized unto His death, and we are now to live unto God.

“I Am Crucified with Christ”

In Romans 6 Paul had written about our being dead with Christ, and in Romans 7 of how the incorrigible nature of the flesh is discovered and deliverance found in Christ. Here in Galatians 2, the Apostle shows us how he himself was affected by the truth of the cross. He well knew that all his sins had been forgiven by the shedding of the precious blood of Jesus, but the reason for our Lord Jesus Christ giving “Himself for our sins” was “that He might deliver us from this present evil world” (Galatians 1:4). The cross of Christ is the means of delivering us from this present evil world.

If, like Paul, we see ourselves crucified with Christ, we are not likely to be ensnared by what the world offers. Paul had acquired much of what the religion of this world prided itself in, and he had prized it as a natural man, but when he saw himself crucified with Christ all that he had formerly valued was seen in its worthlessness. All his pride in his achievements, all his self-righteousness, and all that he boasted in as “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5) was exposed in the light of the cross as belonging to a life that had received its judgment from God when Christ died.

Yet if Paul viewed himself as exposed in shame and judgment in the cross of Christ, he nevertheless had a life in which he lived, but it was the life that men endeavored to bring to an end when they crucified the Lord of glory. Christ, whom men crucified, not

only lives in the presence of the Father, but He lives in His saints in this world, and Paul desired that this heavenly life of the glorified Christ should be constantly in evidence in him here below. Paul looked back to the cross to see the end of all that he was as in the flesh, but he looked up to Christ in glory, the attraction and power of the life he lived through faith in God's Son; and how powerfully the love of Christ, manifested in His death, in His giving of Himself for Paul, and for all His own, influenced the daily walk of and life of the Apostle.

The crucifixion of Christ not only affected the life of Paul, it also colored his ministry, as already seen in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, and he also applied the truth of the cross to the Galatians in their danger, writing, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you...before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Galatians 3:1). The flesh, in which they were seeking to be made perfect (verse 3), had received its death sentence in the cross of Christ, and those under law had been made dead to the law by the body of Christ (Romans 7:4).

The Flesh Crucified

God had finished with the flesh, having in the death of His own Son "condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3), and those who belong to Christ have accepted the verdict and judgment of God on the flesh, even as the Apostle writes in Galatians 5:24: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Normal believers see the flesh exposed in all its varied features of evil in Christ's cross. They see that nothing good is to be expected from it, and they have finished with it, with all its inordinate affections and evil desires.

Viewed in the light of eternity the life of man in this world as lived in present things "profits nothing" (John 6:63), for it is a life in alienation from God, and in which there is nothing for God. All man's thoughts center in himself, and his highest thoughts do not reach to God and His things. Man's life is lived for his own

gratification and to bring glory to himself, and to secure these men crucified the Son of God, for they neither wanted Him nor His Father. The cross in which men sought to be rid of God and His Christ is that in which the nature of man has been exposed in all its wickedness and shows for the Christian what the flesh is.

The World Crucified

Paul not only saw the old man crucified and the flesh crucified in the cross of Christ, but he could add, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). The Apostle saw the world as an evil system, stained with the blood of Jesus, and exposed in all its wickedness and hatred of God and of Him in whom he had found the knowledge of God. The corruption of the world’s religion, its bribery, unrighteousness, falsehood, and violence, all are to be seen laid bare in what was done to the Christ of God. There is nothing at which this world will stop in its opposition to God, and its hatefulness is manifest for all to see in Christ’s cross.

Paul gloried in the cross because of all that he found there of God’s love to such a wretched sinner as He was and because of all that it manifested of Christ’s love for him. This made him content, yea anxious, to share the world’s opposition to the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him. If Christ was dishonored by the world, he also desired to be dishonored by it; if Christ was hated, so would he also be. He counted it an honor to be associated with Christ as the object of the world’s malice and rejection, for he had seen in the cross what the world truly was.

W. C. Reid

EXERCISE

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD

"In time past ye walked according to the course of this world" (Ephesians 2:2).

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [whereby] the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

"He was in the world...and the world knew him not" (John 1:10).

"The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John 3:1).

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16).

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this...to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5).

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14).

"The sons of God...in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

"Marvel not...if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13).

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

"Be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15).

“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

“All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).

“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof” (1 John 2:17).

“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4: 4).

“Whosoever...will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God” (James 4: 4).

“Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:12,13).

REST

"Shall I not seek rest for thee that it may be well with thee?"

COMFORT IN TRIAL

PSALM 94

Probably most would agree that the primary application of the 94th Psalm is to the sufferings of the Jews in the latter days. Nevertheless, the Psalm contains great principles that apply to all God's people while passing through a world from which Christ is absent.

In the course of the Psalm, we see:

1. The wicked triumphing,
2. The godly suffering,
3. The blessing and consolation of the saint in and through the suffering, and
4. The confidence of the godly that in due time the LORD, Himself, will deal with the wicked.

(Verses 1–2). The Psalm opens with a prayer. The godly man finds himself, not only in a world in which the people of God suffer and the proud prosper, but where to natural sight it might seem that God is indifferent. Therefore, the Psalmist prays that God would “show” Himself, act on behalf of His suffering people, and deal with the proud. At the same time, it is realized that “vengeance” belongs to God. This, surely, is a truth of which the Christian needs to be reminded, for the Apostle Paul can say to us, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” In the presence of provocation, anger, and deliberate insults, let us beware of seeking to take vengeance. The insults and injustice may arouse righteous indignation; we cannot be trusted to take vengeance. That the Lord keeps in His own hands. Our part is to “give place” unto wrath. If a person's

anger makes me angry, then I am “overcome of evil” (Romans 12:18–21).

(Verses 3–7). In the verses that follow we see the progress of the wicked. “The wicked triumph,” but it is realized that it will be only for a time, for the Psalmist asks, “How long?” They “speak insolence”; they “boast themselves”; they “crush” God’s people, and they murder the defenseless: above all, they cast off all fear of God, for they say, “The LORD shall not see,” nor “regard” it. What a graphic picture of the condition of the world at this moment, marked by insolence, boastfulness, oppression, violence, and the casting off of all fear of God.

(Verses 8–11). There follows a fine description of what faith sees behind the temporary outward triumph of evil. In carrying devastation through the world, the wicked are acting like ravenous brutes; and in their boasting, and casting off all fear of God, they behave as “fools” without wisdom, for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

The wicked forget that He that made the ear can hear the hard things that are spoken against God’s people and the boastful things that the wicked say of themselves: that He that made the eye can see all their violent and evil deeds; and that He that teaches man knowledge, “knows the thoughts of man that they are vanity.” Solemn truths for us all, for we do well to remember the Lord hears all our words, sees all our acts, and knows all our thoughts—but how doubly solemn for those who throw off all fear of God.

(Verses 12–15). In these verses we learn that, though for a time God may not “show” Himself in any active intervention on behalf of His suffering people, yet He is by no means indifferent to our trials and exercises. On the contrary, He is using the trials for our blessing through “chastening” and “teaching.” By these trials He chastens us in order that we may detect and judge the evils of the flesh and learn what we are in His sight and thus be “partakers of

His holiness” and bring forth the “fruit of righteousness” (Hebrews 12:10–11). Moreover, through the trial He teaches us in order that we may learn all that God is for us. Thus, He gives us “rest from the days of adversity,” and we realize, whatever trials are allowed, that He “will not cast off His people.”

(Verses 16–19). Further, the godly find that in all their trials the Lord is their unfailing resource. In the presence of “evildoers” and “workers of iniquity” he asks, “Who will rise up for me?” And “Who will stand up for me?” He realizes that had it not been for the Lord he would have been left alone in silence. So, in Christian times, the Apostle Paul found in his great trials, when no man stood with him, that the Lord stood with Him, and the Lord was his help, by Whom he was strengthened (2 Timothy 4:16–17). Like the Psalmist, we may experience that at times when we were in danger of slipping, the mercy of the Lord came in and held us in the way. So, the Apostle can say, “The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.”

Further, the Psalmist not only realized the sustaining grace of the hand of the Lord that kept him in the presence of snares into which he was in danger of slipping, but he found that the “comforts” of the Lord sustained his soul when he was in danger of being overwhelmed by a multitude of “anxious thoughts.” So, again, the Apostle Paul realized, in all his trials, the “mercies” and “comfort” of God (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

(Verses 20–23). Thus, though for a time the wicked appear to triumph, the godly realize that there can be no fellowship between a government of iniquity and the holy God. Though the wicked may combine against the righteous and condemn the innocent, yet the godly find in the LORD their “defense” against all the power of the enemy and their “refuge” in every storm. They can look on in confidence to the time when the LORD “shall bring upon the wicked their own iniquity and finally “cut them off”; then every storm will be stilled. In the meantime, how

good to be able to say with the Apostle Paul, as we look back to the past, God “has delivered us”; as we look round in the present, God “does deliver”; and in confidence look on to the future and say, “He will yet deliver us.” (2 Corinthians 1:10).

Hamilton Smith

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE SEARCH!

1. Abel (Genesis 4:2)
2. Amos (Amos 3:12)
3. Hebrews (Hebrews 13:20)

THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE TREE

It was recognized by Guinness as the world's most expensive tree and cost over \$11 million. There was nothing cheap about the Christmas Tree in the lobby of the Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi. The bare-bones tree cost at least \$10,000, but it's what hung on the 43 ft. (13 m) high tree that gave it such incredible value. The Christmas Tree was decorated with breathtaking ornaments. Over 181 ornaments of gold and precious stones, including diamonds, pearls, emeralds and sapphires, hung from the bows of the tree—all for a marketing ploy.

The reality is—a higher, permanent record has listed another tree as the most expensive in the world. Again, what gave the tree value was what hung upon it. The world's most expensive tree, in fact, so far exceeds the value of the Abu Dhabi tree that it almost seems like poor taste to attempt a comparison.

The World's Most Expensive Tree. The costliest tree of the ages was not mounted in the lobby of a luxury hotel to be viewed by admiring eyes but on top of a barren little hill outside Jerusalem. It looked more like a pole or a cross than an actual tree. No matter what angle you viewed it from—there was nothing pleasing to the natural eye. In fact, this tree had all the markings of human brutality on it. The polished veneer of good taste was nowhere to be seen. Those who passed by sneered and mocked. The world's most expensive tree was of no value to most.

Infinite Value. The wood from the tree is not what gave it value. It was Who was hanging on the tree that drove its value through the roof of earth and up to heaven itself. What was hanging on that tree was of infinite value—far above the price of diamonds, silver and gold. Tears come to the eye at the very thought of it. A man beaten and bruised hung upon that tree. Yes, death by crucifixion was the Roman way of executing the worst of criminals—but this man was innocent. His back was slashed open from a horrific beating. Men had repeatedly spewed their spit in His face and threw their punches at Him, even pounding His head with a rod as they blindfolded Him. Then the ultimate insult reserved for those who had committed the most despicable crimes: they nailed His hands and feet with spikes to a cross—a tree—and left Him to die.

His Name Was Jesus. Through all of the torture, not a threatening word came from His lips. Not a flash of anger from His eyes—nothing but love. From that tree He prayed and said: Father, forgive them. You need to know something else about that tree. There God placed upon the Lord Jesus the heaviest load of all—He put Him there to die for us, to offer Himself as a sacrifice for us. He offered Himself there to take God's holy wrath and judgment for our sins in place of us. God "made Him to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:20). The Bible said, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). He also said: "[You] were...redeemed...not with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18,19). At the end, just before the Lord Jesus died, He triumphantly cried with a very loud voice: "It is finished!" (John 19:30). He then bowed His head, delivered up His spirit and died. What was it that Jesus finished? Jesus paid my sin debt by dying on the tree. "Paid in full" is the equivalent phrase in the Greek language. His precious blood flowed freely. You too can claim its value and say your sins are "paid in full." Without question, that tree is the most expensive tree of all times because of "Who" hung upon it and "what" He accomplished there for our sins.

Which Tree Means the Most to You? Which tree is of greater value to you—the one elaborately decorated that will only make it to the Guinness World Records or the one recorded in the Bible as the tree upon which sins were paid for by precious blood that flowed from the innocent and holy One—the Lord Jesus Christ? "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).