

Pressing On!

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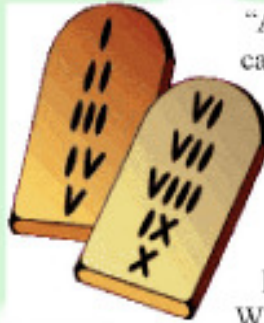
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Spurgeon on the Law



"All the Ten Commandments, like ten great cannons are pointed at you today. For you have broken all God's statutes and lived in daily neglect of all His commands. Soul, you will find it a hard thing to go to war with the Law. When the Law came in peace, Sinai was altogether on a smoke and even Moses said, 'I exceedingly fear and quake!' What will you do when the Law of God comes

in terror; when the trumpet of the archangel shall tear you from your grave; when the eyes of God shall burn their way into your guilty soul; when the great books shall be opened and all your sin and shame shall be punished... can you stand against an angry Law in that Day...?

No man knows the brightness of the gospel till he understands the blackness of those clouds which surround the Law of the Lord."



Charles H Spurgeon

"All men are under the Law by nature, and consequently they are condemned by it because they have broken its commands; and apart from our Lord Jesus men are only reprieved criminals, respited from day to day, but still under sentence and waiting for the appointed hour when the warrant shall be solemnly executed upon them."

"With every commandment, the bare letter is nothing, compared with the whole stupendous meaning and severe strictness of the rule. The commandments, if I may so speak, are like the stars. When seen with the naked eye, they appear to be brilliant points; if we could draw near to them, we should see them to be infinite worlds, greater than even our sun, stupendous though it is. So is it with the law of God. It seems to be but a luminous point, because we see it at a distance, but when we come nearer where Christ stood, and estimate the law as he saw it, then we find it is vast, immeasurable. 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad'. Think then for a moment of the spirituality of the law, its extent and strictness. The law of Moses condemns for offence, without hope of pardon; and sin, like a millstone, is bound around the sinner's neck, and he is cast into the depths. Moreover, the law deals with sins of thought, the imagination of evil is sin. The transit of sin across the heart leaves the stain of impurity behind it. This law, too, extends to every act, tracks us to our bed-chamber, goes with us to our house of prayer, and if it discovers so much as the least sign of wavering from the strict path of integrity, it condemns us. When we think of the law of God, we may well be overwhelmed with horror, and sit down and say, 'God be merciful to me, for to keep this law is utterly beyond power; even to know the fullness of its meaning is not within finite capacity. Therefore, great God, cleanse us from our secret faults—save us by thy grace, for by the law we never can be saved'."

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NTMU offices:

U.S.A. > 208 Barons Rd., CLEMMONS, NC 27012-7203
Email: Bfallsrd@aol.com

U.K. > 60 Chesterfield Rd, EASTHAM CH62 8ER
Email: awrobinson@ntlworld.com

Spain > *Your Editor:* Jim van Heiningen, Apartado 31, 29700 VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA
Email: presson@telefonica.net

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Live Up To It!

Lessons from Ephesians

Howel
Jones

God; they are an essential part of the church by means of which God wants to manifest his wisdom to principalities and powers. His prayer for them is that they may come to a fuller appreciation of their privileged status and to "comprehend with all saints what is the length, breadth, height and depth" of God's love and be "strengthened with might in the inner man", rejoicing that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly beyond" any of their expectations.

Continuing our overview of the New Testament books we now come to a number of letters written by Paul during the time he was in Rome at the close of his ministry.

Having appealed to Caesar, when, during his imprisonment in Caesarea, the Jewish authorities were conspiring to assassinate him, Paul was taken to Rome where he was placed under a kind of house arrest. He uses the time to write encouraging letters to several churches and individuals. These letters - to the congregations of Ephesus, Colossae and Philippi and to Timothy, Titus and Philemon - belong to the reflective period in his life. He is now looking back and seeking to encourage and prepare these congregations - and individuals - for their present challenges and what might lie ahead for them. So, the first one to look at, is the Epistle to the Ephesian congregation.

They had come into being during Paul's third missionary journey. They were a strong church which features as one of the churches to which letters were written in the Book of Revelation. It had faced turmoil during its existence and yet manifested some real evidence of blessing, as well as examples of needing to stand firm. Paul felt at home there and, for three years, used it as a base during his ministry to various other congregations in that region. Much later the apostle John would do exactly the same.

Looking at the epistle of the Ephesians in its entirety we can trace four stages: 1) they are commended for their initial experience of Christ, and 2) reminded of how blessed they are to be part of God's purpose. Those two sections are followed by two challenges: 3) to live out a clear testimony in the ordinary circumstances of life and 4) to stand firm in the spiritual battle in which Satan is out to destroy that testimony. We look at each of these in turn.

First, Paul opens the letter by reminding them of the wonderful privilege that is theirs to be included as part of God's eternal purpose; blessed with every spiritual blessing in the 'heavenlies'; chosen and called to a glorious destiny; made his sons; redeemed and forgiven through his blood. All of this as a result of their hearing the word of truth and believing in it by faith, and then being sealed with the Holy Spirit, so that, transformed, they exist for the praise of his glory, expressing something of the fulfillment of that purpose.

Secondly, thanking God for that fact, Paul prays that they may experience (receive and live out) even more of that grace. He specifically mentions the hope to which they have been called and the riches of their inheritance; and especially the resurrection power that they have already experienced in their conversions. Though once dead in their natural sinfulness, they have now been brought to life by faith through God's generous grace. Though by nature strangers to the life of God, they have been brought in and incorporated into the "body of Christ", they have been built on the foundation of the apostles as a habitation of

Thirdly, such a privileged prospect carries with it certain obligations and responsibilities. So, the challenge is that they should walk worthy of this wonderful vocation. In doing so they are to be humble and cooperative. This highlights a significant feature of the church: it's oneness - they are to maintain its unity in the bond of peace. The church - God's vehicle expressing his glory - is corporate, comprising many different members-of-the-body. These members are gifts from God whose contribution stimulates other members. As they relate together, displaying right attitudes (e.g. 'speaking the truth in love'), there is mutual benefit. From such reciprocal nurture, with each member playing its part, the body grows into "the fullness of the stature of Christ". Seeing themselves as active - as well as actual - members of the body is a key element in exercising that responsibility.

Within that comprehensive picture each one is to live the new life and demonstrate the difference. They are to put off the old life, learned in their previous existence, and display those attributes that are typical of their new company and environment. There are a whole lot of things they must not do. That includes immorality, greed, anger, deceit, filthy and loose talk, and anything that is insensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Equally, just as they are to 'put off' the old man, they are to 'put on' the new, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Far from being foolish, they are to be wise, especially understanding the will of the Lord. These qualities are to be lived out in practical situations, especially with regard to personal, family and work relationships.

Fourthly, being aware of how precious - and vulnerable - the "church" is, they are told to protect themselves from destructive attack. Taking the analogy of a warrior, they are encouraged to clothe themselves with all the defensive armor, and trust in "the sword of the Spirit", so that they can survive by withstanding all the wiles of the devil and his subtle attacks.

What can we learn from this letter? That it is a blessed privilege of grace and faith to be part of the people of God, and to represent his excellence to a fallen world. We should seek to embrace more of him and his life in order to fully reflect his greatness. At the same time there is a responsibility to walk worthy of that calling, both together as one coherent and united "body", and also in everyday situations, constantly prepared to make use of the defensive armor against anything that would assail the Lord's testimony.

"Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints."

CITY OF THE CURSED

Jim van Heiningen

No Journeying Mercies

A Jewish man set out from Jerusalem to go to Jericho, most likely on a business trip, but he didn't get very far. At some point, perhaps half-way, he ran into painful problems. Ambushed by highwaymen and badly injured, he was left for dead as they took off with all his goods (Lk. 10). This, of course, is the introduction to a famous story told by Jesus. A story it is, but we have no reason to think that things didn't actually happen like He said.

Crime Doesn't Pay

Now the storyteller didn't say how many criminals were involved, but with a bit of speculation, it is not difficult to imagine that two of these men got caught eventually and were condemned to death - execution by crucifixion! Then, when their fateful day comes round, they find that there's a third man who is to die also. And when they hear the name - Jesus of Nazareth - it brings a glimmer of hope! Isn't He the One who, on numerous occasions, lifted the curse of disease and disability, of demons, even of death itself?

But, as the three of them hang there, nailed to rough crosses, helpless, naked, in excruciating pain, both criminals revile Jesus... Why? Because He isn't lifting their curse - to the contrary, it is clear He can't even free himself from the terrible curse of crucifixion that has come down upon him...

But a Criminal Can Pray

Matthew and Mark tell us about that in their Gospels, but Luke is the one to complete the story. In his chapter 23, it is as if he opens a window, and suddenly the scene of unmitigated curse becomes one of unlimited blessing. That is when one of the men humbles himself. Here we have a hardened criminal, and he's repenting and recognizing that they, as criminals, are only getting their just deserts, while Jesus is suffering innocently. Then he prays... Who does he pray to? He has realized that Jesus is, indeed, the King of the Jews, the Messiah himself. And so he asks to be remembered when Jesus has "come into his kingdom"!

First Down, then Up

Jesus isn't coming into his Kingdom just yet. He will first have to rise from the dead. For now He is going to

Hades, the realm of the dead, "descending into the lower parts of the earth", as the apostle Paul says (Eph. 4). Peter affirms in Acts 2 that when the Lord rose, He rose from Hades. From another story (Lk. 16:19-31), you will remember, of course, how Hades stood out as a destination of curse and despair. That was the backdrop, but we discover that one section of this realm could not be more different - Jesus called it "Paradise". It was a section filled with blessing and hope, and was reserved exclusively for all who were of the faith of Abraham.

Paradise on the Move

This spiritual Paradise was a wonderful reality, but though it had always been there - in Hades - that situation was now coming to an end. From the moment of Jesus' victorious resurrection, Paradise would be found, not in Hades, but in Heaven. Paul quotes Psalm 68 and describes that moment of triumph in Ephesians 4:

"When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive..." (see also Jn. 20:17; Rv. 1:18; 2 Co. 12:3-4).

With Christ

Jesus promises to meet the repentant criminal right there, in Paradise: "Today you will be with me in Paradise!" No more curse there! Note that by simple faith in the Messiah this pathetic human being has been transformed into a subject of the King - the Curse of sin on his life is broken! It has been forever exchanged for God's Blessing! Though still in agony on the cross, he is now "**with Christ**". Jesus could not have said: "You will be **with** me!", unless the man was already '**with** him' before dying. No one **without** Christ at the moment of death, will be **with** Christ after death. The cursed criminal, now a true son of Abraham, is ushered into Paradise, there to be with Christ forever and ever! In other words, when the rising Christ transfers Paradise to heaven, this man is there. When later Christ reigns over the world from Jerusalem, and Paradise is at long last restored to earth, the erstwhile criminal is there, with Christ! Wherever Christ is, this man will be there with him!

Now, we could go on from here and do more fascinating studying on the events surrounding all this, but that will have to wait for another opportunity - for now we must return to our subject of the "City of the Cursed".

No one without Christ at the moment of death, will be with Christ after death.

Were you guessing?

If you guessed 'Jericho' is the city we're thinking of, then you're spot on! It is not unlikely that the criminals, mentioned by Jesus in his parable of Luke 10, were based there, operating on the highways and byways surrounding the city. Remember that the victim of the story was on his way 'down' from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Back to Beginnings

But we have to go further back for a moment, all the way to Noah. Noah had a grandson, called Canaan, and God, knowing beforehand what life Canaan would be living and what his father Ham was going to hand down to him, prophesied through Noah of the curse on Canaan's life, on his descendants and on the land that would bear his name - the Land of Canaan (Gn. 9). But then in God's wonderful way of moving, the Land of Canaan became Abram's 'promised land', just as it would later be to the Israelites - the land flowing with milk and honey. In other words, the 'Land of Curse' was destined to become the 'Land of Blessing'.

Nothing Worse than God's Curse

That curse on Canaan and the Canaanites was real and terrible. God's curse is always the result of sin and points directly to God's judgment. Judgment may seem delayed; the curse may seem unreal, but even in Abram's time, down in the south of Canaan, judgment suddenly fell on the cursed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It shows us that the Canaanites of that area must have been "ripening" for judgment through many years, and when the point of no return had arrived, judgment was executed. The rest of the country though, was not yet ripe for judgment...

Judgment in the Making

From chapter 10 we learn that a good number of clans, or tribes, all of them Canaan's offspring, gradually filled all of the land. When Abram arrived in ch. 12, "the Canaanites were in the land (*which sounds as if they weren't supposed to be*). Then the **LORD** appeared to Abram and said, 'I will give this land to your offspring'." The Amorites were a prominent tribe of Canaanites. In ch. 15 Abram was told concerning their impending judgment, that "the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full". In other words, judgment was inevitable, but it was to be stayed until the Judge would give the word. God knew that another 400 years would be needed, so He tells Abram that his descendants through Jacob would be back in Canaan for that, once they had been liberated from Egypt. And that's exactly how it happened; 400 years later Moses brought the armies of the God of Israel right to the borders of Canaan, then Joshua led the invasion...

Who's in Charge?

But a surprise was in store for Joshua - he found that someone else was in reality the Commander of God's army (Josh. 5) - all Joshua could do was worship him. When we look at this meeting between the two, we realize that the "man with the drawn sword" was none other than the Lord Jesus himself. And, of course, from

Revelation 19, we know that He is the One who is yet to command an invading army. In spectacular fashion, He takes back Earth itself, and then judges and reigns from Jerusalem, lifting at last the curse that's on all of creation. In Joshua's time, it was Canaan that was then ripe for judgment. The Commander's sword was drawn - judgment was about to start... In Noah's time, God had used the Flood for judgment. At the tower of Babel, He used confusion of language. For Sodom and Gomorrah He used fire. This time it was going to be the drawn sword - and the children of Israel were the executioners...

Jericho

We may be sure that at this time, Jericho, the city of the cursed, was a bastion of idolatry & spiritism, violence, child sacrifice, gross immorality - all of that in utter defiance and contempt of the God of Noah and Abraham. Did the citizens of Jericho put up a fight? Ch. 24 says they did, but in ch. 6, where the fall of the city is described, there is no record of that. What we do read, again and again, is that "their hearts melted in fear", and well they might. Yet, even in that desperate situation, God's mercy intervened, as - so many centuries later - it would on behalf of the crucified criminal.

Rahab

She was one of the cursed women of Jericho. But Rahab put her faith in the God of Israel, and through that faith she was wonderfully saved from judgment - not only she, but her extended family as well. Joshua 2 & 6 tell us about that. And, just like Lot and his daughters had been snatched from Sodom before it burned, so Rahab and family were snatched from Jericho in the nick of time. Here we have a Canaanite woman, descendant of Ham, who has the curse exchanged for God's salvation and blessing. From now on she is counted among the descendants of Shem and Abraham. She even made it into the genealogy of the Messiah in Matthew 1. That distinction was due to the fact that Rahab, from the City of the Cursed, became the great-great-grandmother of King David!

Don't Nurse what's of the Curse

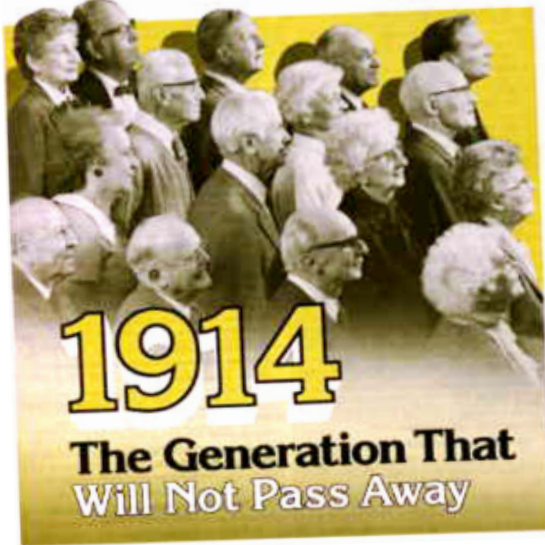
Jericho is destroyed, now what? First of all, God puts the Israelites on notice that if any man should have the temerity to rebuild the cursed city, he would be bringing back the curse - on himself and on his family. More than five centuries later, a man called Hiel does exactly that (1 Kings 16:34). No sooner have we read about that in Joshua 6, when in chapter 7 we read of Achan going after the stuff that is cursed, just as God's people are entering into their inheritance. Does it remind you of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5? Just as God's **EKKLESIA** was entering into its (spiritual) inheritance, this couple thought they could incorporate a bit of 'the curse' into their ministry. The curse on this world is not a trifling matter. His Word reminds us to "**come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; DO NOT TOUCH ANY UNCLEAN THING!**" (2 Co. 6:17).

Don't miss next issue's NT story of the 'City of the Cursed'.



The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



HEADS OF SILVER - MINDS OF DROSS?

According to **The Watchtower** (May 15, 1984), these 70-year-olds were **NOT** going to pass away before Armageddon. And my, didn't they try! But then, pass away they did...!

Now that a full century has passed, you may appreciate the following, telling parody by 'Jaymes', edited specially for PRESSING ON!

1914 is a very significant date for true believers. Here is why:

Faithful and eager students of the scriptures figured out and "proved" Jesus would return to kill the wicked and reward the meek in **1874**. The signs were obvious.

But, it didn't happen.

Faithful and eager students (the ones who didn't get disgusted and leave) sought to prop up this "return" by Jesus. They found an escape clause: Jesus actually did return! But he did so invisibly and could only be "seen" metaphorically...

"Armageddon" would bring destruction after a brief preaching opportunity (of 40 years). The year eventually was identified: **1914**. This was promoted, preached, published and "proved" once again. It was "God's date, not ours!"

But, it didn't happen.

Okay, back to the drawing board. What went wrong and what went right? What about Armageddon? Okay, wait! Wait! I got it! I got it! Jesus returned invisibly: NOT in **1874** at all. Jesus returned invisibly in **1914**!

Remember that "brief delay before Armageddon"? You know, the one between **1874** and **1914**? Well, we get to do it all over again. We will preach, promote, publish and pump it for all it is worth. Armageddon will come... hmmm... maybe in **1918**!

But, it didn't happen!

Mamma mia! What now? Let me see... got to think... got to think... Got it!

Jesus selected the group whom he would work with in **1918**, based on their faithful preaching about the phony date for Armageddon which was "God's date, not ours"... He picked President Rutherford's cronies to be the new instrument of spreading the good news! Yeah!

How close is the end? Rutherford's booklet tells us: "**MILLIONS NOW LIVING WILL NEVER DIE!**" Noah knew the Flood was coming, didn't he? Well, Rutherford had reason to be surer than Noah... That's what he wrote... Now we'll really get things right because we are chosen directly by King Jesus to spread the only TRUE message. The Armageddon scenario is any second now. The important thing is that the "Ancient Worthies" will be resurrected by **1925** (Abraham, David, etc.). And, you know what that implies, don't you?

For the resurrection to take place... **ARMAGEDDON** has to have taken place! Got it?

We are building a mansion in San Diego, California, for Abraham and the other "worthies" to live in. President Rutherford will keep everything cozy for them until they claim their homestead.

But, it didn't happen!

Uh... guess what?

ONLY NOW has King Jesus seen fit to reveal it to us. Read all about it: we are now not simply "Christians". That ain't good enough. No way. We are "**JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES!**" You look it up in Isaiah 43.

Our job (now) is to publish the good news about JEHOVAH! He is the editor of our illustrious **Watchtower** Magazine!

We can prove we are special and different from other (so-called) Christians:

1. We are the only ones who spread true prophecy by the direction of the King, in the name of his Father Jehovah. (That stuff about **1874**, **1914**, **1918** and **1925** proves it, because we were eager for prophecy to be fulfilled! You see? Accuracy isn't as important as eagerness.)

2. We are different. We won't let our children risk recovery in the emergency room - we'll deny blood transfusions. We will tear off half of the cross and make it a "torture stake". We'll urge door-to-door insulting of other people's beliefs and hold ourselves up as the only people with pure worship. Like what? Like we won't indulge in charity activity, won't build schools or universities or hospitals. We'll do important things instead. Like what? Ummm, we'll sell the **Awake!** and **Watchtower** with all this "eager" stuff in it.

3. Okay, we need money. To get money (for Jehovah's work, of course) we are now prepared to hint and insinuate when Armageddon will happen and THIS TIME we will be 100% accurate. See our chronology pre-

pared by the "anonymous" bible scholar, Freddy Franz: The date is **1975!!!**

4. It's gonna come. Be ready. Sell your house, quit your job and pioneer!!! Oh, and if you did sell your house, donate some money (or all of it) to us, so that we can continue the fine work, like building and buying up properties all around the world. What's that? Armageddon's coming and so we don't need real estate??? We are God's chosen agent on Earth and we decide what is right and what isn't!

5. We were really eager about this, but you guys ran ahead of us and you ASSUMED for **1975** something that didn't happen. SHAME ON YOU!

6. Get busy! We are watching everything you do. It isn't us that has the problem, you doubting Thomas! It is YOU! Toe the line. March in step or we'll put your name on Abaddon's list of "goats to be smashed at Armageddon".

7. Armageddon is still coming. We know this because we are the only religion on earth that has a 100% record when it comes to Bible Prophecy - (100% eager, if not completely in alignment with demonstrable occurrence.) We are "**Jehovah's Faithful and Discreet Slave**". We know that because we predicted that **1914** was an important date. Therefore, everything else we have ever said doesn't matter, because we got **1914** right. See?

You dispute **607 B.C.E.** as the real date of Jerusalem's destruction? Then HOW did we get **1914** right? Huh?

Sure it SEEMS like we are false prophets bringing shame on the name of Jehovah, because we publish our human opinion and pass it off as Truth, but, that isn't important!! Here is the only important thing: Apostates are spreading tales in attacking the "Governing Body" in Brooklyn. This proves they are siding with Satan. How? They oppose us - simple! And, last but not least...

Whatever we say you have to do - no questions asked! Even if what we ask you to do is wrong. Why? Because it proves you are "mild tempered and obedient". Only a person who thinks for himself would dream of going against us. And that would prove they were apostate. And, um, evil.

So, **1914** is a very important date because:

* We say so.

* We always said so; even when we were wrong about most of it.

* We can only be "the Faithful and Discreet Slave", if **1914** is true. So, man, it's got to be true!

* For **1914** to be true; **607 B.C.E.** has to be true. If it is wrong, it is only because it looks wrong and cannot be proved and not because it is actually wrong.

* Stop asking about it! You are getting on our nerves... End of discussion.

Coming soon: **Armageddon** (we are eagerly optimistic and as accurate as ever)! Keep reading **The Watchtower** and **Awake!**

The Rain of Victory

Watchman Nee

Six of us planned a fifteen-day preaching visit to an island off the South China coast. At the last moment a young brother, called Wu, joined the party. He was only sixteen and had just lately been born again, but there was a marked change in his life. Moreover he was very eager to come, so after some hesitation I agreed to take him. This made us seven in all.

The island was a fairly large one with a big main village. A herbalist took us in, making us quite comfortable on planks and straw in his attic. It was not long before this man became our first convert. But though we labored systematically and hard, and though we found the people of the village most courteous, we had very little fruit, and we began to wonder why this was.

On January 9th we were outside preaching. Wu with some others was in one part of the village and suddenly asked publicly: 'Why will none of you believe?' Someone in the crowd replied at once: 'We have a god - Ta-wang (meaning 'Great King') - and he has never failed us. He is an effective god'. 'How do you know that you can trust him?' asked Wu. 'We have held his festival procession every January for 286 years. The chosen day is revealed by divination beforehand, and every year without fail his day is a perfect one without rain or cloud', was the reply. 'When is the procession this year?' 'It is fixed for January 11 at eight in the morning.' 'Then', said Wu impetuously, 'I promise you that it will certainly rain on the 11th'. At once there was an outburst of cries from the crowd: 'That is enough! We don't want to hear any more preaching. If there is rain on the 11th, then your god is God!'

I was elsewhere in the village when this occurred. As soon as I heard of it, I saw that it was most serious. The news had spread like wild fire, and before long over twenty thousand people would know about it. What were we to do? We stopped our preaching at once, and gave ourselves to prayer. We asked the Lord to forgive us if we had over-stepped ourselves. I tell you, we were in deadly earnest. What had we done? Had we made a terrible mistake, or dare we ask God for a miracle?

The more you want an answer to prayer from God, the more you desire to be clear with him. There must be no doubt about fellowship - no shadow between. We did not mind being thrown out, if we had done something wrong. After all, you can't drag God into a thing against his will! But, we reflected, this would mean an end to the Gospel testimony in the island, and 'Ta-wang' would reign supreme for ever. What should we do? Should we leave now?

Up to this point we had feared to pray for rain. Then, like a flash, there came the word to me: "**Where is the God of Elijah?**" It came with such clarity and power that I knew it was from God. Confidently I announced to the brothers: 'I have the answer. The Lord will send rain on the 11th'. We could accept the devil's challenge in the Name of the Lord. Together we thanked him, and then, full of praise, went out - all seven of us - and told everyone.

That evening we once more prayed for rain - now! There came to us a stern rebuke from the Lord: "**Where is the God of Elijah?**" Were we going to fight our way through this battle, or were we going to rest in the finished victory of Christ? What had Elisha done when he spoke those words? (2 K. 2:14). He had laid claim to the very miracle that Elijah, now in the glory, had himself performed. In NT terms, he had taken his stand by faith - on the ground of a finished work.

We confessed our sins again. 'Lord', we said, 'We don't need rain until the 11th'. We went to bed, and next morning (the 10th) we set off for a neighboring island for a day's preaching. The Lord was very gracious, and that day three families turned to him, confessing him publicly and burning their idols. We returned late, tired out, but rejoicing. We could afford to sleep late in the morning.

I was awakened by the direct rays of the sun through the single window of our attic. 'This isn't rain!', I said. It was already past seven o'clock. I got up, knelt down and prayed. 'Lord', I said, 'please send the rain!' But once again, ringing in my ears came the word: "**Where is the God of Elijah?**" Humbled, I walked downstairs before God in silence. We sat down to breakfast - including our host - all very quiet. There was no cloud in the sky, but we knew God was committed. As we bowed to say grace before the food, I said, 'I think the time is up. Rain must come now. We can bring it to the Lord's remembrance'. Quietly we did so, and this time the answer came with no hint whatever of rebuke in it: "**Where is the God of Elijah?**" Even before our 'Amen' we heard a few drops on the tiles. There was a steady shower as we ate our rice and were served with a second bowl. 'Let us give thanks again', I said, and now we asked God for heavier rain. As we began on that second bowl of rice, the rain was coming down in buckets-full. By the time we had finished, the street outside was already deep in water and the three steps at the door of the house were covered.

Soon we heard what had happened in the village. Already, at the first drop of rain, a few of the younger generation had begun to say openly: 'This is God; there is no more Ta-wang! He is kept in by the rain'. But he wasn't... They carried him out on a sedan chair. Surely he would stop the shower! Then came the down-pour. After only some ten or twelve yards, three of the coolies stumbled and fell. Down went the chair and Ta-wang with it, fracturing his jaw and his left arm. Still determined, they carried out emergency repairs and put him back in the chair. Somehow, slipping and stumbling, they dragged or carried him half way round the village. Then the floods defeated them. Some of the village elders, of 60 to 80 years, bareheaded and without umbrellas, as their faith in Ta-wang's weather required, had fallen and were in serious difficulties. The procession was stopped and the idol taken into a house. Divination was made. 'Today was the wrong day', came the answer. 'The festival is to be on the 14th with the procession at six in the evening.'

Immediately we heard this, there came the assurance in our hearts: 'God will send rain on the 14th'. We went to prayer: 'Lord, send rain on the 14th at 6 pm and give us four good days until then'. That afternoon the sky cleared, and now we had a good hearing for the Gospel. The Lord gave us over thirty converts - real ones - in the village and in the island during those three short days. The 14th broke, another perfect day, and we had good meetings. As the evening approached we met, and again, at the appointed hour, we quietly brought the matter to the Lord's remembrance. Not a minute late, his answer came with torrential rain and floods as before.

The next day our time was up and we had to leave. For us the essential point was that Satan's power had been broken - that is an eternal thing. Ta-wang was no more 'an effective god'. The salvation of souls would follow, but was in itself secondary to this vital and unchanging fact. The impression on us all was a lasting one. God had committed Himself. We had tasted the authority of the Name that is above every name - the Name that has power in heaven and earth and hell.



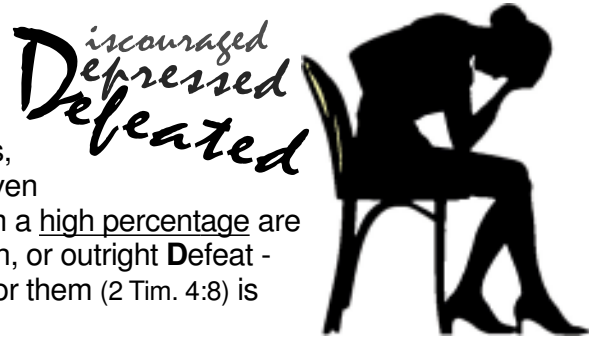
Dear reader,

We think and we hope that you will enjoy this latest issue of **PRESSING ON!**

Like every other true Christian, you're in the "race", in the spiritual one. And you know that after a while it's easy to start dragging your feet, lose sight of the "finishing line", get side-tracked, faint, even turn back. **Pressing On!** is here to inform you, to encourage you and to challenge you about **counting on God's grace for all of the race...**

As Philippians 3 informs us, there's the **goal** and there's the **prize** that are set before us, but then Hebrews 10 tells us that the "**considering**", the "**stirring up**", the "**exhorting**" are the things **all** of us are involved in: "*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*". It will be obvious to you that the 'considering, stirring up and exhorting' have everything to do with the "assembling". Jesus says that two or three in his name are sufficient for him to be very much present in the midst of them with all that He has to offer. It is absolutely basic for fruitful encouragement and challenge, that you and I plus other 'runners in the race' do so very humbly around HIM, looking to HIM and his open word. You too can be wonderfully used for your fellow "athletes". **Pressing On!** prepares and encourages the encouragers, and can prove to be a very worthwhile tool in your hands...

Picture yourself traveling round the planet, say from Canada, to Croatia, to Cameroon, to the Comoros, to Cambodia, to the Cook Islands, to Colombia or to Cuba. In every one of these countries you'll find true Christians. You may find some big groups, meeting in churches, and you'll find there are small groups, meeting in homes or wherever, even in prisons, but as you get to know them, you'll also find that among them a high percentage are feeling the effects of Satan's 3-D strategy - **Discouragement**, **Depression**, or outright **Defeat** - Christian "athletes" falling, or fallen, by the wayside. The crown laid up for them (2 Tim. 4:8) is receding and could be taken from them (Rev. 3:11).



Not in every country can such folks read English. In many of the 70 countries to which we send **Pressing On!**, English is not even the second language. However, there usually are individual Christians who know sufficient English to grasp the message. And some of these are receiving up to 30 or 40 copies for regular distribution.

We are fully persuaded that you too can become a most valuable encourager of the brethren! And we want you to plainly realize that **PRESSING ON!** is entirely at your disposal to help you, in other words, free of charge!

Please, consider the form below, pray over it, then fill out what applies and send it to us:

-
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 - Separately I am sending you names, addresses and e-addresses of Christian friends who have confirmed they would like to be on your mailing list, either for email or snailmail.
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 2. Once printed and filled out, scan and email the form to: **presson@telefonica.net**

“And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward” - Mt. 10:42.