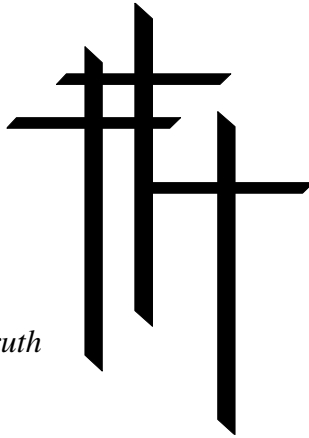


Timely Messenger

*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*



Volume 67 No. 5

May 2007

CHOSEN, CREATED, COMPLETE

by John LaVier

These three words tell us of what is ours in Christ, and they should be unspeakably precious to every child of God. If we would meditate upon them, and gain some insight of the wonders wrapped up in them, surely our lives would become much more fragrant and fruitful.

CHOSEN

The first is found in Ephesians 1:4: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." Not only

was this true of those to whom Paul wrote, but it is equally true of every member of the Body of Christ. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). How thankful we should be that it is God who has done the choosing. Men change their minds, and often, because of imperfect knowledge, they later regret some choice

that they have made, but the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Precious thought! Chosen by God in the ageless past; long, long before we were born. He who knows the end from the beginning, and to whom the future is as clear as the present, saw us then and chose us in Christ and ordained us to eternal life. Not because of any goodness in ourselves, for we had none. It was all "according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5), and "according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

When an athlete prepares to high jump, he takes a long start, and we can imagine something of the great purpose that God has for us when we see how He began to choose us for it so long ago.

CREATED

Next, in Ephesians 2:10

we see that “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” Notice how in these passages the practical side is kept in view. “Chosen ... that we should be holy and without blame.” “Created ... unto good works,” or as we have in Ephesians 4:24, “Created in righteousness and true holiness.” Surely our calling and conduct should closely correspond.

We have not only been chosen in Christ, but we have been created in Christ. “Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). We are out of Adam, the old creation, and into Christ, the new creation. What a mighty change! What a glorious transformation!

Creation is the work of God. It is He who, by His word, brought the universe into being; and He who, having chosen us, one day spake the same life giving words and light broke upon our darkened souls. “For

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). We could not create ourselves. God is the Great Creator; salvation is of the Lord.

COMPLETE

Finally, in Colossians 2:10, it is written, “And ye are complete in Him.” Note the “ye are.” It is not “ye can be complete in Him,” nor even “ye shall be complete in Him,” but “ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” We are perfect and entire, wanting nothing. We are filled full. Nothing can be added that can make our standing before God any more perfect or acceptable than it already is, for we stand before God in all the perfections of His own Blessed and Beloved and Perfect Son, The Lord Jesus Christ.

Complete in Thee! No work of mine
May take, dear Lord, the place of Thine;
Thy blood hath pardon, bought for me,
And I am now complete in Thee.

Dear Savior, when before Thy bar
All tribes and tongues assembled are,
Among Thy chosen will I be,
At thy right hand—complete in Thee.

Chosen, Created, Complete; but all in Christ. We are forever linked to Him, and every blessing that we have and enjoy flows from Him. We have nothing in ourselves, but we have everything in Him, so let us magnify the Lord and exalt His Name together; not by lip alone, but by life; by works as well as words.

*For in Him
dwelleth all the
fulness of the
Godhead bodily.
And ye are
complete in Him,
which is the
Head of all
principality
and power.*



**Grace Bible Church
Fort Worth, Texas**

June 4-8, 2007

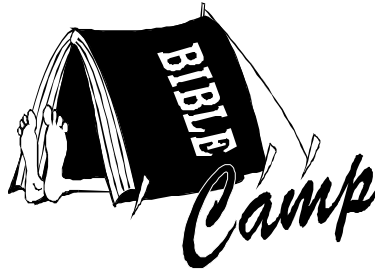
Grace Bible Church in Fort Worth will hold their Vacation Bible School June 4-8 this year from 9:30 to Noon each morning. There will be classes and activities for ages 3 to 14. There will be pizza and ice cream for lunch on Friday.

**Eleventh Avenue Church
Mineral Wells, Texas**

June 4-8, 2007

Eleventh Avenue Church in Mineral Wells will hold their Vacation Bible School June 4-8 this year with activities each evening from 7:00 to 8:00 pm.

Family



**Camp Arrowhead
Glenrose, Texas**

July 2-6, 2007

Our Family Bible Camp will be held at Camp Arrowhead in Glenrose, Texas the week of July 2-6. The theme this year will be "The Wondrous Cross." There are activities and Bible studies for all age groups.

Registration and release forms are now available! If you would like to obtain copies, write to us at:

Grace Bible Church
1450 Oak Hill Road
Fort Worth, TX 76112

Or you can access the forms online at our website:

gracebiblechurch-fw.com

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Gregg Bing — Editor

Sent **free** to anyone upon request. If you live in the Fort Worth area, we invite you to worship with us.

Sunday Services:

10:00 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Morning Worship
6:00 PM Evening Worship

Mid-Week Services:

Tues. 10:00 AM Ladies Class
Wed. 7:00 PM Bible Study

ADDRESS CHANGED?

If so, please notify us at the above address. Be sure to include both your name, your old address and your new address. This will help us keep our mailing list current and thus reduce the cost of postage.

Thanks for your help!

THE MAN OF GOD — PART 7

By Gregg Bing

Continued from last month.

“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” (1 Tim. 6:11-12)

The man of God is characterized by three things: 1) the things he flees: idolatry, the love of money, etc., 2) the things he follows after: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, and 3) what he fights for: “the good fight of faith.” This month we will look at the key to making these three things a reality in our daily lives, a key found in a little expression found in the middle of 1 Timothy 6:12:

Lay Hold on Eternal Life

What does this expression mean? How can this idea help us become men and women of God? These questions are best answered by looking at an illustration from the Scriptures.

Moses is called “the man of God” in Deuteronomy 33:1. Most people are familiar with the story of Moses from the book of Exodus. The book opens with the children of Israel in bondage in Egypt. The pharaoh, worried that the Israelites will grow large enough to threaten the power of the Egyptians, issues an edict that all male babies born to Hebrew mothers are to be thrown into the river. When Moses is born, his parents hide him for three months, but then are forced to place him in an ark of bulrushes and set him in the river. The child is found by the pharaoh's daughter, who

takes him in and raises him as her own child.

At the age of forty years (Acts 7:23), Moses is faced with the most critical decision of his life, a decision which is described in Hebrews 11:24-26:

“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”

Moses, at this stage in his life, knowing he had been called of God to deliver the children of Israel out of their Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:23-25), sought to carry out this purpose of God. He refused to be called “the son of Pharaoh's daughter,” having chosen to “suffer affliction with the people of God” rather than to “enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.” The first question we con-

sider is: What did Moses give up? To begin with, he gave up the position, power and prestige he had as a part of Pharaoh's household, as well as all that Egypt had to offer him: the riches and treasure that was no doubt his as part of the royal family, and every imaginable sinful pleasure that was readily available in the idolatrous culture of Egypt. What did Moses choose instead? To be associated with the people of God, a people who were not only strangers in a foreign land, but were suffering hard labor, terrible affliction, and open shame as slaves to the Egyptians.

Most people would probably question such a decision on Moses' part. Why did Moses make this choice? He made a value judgment. He looked at both paths set before him, and judged that being associated with the people of God and being part of God's plan and purpose through this nation to bring the Christ into the world, was worth more than all that Egypt, with its multitude of pleasures and rich storehouses, could offer.

What guided Moses in this choice? "He looked to the reward." *Strong's Enhanced Lexicon* defines the word "looked" to mean "to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on some one thing." It is a present tense verb which implies to look continually. Moses fixed his eyes continually on a future reward, but what was this reward?

Hebrews 11:24 tells us Moses did all this "by faith," a faith based upon the hearing of God's Word (Rom. 10:17). Likely, he received his initial spiritual training from his mother, who served as his nurse the first few years of his life (Exo. 2:9-10). She must have told him of God's promises to their people, including His promise to Abraham to bring his descendants out of Egyptian bondage (Gen. 15:13-14). Moses' parents also seemed to understand that Moses was a special child, chosen by God to be Israel's deliverer (Heb. 11:23, Acts 7:20), and must have communicated this fact to Moses, even at an early age (Acts 7:25).

Having been taught that

God is faithful and true, Moses trusted He would carry through on this promise as well. So, Moses looked away from his present situation in Egypt, including all it offered to him personally; he looked away from the sufferings Egypt was inflicting upon his own nation. Instead, Moses fixed his eyes on the reward: the blessings God had in store for His people in the promised land of Canaan, the eternal blessings which would be theirs through the promised Christ (Messiah) that would one day come into the world through the nation of Israel. This choice by Moses demonstrates what it means to "lay hold on eternal life."

The expression "lay hold" means to seize, to grasp, to take hold of. To "lay hold on eternal life" does not imply we must grasp or seize our salvation. We are saved by receiving God's gift of eternal life by faith (Eph. 2:8-9). It also does not imply that we must hold onto our salvation, in order to secure it. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise the

very moment we trust Christ as Savior, and we are secure in Him (Eph. 1:13-14). To “lay hold on eternal life” means to grasp or realize that eternal life is a present possession. John 3:36 states: “He who believes in the Son **has** everlasting life...” We receive this spiritual life when we believe the gospel of God’s grace (Eph. 2:5). To “lay hold on eternal life” also means to live with an eternal perspective, to view things as indicated by a little chorus we used to sing at Bible camps years ago, “With Eternity’s Values in View.”

*With eternity’s values in view, Lord,
With eternity’s values in view.
May I do each day’s work for Jesus,
With eternity’s values in view.*

While we live here on earth, it is easy, even for Christians, to become so caught up in the affairs of this world that we forget what is most important in life. Paul told Timothy:

“No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may

please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” (2 Tim. 2:4)

The man of God seeks to please the Lord rather than himself. Moses knew the pleasures of sin afforded by this world were temporary. As the Apostle John wrote,

“The world is passing away and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17).

Moses also understood the treasures of Egypt would not last and could not even be compared to the wealth of being worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Paul expressed a similar attitude in his letter to the Philippians:

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may

gain Christ.” (Phil. 3:7-8)

Furthermore, Moses knew that Israel’s sufferings in Egypt would soon come to an end, based on God’s promise of deliverance. Paul shared this same idea with the Corinthian church:

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

The sufferings we experience here on earth are “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in

us” (Rom, 8:18). As Paul journeyed to Jerusalem, knowing chains and tribulations awaited him, he told the Ephesians elders:

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24)

Paul’s attitude was simple: “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). As long as he lived, he knew God had a purpose for his life on earth, but he also understood that to depart this life is to “be with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. 1:23), and something that will last for eternity. This is the essence of what it means to “lay hold of eternal life.”

As believers, our citizenship is in heaven. Our future, our eternity is heavenly. Paul reminded the Colossian saints of the hope that is laid up in heaven for us (Col. 1:4); the hope of eternal life with

our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we come to understand this glorious truth, it affects every aspect of our lives.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” (Col. 3:1-4)

Our minds, our affections, our desires, our goals, our purposes are not to be set on things on this earth, but on things above, where Christ is. Our focus should not be on “things” at all, but on a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer to the Hebrews admonished them to be:

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,

despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2)

Just as Moses continually “looked to the reward,” we too are to be focused on our future reward: “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13), who will one day appear, transform our lowly bodies and conform them to His glorious body that we may dwell with Him forever in heaven (Phil. 3:20-21).

While the man of God is characterized by what he flees, follows, and fights for, he (or she) is driven to do so by “laying hold on eternal life;” grasping the reality that we have eternal life—that this is our glorious hope—and by living each day with the perspective that what matters most is what counts for eternity.

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. —Titus 1:2

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- Past Pentecost to Paul
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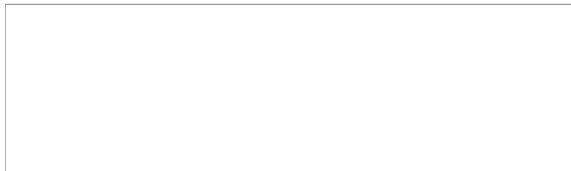
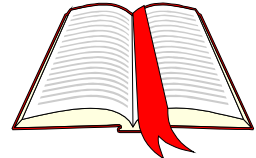
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