

# *Youth* Messenger



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## David's Sling

*Not with the armor of King Saul,  
 Not with his jeweled sword,  
 Went Israel's champion forth to fight  
 The battle of the Lord.*

*"Give me the weapons I have proved,"  
 The stripling said, and took  
 For service in his trusty sling  
 Five pebbles from the brook*

*A single stone sufficient proved,  
 When guided by His will  
 Who gave the victory that day  
 On Elah's lonely hill.*

*Take thought, my soul, on David's faith,  
 Which leaned on God's strong arm  
 Nor shrank from duty's path or work,  
 Through fear of loss of harm*

*Take thought, my soul, on David's skill,  
 With armor wisely proved,  
 The simple weapons of his youth,  
 Whose use he knew and loved.*

*Not with another's armor thou  
 Canst gird thee for the fight  
 With giant sins, and bravely stand  
 The champion of right.*

*Another may have gift of tongues;  
 Another, songs of flame;  
 Thy single talent yet should serve  
 Thy Master's cause the same.*

*When doubts or fears beset thy path,  
 Take thought on David's sling,  
 And to the battle of the Lord  
 Thy simple service bring.*

—Mary Bassett Clarke

## Editorial

## "To the saints which are at Ephesus"

Many believe, myself included, that Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is the greatest of all his writings. He addresses the believers in Ephesus as "the saints" and "the faithful in Christ Jesus." He also claims for himself the title which the Lord gave to the Twelve, "an apostle of Jesus Christ."

Saints in Ephesus? How wonderful a testimony! Can we say there are saints in Sydney, New York, Washington, Los Angeles? By the grace of the Lord I believe He has His saints everywhere.

Ephesus—what kind of city was it? First, it was a very prosperous city. It was also a city of immorality and idolatry. The city boasted of the famous Temple of Diana, that was one of the wonders of the world and the center of a fertility cult. Emperor worship was a feature of religious life, and the temple was built to honor the emperor Claudius.

Against this pagan background, it is nonetheless evident that there were Christians living out their faith with purity, dignity and power.

We need to be aware that the life the Lord gives us does not depend on our environment. The life that Christ imparts to us when we come to know Him enables us to rise above circumstances. "Ephesus" for you and me may be in a factory, an office, a school, a college, or even your own home.

Though the atmosphere may be an unholy one where you hear

obscenities, blasphemies and lewd conversation, you can rise above these surroundings through the power the Lord has given you. You do not "drink" from the "waters of the world" but from the living waters of the Word of God. The world does not govern us, but rather Christ does. It is left to us to choose. It is not a problem if we are born in "Ephesus" or if we are born in sin, but only if we choose to remain in "Ephesus" and remain sinners. As it was important for the Ephesian believers to understand the difference between where they had come from and where they now were, so it is vital for us to have the same understanding. The Lord is calling us to know our place in the world. He has given us understanding of His will, and His will for us is to be His saints and "the faithful in Christ Jesus."

May this be our experience this year.

B. Jaksic



# African Youth Convention

December 19–27, 1998

by Joel Duarte—Virginia, USA



Dear Brethren,  
Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and with the awe-inspiring words found in Psalm 1:1, 2—"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

It is a privilege and pleasure to convey to you the news of the Youth Convention that recently took place in the beautiful country of South Africa. This event was held in a big complex which our church rented in Klerksdorp, a town approximately two hours from Johannesburg, South Africa's largest and most populous city.

The theme for this convention was "One in Christ Jesus," a theme

that reminds us of the position we are to take as the professed people of God—moreover, as His people living in the last stages of this earth's history. In Psalm 133:1 we read, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Several messages were presented with subjects such as *Justification by Faith*, *The Unity of the Church*, and *Growing in Christ*. Workshops were also conducted both by young people and by those who were not so young but with a long and vast experience. The main speakers were Brn. Jaksic, Burec, and Doss. However, many young people also led out in some meetings, including myself.

How do we learn to keep unity among ourselves as a church—and ultimately with God and His Son, Jesus Christ? These messages and workshops were selected and developed on a platform which we call principles. These principles are based on God's law of Ten Commandments. Therefore, if we abide by them through the power of Christ, we will be truly united one with another and obviously united to the Deity.

We discussed health reform, dress reform, music, entertainment, how to detect the enemy's temptations and snares, as well as the paths in which we are to walk. Above all, we came to the conclusion that we must drink and eat of the heavenly food to enable us to



**Boys' workshop  
at the Youth  
Congress**



**Another  
workshop**

be steadfast and wise while facing the antagonism of the prince of darkness and usurper of this world.

One special preacher that did not fail to remind and teach us about the character and love of God was nature. Our brethren arranged an outing to an animal reserve park close to our campground, where we saw animals in their natural habitat. Children, youth, and older ones all beheld the mighty hand of our God, not only in the beautiful animals which He has created, but also in the majestic scenery displayed before us.

The highlight of this convention was the immersion of 11 souls into the baptismal waters, renouncing their former lives and resurrecting in newness of life. Thus they made a

covenant with God and our Lord Jesus and officially joined the little company that bears the banner of God. Several parents dedicated their children to God as well.

Thirteen countries were represented from four continents—North America, Australia, Asia, and the host. One custom that I liked very much about the Africans is that during breaks between services, while the congregation is still seated, one person starts singing and immediately the entire congregation joins in the hymn in a peculiar African accent. What a lovely custom worthy of imitation!

I cannot let this opportunity pass by without expressing my gratitude towards my African brethren

for the hospitality, warm reception, and above all the love they extended to all who came from overseas. May the Lord richly bless them.

In conclusion, my dear young brothers and sisters, let us take heed of the counsel found in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." The servant of the Lord writes in *Messages to Young People*, p. 21: "God wants the youth to become men of earnest mind, to be prepared for action in His noble work, and fitted to bear responsibilities. God calls for young men with hearts uncorrupted, strong and brave, and determined to fight manfully in the struggle before them, that

they may glorify God, and bless humanity. If the youth would but make the Bible their study, would but calm their impetuous desires, and listen to the voice of their Creator and Redeemer, they would not only be at peace with God, but would find themselves ennobled and elevated. It will be for your eternal interest, my young friend, to give heed to the instructions in the word of God, for they are of inestimable importance to you."

My dear fellow youth, let us not look at the past, let us live the present and start working for true unity among God's people, unity in spirit and in truth, in order to be found at peace with our brethren and our King. May the Lord bless us all. Amen.



***Baptism at the Youth Congress***



***Some of those who attended the Youth Congress***



***Eleven souls were baptized***



***"International choir"***

# Youth Convention



**M**araruru, Mararuru" is Tahitian for thank you, thank you, and indeed, we can say thank You Lord, for the very blessed youth convention held on the island of Huahine, French Polynesia!

Those who had the privilege to be there will agree with me that this was one of the most unique and wonderful gatherings of young and old alike. We studied, we sang, we prayed, we went for walks, we cooked and ate "Tahitian Food" and enjoyed the most authentic Tahitian hospitality which, in my opinion, is among the world's best. Nowhere else are you met at the airport as you land, with musicians greeting you and following you. And not only

that, each passenger receives a wonderfully scented flower wreath around the neck; all men and women get the same treatment.

Once you have gone through Customs, you are greeted by our brethren who also give you more floral "necklaces." By the time all the brethren and sisters greet you and each one gives you another necklace, your head is hardly visible. (One thing, though, I hope you are not allergic to flowers, and go into sneezing fits as it happened to me!)

Now to the convention itself. The brethren built the camp by the sea, only a few steps from the Pacific Ocean waters. The "Tabernacle," as I called it, is a large building, and all

the other facilities were built in just three months specifically for the convention. This is now their permanent campground. The nearness to the water enabled some of us to go for the early morning walks along the white sandy and coral beach.

At 6 a.m. every day we divided into prayer groups to send our petitions to our heavenly Father to bless us for the day.

The theme of the meeting was "In the World for Christ." The order of the day began with a morning lecture followed by the workshop that was appreciated by all. The same order was followed in the afternoon, ending the day with the spiritual study, provided with emphasis for the many visitors that came every day.

The titles covered a wide range of topics, such as "Youth Involvement and Preparation to Be Workers for the Lord," to "What It Means to Be Justified and Sanctified." I thank the Lord for two young brothers who came with me from Australia; their contribution was greatly appreciated indeed. Brother Peter Szabo pre-

sented "Christian Standards" dealing with the Lord's will for our dressing, recreation, and music choices. It was well presented and a very keen interest was manifested by the listeners.

Brother George Nicholson Nikolov spoke of "The Experience of Slavery to Sin to the Freedom That Only Christ Can Give." And "Christ Can Go Further" dealt with the matchless love of God. As he was presenting this heart-warming message, many were touched to tears.

He also spoke of the relationship before marriage and warned young people not to venture on forbidden ground.

We were privileged to attend two sacred concerts by our brethren and young people from Tahiti and New Caledonia. One concert was also for the "People of the Island." Many came to share in the joy of praise and music dedicated to the glory of our Lord.

We also went to "Motu," a tiny island owned by our brethren. It was indeed a day of refreshment and recreation. Brother George met two



**Baptism of Brother Steven**

young ladies and invited them to come to share with us the fellowship and joy of being with Christ. They responded by coming to the camp and staying for the duration of the meetings. This was "missionary work in practice."

Pray that these two young ladies will continue attending our church meetings and learn of Jesus' saving grace.

We also visited some historic sites and places of interest. Perhaps the highlight of the convention was the baptism of Steven, the tall young man who came to Australia for our 1996 Youth Convention. He was touched when the call came to accept Christ as our personal Saviour. He later told me he would have come even if the call had not been made, for he had surrendered his life to Christ during the Convention. Praise the Lord for Steven's experience. May many more young people have such an experience.

Here is a portion of the letter written by the French Polynesian Field Secretary to the Australian Union Conference:

"We would like to let you know about the success of our Youth Congress that we had on the island of Huahine, from October 12-22, 1998.

"Hundreds of people were present, and we spent a nice time among the youth.

"At this opportunity, we'll send you our warm thanks for your help in making this congress a success. We were greatly blessed by the encouraging and good messages given by Brother Jaksic. Plus, the good advice given by Brother George was deeply appreciated by the youth. His enriching experience has touched many souls.

"We are also very appreciative of the testimonies given by the Szabo Family. We hope to improve this mutual relationship for the well-being of our youth."

May this "mutual relationship" continue and many more young people decide for the Lord!

Your brother and friend in Christ,  
*Brian Jaksic*



*Are You Aware of*

# What Is Going On?

by Ellen G. White

Society is now in a state of demoralization, and this will ripen until the nations become as lawless, as corrupt, as were the inhabitants of the world before the Flood. The degradation that is found in the world today is largely due to the fact that the Bible no longer exerts a controlling influence upon the minds of men. It has become fashionable to doubt. . . .

I feel the most intense anguish for our youth. I warn you, as one who knows the danger, not to be entrapped by Satan through the little knowledge of science which you may have acquired. It is better to have a pure and humble heart than all the knowledge you can possibly gain without the fear of the Lord. The youth of today will be likely to meet skeptics and infidels wherever they may go, and how necessary that they be equipped, so that they may be able to give a reason of their hope with meekness and fear. . . .

The youth often come in contact with those of skeptical tendencies, and their parents are in ignorance of the fact, until the terrible work of evil is consummated, and the youth are

ruined. The young should be instructed diligently, that they may not be deceived in regard to the true character of these persons, and not form friendships with this class, or listen to their words of sarcasm and sophistry. Unless our young people have moral courage to sever their connection with these persons when they discover their unbelief, they will be ensnared, and will think and talk as do their associates, speaking lightly of religion and the faith of the Bible. . . .

We fear more for those who are self-confident than for any others, for they will surely be entangled in the net that has been set by the great adversary of God and man. Some associate who has been chosen as a familiar friend, who has been tainted with the corruption of doubt, will instill his leaven of unbelief into the minds of this class. By fulsome flattery of their talent, their intellectual superiority, by inciting in them an ambition for high position, their attention will be gained, and moral blight will fall upon them. Those who are exalted in their own opinions will despise the blood of the Atoning

**You are invited!!!**

## *Far Eastern Youth Congress*

to be held May 4-9, 1999,  
in Kimchon, Kyungbook,  
South Korea

**For more information contact:**  
E-mail: [sdarm@worldnet.att.net](mailto:sdarm@worldnet.att.net)  
Phone: (540) 362-1800

Sacrifice, and will do despite to the Spirit of grace. . . .

Our youth will meet temptations on every hand, and they must be so educated that they will depend upon higher power, higher teaching, than can be given by mortals. There are despisers of our Lord everywhere, who habitually throw contempt upon Christianity. They call it the plaything of children, invented to impose on the credulity of the ignorant. Those who have not moral power cannot stand in defense of the truth; they have not courage to say: 'Unless such conversation ceases, I cannot remain in your presence. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, is my Saviour; in Him is centered my hope of eternal life.' But this is the very way in which to silence them. If you argue with them, they will have arguments with which to meet you, and nothing you may say will touch them; but if you live for Christ, if you are firm in your allegiance to the God of heaven, you may do for them that which argument will fail to do, and convince them of the fallacy of their doctrines, by the power of godliness. . . .

The youth should seek God more earnestly. The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury, by having repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all

sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near! The prophet says: 'Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger' (Zephaniah 2:3).—*The Signs of the Times*, April 21, 1890.

Never were the youth of any age or country so earnestly observed by the angels of God as are the youth of today. All Heaven is watching with intense interest for every indication of the characters they are forming—whether, when brought to the test, they will stand firmly for God and the right, or be swayed by worldly influences.

There are many who profess Christ, but are unacquainted with Him. They do not serve Jesus, do not love His requirements. Satan is well pleased with such, for he can use them to decoy others from the

right path. But those who are truly converted, whose hearts are fully set to do right and to press against the strong current of self-indulgence and pleasure-seeking, are objects of his bitter hatred, and he will bring to bear against them all the opposing influences within his reach.


God has a great work to be done in a short time. He has committed to the young talents of intellect, time, and means, and He holds them responsible for the use they make of these good gifts. He calls upon them to come to the front, to resist the corrupting, bewitching influences of this fast age, and to become qualified to labor in His cause. They cannot become fitted for usefulness without putting heart and energy into the work of preparation. . . .

When the young choose the service of Christ, and prove that through divine aid they have the moral principle to govern self, they are a power for good, and an influence goes out from them that leads others to glorify God. Satan knows this, and he seeks to gain control of the talents of the young, that he may use them in his service. His bewitching snares are ever around them. He excites the natural tendency to selfishness, self-indulgence, and impatience of restraint. He allures them to ruin by absorbing their time and taking their attention, so that there is neither time

nor inclination for prayer and the study of the Scriptures. He tries to make them believe that the requirements of Christ restrict their liberty and hinder their enjoyment. Is it not well to become wise as to his devices?

The service of Christ is not so hard as Satan would make it appear. It is true that liberty to sin is restricted, and we must learn to suffer reproach for Christ's sake. But the requirements of God are made in wisdom and goodness. In obeying them, the mind enlarges, the character improves, and the soul finds a peace and rest that the world can neither give nor take away. When the heart is fully surrendered to Jesus, His ways will be found to be ways of pleasantness and peace.

It is a divine law that blessings come at some cost to the receiver. Those who would become wise in the sciences must study; and those who would become wise in regard to Bible truth, that they may impart that knowledge to others, must be diligent students of God's holy word. There is no other way; they must search the Scriptures diligently, interestedly, prayerfully. Precious words of promise and encouragement, of warning, reproof, and instruction, are there found. They will learn of Christ's love, the value of His blood, and the wonderful privileges afforded by His grace.—*The Youth's Instructor*, May 7, 1884.



*Never were the youth of any age or country so earnestly observed by the angels of God as are the youth of today*

# *The last 200 meters*

*In this life many kinds of races I've run  
In some I've done well, and many I've lost.  
The last 200 meters were crucial whenever I've won,  
And often those 200 meters me the trophy did cost.*

*As every athlete and trainer will tell,  
No matter how well you run the race through,  
Nothing will influence the outcome so well,  
As your pace in the last 200 meters will do.*

*The Christian event began long ago,  
Many a fine one has finished his race.  
So many more just too weary did grow,  
Dishonoring their Lord, they departed from grace.*

*Now unto us running right at the end,  
The batons of faith and truth have been passed.  
For life everlasting we now must contend,  
Or else be found wanting and left out at last.*

*Some among us have been running for years,  
of the careless and vain ones there are not few,  
While others are wearied by suffering and tears,  
Still others to both race and its trials are new.*

*All of us, though, are in the last bend.  
The voices we hear and the wind in our hair,  
Tell us for certain we're nearing the end.  
"Only 200 meters!" is what they declare.*

*Hold fast to the baton of truth you've received.  
Your feet and your legs and body may ache,  
Remember Him, though, on Whom first you believed,  
of all these pains He a great blessing can make.  
Though brother or sister spikes your heels and your  
heart, be it for spite, love or no care,  
Stop not to consider, nor yet blame to impart,  
Encourage them only and your own comfort share.*

*Many the bystanders now round the track  
Some rotten fruit and insults will hurl.  
Leave not the course, O please turn not back,  
Though to entice you they offer a pearl.  
Many a hurdle there'll still surely be,  
And many a friend will fall by the way.  
Suffering and torture you're likely to see,  
but oh, let not anything cause you to stray.*

*Lengthen your stride, though you feel you might faint.  
Pump faster your arms, and increase your breath.  
Above all, look up where your Master awaits  
With life everlasting and victory wreath.  
Only 200 meters between you and the word:  
"Well done, faithful servant, full joy is your right."  
Just 200 meters till your eternal reward.  
These 200 meters, oh run with your might!*

*—Sonia Vitus, Ontario, Canada*

# Pride vs. Humility

One of the signs of the perilous last days is that people tend to be very conceited. (See 2 Timothy 3:1, 2.) No one really likes a proud or conceited person, yet we may have this un-Christlike characteristic without even realizing it. The following puzzle teaches us much about what the book of Proverbs says about pride, and about the opposite quality—the grace of humility.

## Across:

- 1 The Lord will \_\_\_\_\_ the house of the proud (15:25).
- 3 Go, \_\_\_\_\_ thyself, and make sure thy friend (6:3).
- 5 Only by pride cometh \_\_\_\_\_ (13:10).
- 7 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up \_\_\_\_\_ (28:25).
- 8 A man's \_\_\_\_\_ shall bring him low (29:23).
- 11 Pride goeth before \_\_\_\_\_, and an haughty spirit before a fall (16:18).
- 13 Go not forth \_\_\_\_\_ to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame (25:8).
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_ honour is humility (18:12).
- 18 Honour shall \_\_\_\_\_ the humble in spirit (29:23).
- 19 Before destruction the heart of man is \_\_\_\_\_ (18:12).

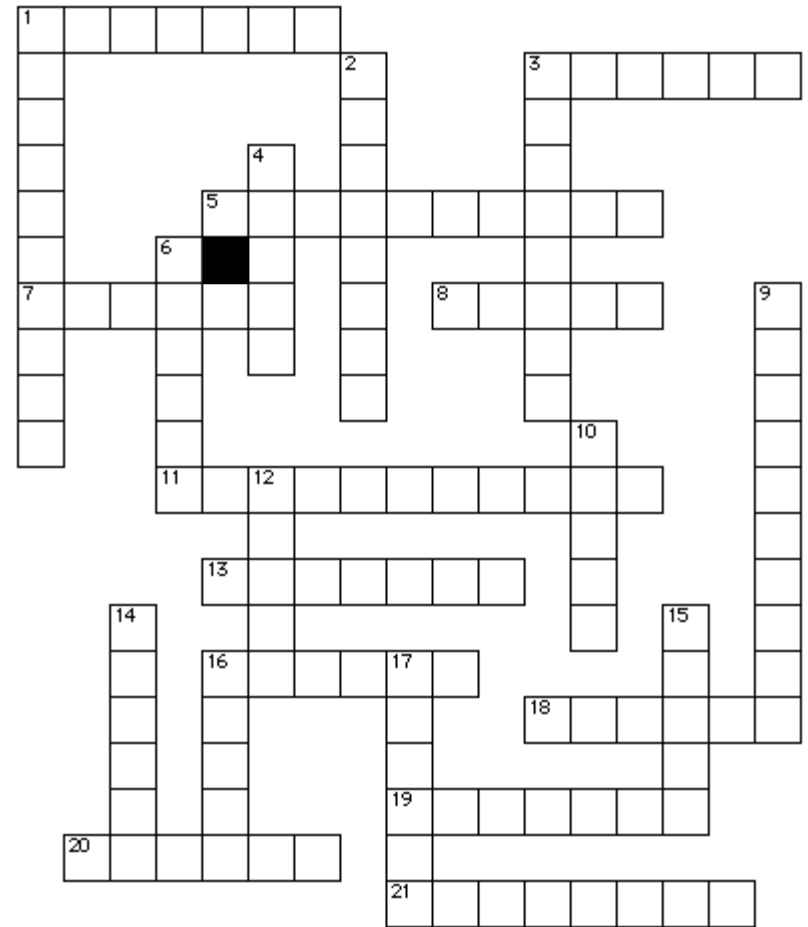


20 \_\_\_\_\_ it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud (16:19).

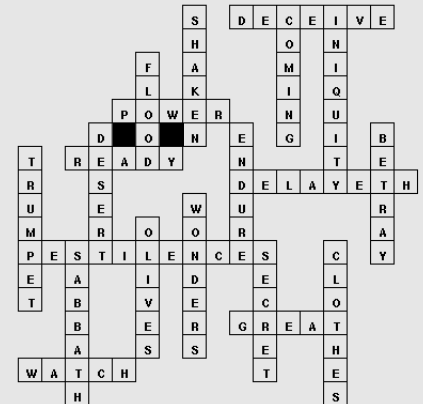
21 Surely he \_\_\_\_\_ the scornors: but he giveth grace unto the lowly (3:34).

## Down:

- 1 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be \_\_\_\_\_ (13:11).
- 2 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a \_\_\_\_\_ man who can find? (20:6).
- 3 The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is \_\_\_\_\_ (15:33).
- 4 Better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen (25:7).
- 6 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the \_\_\_\_\_, is sin (21:4).
- 9 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be \_\_\_\_\_ (16:5).
- 10 With the \_\_\_\_\_ is wisdom (11:2).
- 12 When pride cometh, then cometh \_\_\_\_\_ (11:2).
- 14 Let another man \_\_\_\_\_ thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips (27:2).
- 15 For men to search their own \_\_\_\_\_ is not glory (25:27).
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_ not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth (27:1).
- 17 By humility and the fear of the Lord are \_\_\_\_\_, and honour, and life (22:4).



## Answers to last issue's puzzle entitled, "Signs of Christ's Coming."





## "I Care . . ."

Submitted by Tobias L. Stockler—Ontario, Canada

The smell of smoke and the early beams of dawn were just beginning to compete for attention in their bedroom, as Ann crouched between the beds of her two sons and woke them. Quickly she got them out of bed, telling them to stay down low. Using their bed sheets tied together as a rope, she started to let Wayne out of the second story window. Part way down the knots came loose. The six-year-old plummeted to the sidewalk below, dashing the young mother's hope for him to "run and get Grandma" next door. She knew the flames in the living room prevented her from calling the fire department from her own

phone. In desperation she yelled out the window, "Mama!, MAMA!"

"Mama" was up early this Saturday morning, as usual. She was busy studying her Sabbath School lesson when the note of distress roused her. Quickly she ran to see what was the matter. She then quickly awakened the downstairs neighbors and called the fire department.

The freshly awakened neighbor ran across the street and returned with a ladder that almost reached to the window. Ann lowered her frightened eleven-year-old the four feet down to the top rung. "Let yourself down to the ladder," several called up. There was Ann, her dark hair and beautiful face framed by the win-

dow of a burning building. It was only a matter of a few minutes and this very window would possibly go up in smoke. Every moment counted, and yet Ann did not climb out. Her weary voice called back, "I can't—my hands." As she spoke she raised her hands, hands that a moment ago were busily engaged in sparing the life of her two precious boys. Her hands and face were burned!

Ann was the daughter of David and Mae. David was a self-indulgent father, whatever other capabilities he might have possessed. Leisure pursuits suited his nature more than the stern realities of family life, and he preferred the pool hall and similar activities to being home with his fam-

ily. Mae was the direct descendant of the sturdy Pennsylvania Dutch, who meant to carve out by hard work and a stern hand (in addition to her more "motherly" qualities and deep religious commitments) a beautiful home and family. The life philosophies and practices of the two parents strongly clashed and they separated. But the influence of both was certain on the tender wax of character of their four little children.

Their daughter Ann was now grown and with children of her own. She wrestled with the good and bad sides of her own heart. Her better nature wanted the best for her two sons, and, if she ever admitted it, for herself.

Her evil nature tempted her with harmful habits, in this particular case smoking. Although well trained in the talk and outward acts of religion, she had never found in it the power to strengthen every right desire and conquer every hurtful one. Instead she tried to use her own will power to limit her interest in cigarettes. And so we find her on that fateful Friday night with a stormy battle raging within herself, stifling it down until her boys were fast asleep, and then falling again as a helpless slave to the passions of her own heart. Her mind fought with herself long into the night on this and many other matters, while she smoked in the lonely solitude of the living room of her second story apartment.

Sleep became the final victor. Its sweet power demanded the problems from that weary mind, paying them back with the relaxation she so desperately needed. Her dark eyes shut, her head with its long dark hair slumped in rest against the back of the couch.

She awoke some time later to find sleep was not only her temporary savior but also her deadly betrayer. The same brain signals that relaxed the face of the worrying mother into beauty, relaxed the clutch of her lips on the cigarette, dropping it on the couch seat beside her. It had smoldered, gaining

courage by time, till it blazed into flames. Ann responded instantly, beating out the flames. Then she went to bed.

While she slept, the fire eventually flared up again in the living room. Early in the morning hours, Ann awoke.

Running through the flames she moistened towels in the restroom and tried once more to beat out the fire. When Ann saw that she could not extinguish it, she went to her sons' room and awakened them. Painfully she must have knotted those sheets—pain as she tried to force her burned hands into action for the rescue of her sons, and pain knowing that she was responsible for the danger that now threatened all of their lives. And now as she stood at the bedroom window, her hands were too weak and sore to use in saving herself.



Quickly a man went up the ladder and let her down out of the window. Quickly, too, the fire department arrived and put the fire out. While the living room was gutted, much of the rest of the building was all right except for the stench of smoke. . . .

Years passed since this event. But my father's memory of seeing his mother standing in the window saying "I can't" still haunted him. He knew that in allowing her hands to be burned to save her beloved children, the message unspoken was "I care."

Likewise, God also cares for each one of us with a most tender love. His hands were "burned" in the process of saving you just as surely as they were burned in the process of saving me. He hurts for us individually more surely than Ann suffered for her sons. But maybe you don't sense His presence as easily as my father sensed his mother's. Maybe His care is less conspicuous than hers was. Maybe you are sure that God cares for you, but somehow you just don't see how. I also have struggled with seeing God in an age that

## The message unspoken was "I care."

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attempts to bury His working under numerous classifications, "unbiased" observations, and noisy commotion till the plain facts of His working are nearly obscured. But this does not change the fact that He loves you very, very much.

Will you trust your good and bad sides to Him? Will you give Him your struggles for today and say in all of today's activities, "Let it be Thy will, not my will?" Do you really believe that sufficient to today is its evil and therefore you choose to leave all worries and unnecessary plans for tomorrow in God's lap? Whether you send your thoughts quietly to God or kneel down right now and pour your heart out to Him in a thousand words, He is listening to you. Talk to Him now. And may God richly bless your prayers. Amen. 🌿

**You are invited!!!**

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# Belshazzar vs. Belteshazzar

by Tobias L. Stockler—Ontario, Canada

Outside the palace walls, Babylon is beautiful and serene. On both sides of the winding Euphrates sprawl 4 square miles of city. Beyond its sturdy walls, irrigated grain fields and palm trees spread below the summer sunset. Like London or Paris, Babylon stands an influence and leader in culture and politics. Its massive walls and international respect give a strong sense of security that even yesterday's reverse did not damage. Granted, King Nabonidus did lose the battle when Persian forces attacked just north of the city. But then he with his army simply retreated into town. Neither he nor his son, King Belshazzar,<sup>1</sup> seem very disturbed.

King Belshazzar's feast is still "on" tonight. Hundreds of political leaders, with their ladies, are gathered in the great palace hall. Belshazzar himself is host. The feast is in honor of Bacchus, the god of wine. It is a raucous and sensual affair.

King Belshazzar glances with pride out over the hall. Rapturous music, delicious food, and superb wine give a luxurious feeling. All is going well. We are leading the world—we have been for the last seventy years. The economy is

good. We dominate the international scene. The instability that plagued the government fifteen years ago is practically forgotten. Now matters are settling down under my co-rule. Life is wonderful. I am absolutely great! If it weren't for me, where would our nation be today? Nothing is too special for me. Waitress, bring out the vessels we seized from Jerusalem's Temple. We will drink from those tonight!

There is a movement over there. Above the din of chatting and flirting people I see a hand carving letters of fire into the palace wall. What could that mean?

Shock is followed by fear. A white face and violent shivering betray the rush of adrenaline. Conscience adds deep guilt to fear. Memory opens its doors and harmful choice after harmful choice comes to mind. A thick silence fills the room as Babylon's leadership mirrors the drunken king's experience.

Finally, the monarch gains enough composure to gasp out: Bring in the wise men! There is a flurry of activity by the waiters and soon a group of prestigious men assemble. Painfully, Belshazzar speaks again: anyone who can read that message and explain it will be our new Prime Minister.



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Slowly the wise men all turn and stare at the wall. Eagerly they each strain to decipher the mystery. Is it Chaldean? No. Persian? Egyptian? No. Do I even know that language? What does it say? Maybe it is cryptic. Is it a message for the king? Is it a message for the nation? Does it mean glory? Is it threatening harm? Oh, what can it mean? I wish I knew. Finally, reluctantly, each “wise man” acknowledges his complete incompetence for this task. Shock and terror again settle like oppressive fog in the room. Who can read this?

Just now the queen appears. Would she maybe have good advice? Ah yes, she has heard about the message.

Here, Belshazzar, is my advice: don't be troubled; your grandfather's old and trusted advisor Belteshazzar, otherwise known as Daniel, is able to read this and explain it.

What a painful thought! Call Daniel? Everything he stands for I reject! He is from the old regime. Daniel? Do I really want to call him? Oh well, maybe he will know. “Call Daniel.”

An old but dignified gentleman

appears. The king looks down at him and composes himself. “Are you Daniel? I have heard about you. My wisest men can't decipher those letters up there on the wall. I hear you are able to understand mysterious things. If you can explain that message I will honor you with the post next to me in this government.

Daniel looks at Belshazzar. He can remember when this young man was a little boy, back to when the royal family proudly announced his birth. During the early years of his life, this young boy heard the stories of his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, and his grandfather's Prime Minister, Daniel, over and over again. He knew of the dream and the golden image. And he knew very well of the years his grandfather spent “out to pasture.” He also knew of his grandfather's conversion. He knew that his grandfather made Babylon great by help from the true God. That his grandfather prospered when he cooperated with Daniel's God. And that trouble and defeat came when his grandfather ignored Daniel's God. Still, young Belshazzar chose lustful pleasure and worldliness

instead of the God who gives real peace and deep joy. He chose the “good life.” Plenty of wine, “pretty” girls, cheap flattery and self praising, and as little work and as much fun and excitement as possible.

How different from Daniel's own childhood! He also grew up as royalty. He too was once a young prince. As a young person he also had the opportunity and necessity of learning lessons from those who lived before him. And he had! He refused the wine and food of the “good life,” just because of remembering (with the help of prayer) that Nadab and Abihu were killed by God for using wine. How much better if Belshazzar followed his example.

Although he was captured and subjugated, God gave him so much wisdom, made him so useful, and gave him such great integrity, that Nebuchadnezzar chose to give Daniel the second highest post in this government. And how much had he been involved in this country ever since!

Now in front of the old and time-honored Daniel sits the young king. He must speak to him. This king knows the consequences of refusing Daniel's God. He knows of Daniel's integrity. And in the face of all this he chose to reject and defy God. The knowledge of that rejection wells up inside of him as fear of that handwriting now. What could it mean? Daniel will tell him.

Daniel refuses any honors. Calmly he reminds Belshazzar of God's discipline of his grandfather's pride. You refused humility in the face of history's lesson that God will not tolerate pride. This message is God's judgment of your pride and of the pride of Babylon. The message is this: God considered you and your kingdom. He found both of you lacking. He finished you and gave your

kingdom to the Persians camped outside your walls.

Belshazzar kept his word to honor Daniel. And God kept His word to dishonor Belshazzar. “In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.” Daniel 5:30–6:2.

How different the fate of those two men; both born and educated in similar environments but choosing two very different courses. Daniel chose to make the most of himself and his circumstances while firmly maintaining humble loyalty and obedience to God. Through the catastrophic events of that night, he was catapulted to the top of a new government. For the second time, he served as Prime Minister. And the same event forever ended the short career of Belshazzar. In some ways, Belshazzar had even more opportunities to do good than did Daniel. But personal choice in spite of circumstances determine character and destiny. It did for Daniel, and it will for us. Then let us make good choices with the help of God. Who knows where God can use us in this world if we do make right choices. But we do know that if we will learn from the lessons of history to make those right choices we will live with Daniel in the next world.

<sup>1</sup> *Historical note: Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, after a reign of 15 years appointed his son as “co-king.” Belshazzar co-reigned with him for the last three years of Babylonian rule.* 🐾



# *The Difference*

*Some murmur when their sky is clear  
And wholly bright to view,  
If one small speck of dark appear  
In their great heaven of blue.*

*And some with thankful love are filled  
If but one streak of light,  
One ray of God's good mercy, gild  
The darkness of their night.*

*—Unknown*

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