

Living to Win

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Thy Kingdom Come!

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes, by Allie Dart

I don't consider Jewish beliefs to be the norm for Christians, but the original Gospel accounts were written in such a way as to be understandable to Jews and practitioners of Judaism. Judaism is not the authority on what Christians should do and how they should understand the Bible. Make no mistake, the Bible is the sole authority. Since the Bible is our sole authority, it is all the more important that we should be careful interpreting what we are reading.

A point was made in the *Christian Origins* series to keep in mind, when we read the Bible, that we're reading someone else's mail. And because of that, we often make mistakes in understanding what we are reading. This CD series is chock-full of vital information for a biblical student. It's highly recommended that you get your copy from CEM.

Years ago, when I was teaching public speaking, I came to realize how important it is that a man know his audience and that he speaks to the audience in front of him, not to the audience that isn't there. Most TV or radio Bible-based programs are delivered in front of an audience of Christian people,

usually a church. This powerfully influences the man doing the program.

My radio programs are done in studio, with an audience of one. And I rarely think of him as I do the program. I am thinking of a truck driver headed north out of New Orleans, or a housewife listening to the radio while she does her ironing, or a family on their way to church on Sunday morning.

When the men who wrote the New Testament sat down to write, their audience was very familiar with two strong influences. The Old Testament, which was the only Bible in existence at the time, and Judaism, the culture in which they

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Thy Kingdom Come!

from Ronald L. Dart's notes 1

Giving Your Share, and Getting in Return

..... 1

Being Present in Love

By Paula Hughes 2

From a Reader

..... 2

In Memory

..... 2

Hold the Line!

By Hugh Buchanan 2

learned the Bible, even if they were Gentiles.

As you read the New Testament, it is important to know that the Gentiles you encounter in its pages were already believers in the God of Israel. They were even in Synagogue attendance, because that was the only place they heard

continued on page 3. .

Giving Your Share, and Getting in Return. . .

“Charity often begins away from home, in the form of highly appreciated investments and using the profits to fund worthy trust donations in fact made in cash. A tax-savvy giving strategy that also allows you to receive—and give even more. It works. Instead of cashing out of a winning position and writing a check, transfer ownership of the security—stocks, bonds, mutual funds and other assets—directly” (*Portfolio Insights*, by Brett Arends). If you have penny stocks or other stocks, bonds, mutual funds or assets that have greatly appreciated and you don't want to pay taxes on them, this is a good win-win way for you and CEM to benefit. If you have any questions, please call CEM at 1-888-BIBLE 44 and talk with Paula Hughes.

Being Present in Love

by Paula Hughes

To speak of being “present” sounds like psycho-babble. Aren’t we always “present” wherever we are? And with the question, the answer whispers in our minds: “No, my mind is sometimes not where my body is.” It’s those times when we daydream. When we look right at someone while they talk to us, thinking of something else.

While we all do this sometimes, we can probably agree it is not the way we should interact habitually with our friends, our brothers and sisters, or anyone else—not even with that pesky complainer among us. For what did Christ call each of us to do? To love one another (John 13:34). Christ called it a command, and said it was how

others would know that we are his disciples (John 13:35). Think about it: a commandment, and a sign to identify who we follow. Sounds like the Sabbath day, doesn’t it? Do you treat it as if it is just as important?

Simply Youth Ministry Today says there are four things we can do to show love. Show up when we are needed. Be present—give the person or situation our full attention. Make ourselves available to help with special requests. And finally, show up again after the initial hubbub has faded, and everyone else has gone back to their normal life.

If we can do this, Jesus has said that we will be his disciples indeed (John 8:31).

From A Reader

Hi Allie,

I know you are more accustomed to seeing an e-mail from Cynthia than me but I was hoping you could pass on a “thank you” to Ron, from me.

I was doing some research on biblical covenants so I decided to read Ron’s book, *Law & Covenant*. I have had it for quite a while but in the busyness of life had just not got around to reading it. It so impressed me and I enjoyed it so much I’m on my second reading now. The points he made concerning perfection versus excellence, the distinction between the “old” and the “new” covenants pertaining to Israel, the personal covenant we have with Jesus as Christians, the proper approach to authority in the church—these and more rang true with me. I very much enjoyed this book and I just wanted to pass on to Ron my thanks and appreciation for his work.

I hope you both are doing well and the upcoming Holy Days are really good for you both.

Ron Saladin

In Memory

Christian Educational Ministries gratefully acknowledges a very generous donation in memory of Jim Ross. Jim was a zealous student of the Bible, a devout Christian, and an active participant on CEM’s Forum. We’ve missed Jim and look forward to seeing him in the resurrection.

Hold the Line!

By Hugh Buchanan

It was on a stiflingly hot day in July that Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain found himself on a wooded hillside in Southern Pennsylvania. Positioned there by his superior officer with 300 men, the remnant of the 20th Maine Regiment, his task was to defend Little Round Top, a small hill that protected the left flank of the Army of the Potomac. To lose this ground would mean the loss of the battle, loss of the army, the loss of the war, the loss of the Union. It was the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War.

He took stock of his assets and liabilities. The 20th Maine held the superior position. Chamberlain’s men were experienced war veterans and were committed to their cause. On the other hand, their ammunition was limited, and they were facing a force of unknown

continued on page 3. . .

Thy Kingdom Come!
continued from page 1 . . .

the Scriptures read. So even Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was writing his letters to people well aware of the Scriptures and Judaism.

If memory serves, the letter to the Romans contains some 46 direct quotations of the Old Testament, and still more indirect allusions to it. So a modern Christian reader who has neglected the Old Testament is at a severe disadvantage in reading the New Testament.

Oskar Skarsaune said that the church didn't begin to encounter "raw Gentiles" until about 120 A.D. Thus, the New Testament was written to be read by people strongly aware of the Judaism of the time. (Mostly, to have it read to them.)

You'll learn many surprising things from this message such as what a Jewish scholar, Jacob Neusner, wrote in *Judaism When Christianity Began*: "When Israel really wants the Messiah to come, he will come." It is a stunning idea you need to understand.

But you must remember how Jesus told us to pray in Matthew 6:9-10: "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven." This is the first request in the Lord's prayer: Thy Kingdom Come. I don't believe for a moment that there is anything we can do to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. Neither do the Jews.

Here is what Jesus said about

the time: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:35-36 NKJV).

There is a common assumption that God has something like a big red X on his calendar at the date he intends for Christ to return. But this Scripture does not require that point of view. Paul hints that even if there is a date or a time, it could be cut short. "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28 KJV). Just how short will God cut his work? How will you know? When you pray, "Thy Kingdom come," do you mean it? How bad do things have to get before you can really put your heart into asking God for his Kingdom to come? This is a most important message, *Thy Kingdom Come*, that you need to order. Its *FREE!* A card is enclosed for your convenience. Just mark it and return it today.

Hold the Line!
continued from page 2 . . .

strength. Their attackers were also experienced in battle and had the advantage of extreme confidence, born of their many victories against the larger and better equipped Union Army.

Shortly, Confederate troops were seen advancing up the slope. Although outnumbered, Chamberlain's tactical

advantages allowed the 20th Maine to repel the initial attack and the second and third assaults.

Attempting to flank the Union position, the 15th Alabama prepared for a fourth assault on the hill. The 20th Maine was now nearly out of ammunition and had lost a third of its complement. Chamberlain quickly convened a meeting with his officers and told them his plan to meet the next assault. The 20th Maine would redeploy the line and then, with bayonets fixed, they would charge the advancing Confederates.

Here is Chamberlain's account of the bayonet charge: "Ranks were broken; some retired before us somewhat hastily; some threw their muskets to the ground—even loaded; sunk on their knees, threw up their hands calling out, 'We surrender. Don't kill us!'"

Those 200 men with empty rifles routed the 500 men of the 15th Alabama. Their dogged determination to hold their position defeated the enemy and made them flee before the advancing tide of fixed bayonets.

The inspiring example of the 20th Maine's stand on Little Round Top contains lessons for the Christian. Christians are at war and we have been admonished to fight. We have an adversary, the devil. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). He is a ruthless killer who seeks to deny us eternal life. Christ describes him as a

continued on page 4 . . .

Hold the Line!

continued from page 3. . .

murderer. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

Like the Confederate attack on Little Round Top, Satan attacks us with wave after wave of persecution, troubles, attacks on faith, character assassination, and temptations to give up the Christian way. He tempts us to disobey God. He pressures us to renounce our relationship with God and to accuse him of evil. He delights in destroying good relationships among people. His goal is to force us to relinquish our position, to give up our tactical advantage against him.

But we hold the high ground. “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

Like Chamberlain’s unit, God has placed us where we can fight, in a high tower, a fortress. We have protection from God, our shield and buckler. God outfits us for battle with spiritual armor. Ephesians 6 describes our equipment for spiritual warfare: the truth; righteousness (obedience to the commandments); the firm footing or foundation of the Gospel (the good news of God’s coming Kingdom); faith; the

hope of salvation; the Word of God; and prayer.

Christ entered into single combat with and defeated Satan at the beginning of his earthly ministry. The record of this battle is in Luke 4:1. A study of this encounter with the enemy will show that Christ was wearing his battle dress, the armor of God that Paul described, and that his weapons were gleaming and ready. He defended himself with prayer, with the truth, with his knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom, with righteousness. He used his sword, the Word of God, to parry Satan’s strokes. In the end, Satan had to retreat, defeated. Christ knew he was on the high ground with a significant tactical advantage. He didn’t relinquish this advantage, he exploited it to win the battle. He didn’t give Satan a chance! He did this to show us that we could do it too! “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

We have all of God’s ammunition, but it’s invisible. Remember, the tide of battle does not depend on the physical resources we can see. Satan will manipulate physical circumstances to demoralize us. The battle is in the mental and spiritual realms, not the physical one. This is where we must fight him. Stubbornly hold on to faith and hope and trust in God and His righteousness. “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy,

according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Timothy 1:18-19).

We can hold the line against Satan and when we do, he has to retreat from us as he retreated from Jesus. He will retreat like the Rebel soldiers on Little Round Top. That sounds amazing, but James tells us it is so: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). The devil wants us to relinquish the bond of unity among ourselves. He wants us to back away from our relationship with God. Don’t do it, don’t give an inch! Don’t ever give up! Hold the line!



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*That the man of God may be
proficient and equipped for
every good work.*