

FEBRUARY 2013

25th

Anniversary

1988

2013

TODAY IN THE **Word**

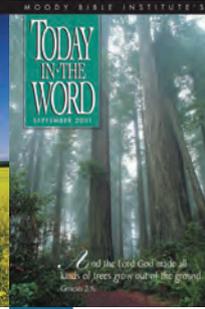
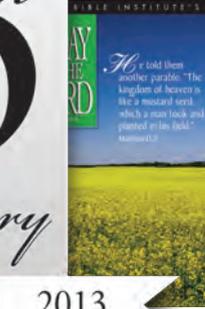
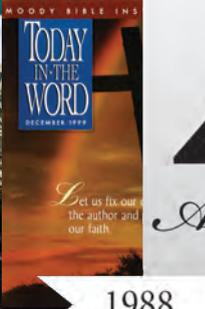
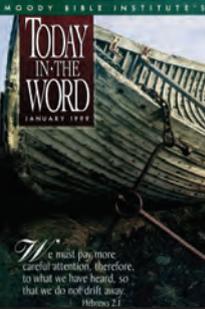
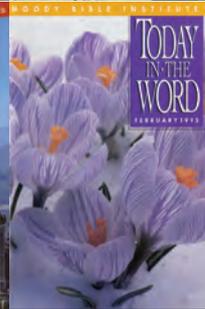
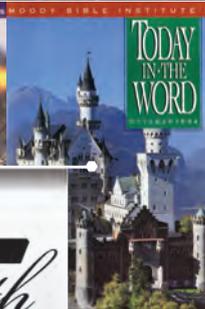
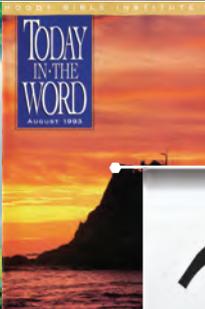
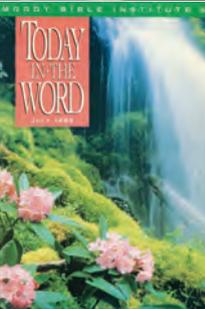
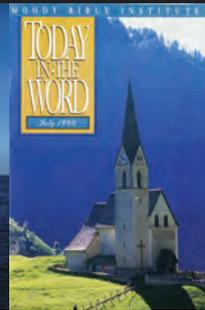
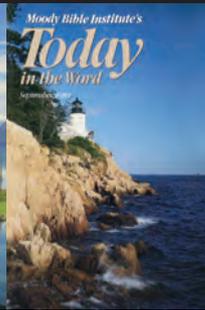
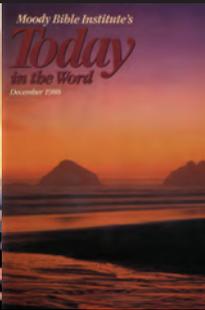
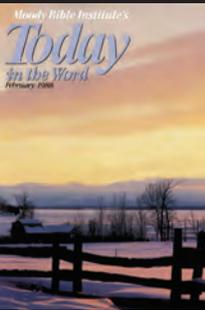
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Faith is being
sure of what
we hope for
and certain
of what we
do not see.

Hebrews 11:1



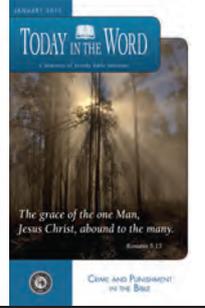
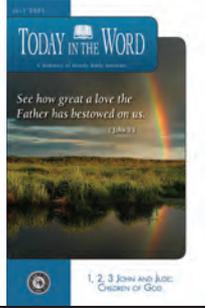
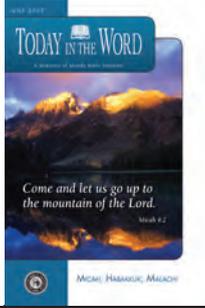
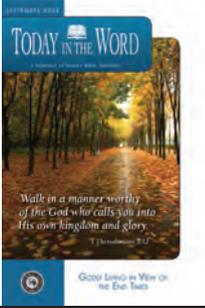
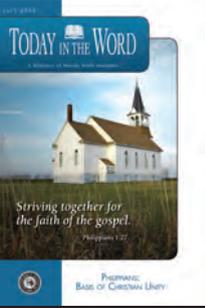
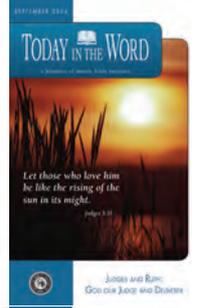
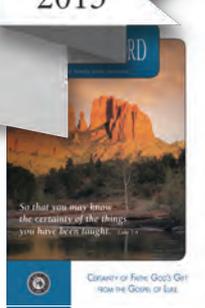
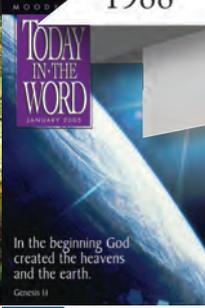
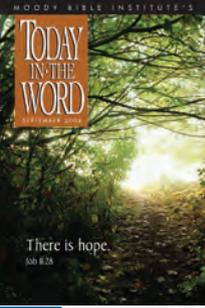
Foundations of Our Faith



25th Anniversary

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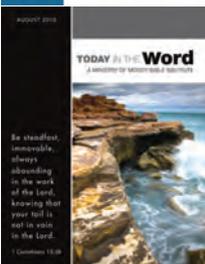
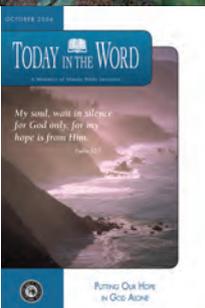
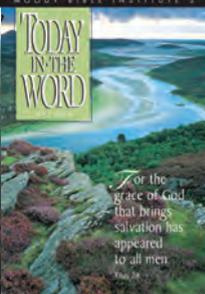
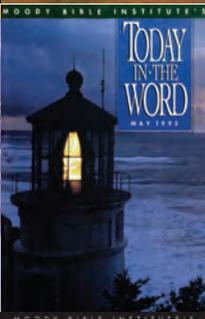
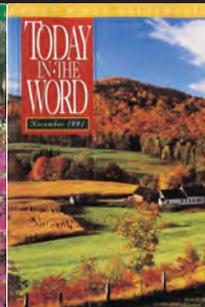
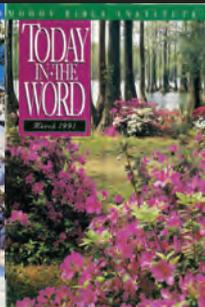
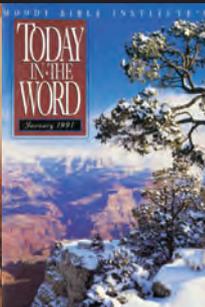
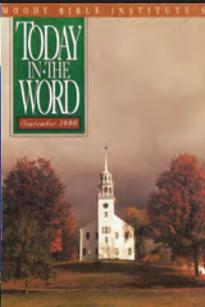
PHOTOGRAPHY: BAGS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

GODDY LINDO IN VIEW ON THE EAST TIDE

MICHAEL HANAUER, MALACAY

1, 2, 3 JOHN AND JUDY: CHILDREN OF GIGG

COMO AND PARRIS: IN THE BIBLE

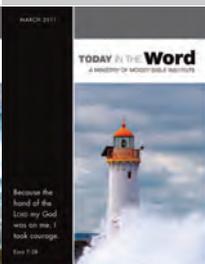


Thank You!

As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of *Today in the Word*, we want to thank our faithful readers for your partnership, friendship, and support.

From the staff at

TODAY IN THE Word



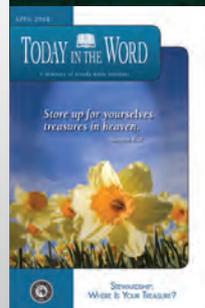
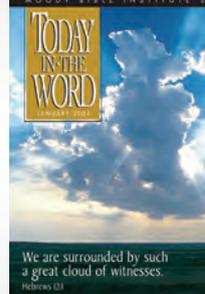
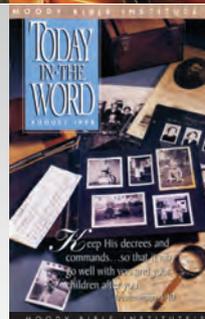
I Corinthians

Ezra and Nehemiah: Leadership Matters

The Gospel of Luke: The Son of Man and the Kingdom of God

No Longer Afraid: When We Walk in the Fear of the Lord

The Gospel of John: New Creation, New Kingdom



TODAY WITH PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Bible Institute

The King Is Coming



One of my favorite hymns is “Joy to the Word.” Written by Isaac Watts, the lyrics beautifully tie together the first coming of Christ with His promised return: “He rules the world with

truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love.”

I appreciate these lyrics because during Christmastime—and throughout the year—we often look back on Christ’s first coming without also looking forward to His second coming. Friends, one day the Lord will pull back the gates of heaven, and we must not be caught unaware.

On this glorious day, Christ will come riding on a white horse. Scripture tells us Christ will wear many crowns and a blood-dipped robe (Rev. 19:11–13). The blood on Christ’s robe will likely be the blood of His enemies because when Christ comes, He is coming to wage war. He is coming to set everything right—all oppression, all sin, all ungodliness.

For this war, Christ will lead a vast army, which includes us. Revelation 19:14 reads, “The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.” When Christ leads on His white horse, we will follow Him, riding white horses. None of us will have weapons for this battle because we will not need them. Our commander will fight this battle Himself.

Jesus will come with a sword, ready to fight. “And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 19:15). When Jesus came the first time, He came as the suffering servant (Isaiah 53), but when He comes the second time, He will come as the conquering king. The day of His return is coming!

What does this mean for us? Peter captures it well in 2 Peter 3:14: “So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.” The right response to the second coming of Christ is a passionate pursuit of holiness. The right response to His imminent return is a deep-seated desire and passion to be just like Him.

Positionally, we are already like Christ. Our sin has been imputed to Him; His righteousness has been imputed to us. By God’s grace, we can stand before the Father righteous in His eyes. But practically, we still struggle with sin. We are neither spotless nor blameless. We are all works in progress. And because we all are works in progress, we can sometimes wane in our pursuit of holiness.

In light of Christ’s return, Peter challenges us not to wane in our pursuit of holiness but to “make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him,” so that we will be ready for that glorious day when the Lord pulls back the gates of heaven.

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by John Koessler

Life and Doctrine



What do abortion, marriage, and terrorism have in common? They all have theological roots. Yet when matters like these are discussed in the public arena, theology is usually considered either too irrelevant or too divisive to include in the conversation. As a result, the theological questions behind these issues are largely ignored. The Bible, on the other hand, has a very different view. Scripture links theology with practice.

The apostle Paul integrated theology and practice when he told Timothy: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:16). Doctrine involves more than theological constructs and propositions. It is truth articulated in word and exemplified “in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

If this is true, there is more to false doctrine than saying the wrong thing. It is certainly possible to teach things that conflict with sound doctrine. But it is also possible to live in a way that is contrary to sound doctrine. According to Scripture, practices like murder, sexual immorality, homosexuality, human trafficking, lying, and perjury are “contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God” (1 Tim. 1:10–11). Sound

doctrine is reflected in the lifestyle of the church (Titus 2:1–15).

We should not be surprised by this connection. The New Testament word for “doctrine” is really just the word for teaching, and the Bible has much to say about the way we live our lives. The Bible’s moral instruction, however, is theologically driven. All that Scripture has to say about ethics and behavior is rooted in the revelation of God and His righteousness. Consequently, any discussion of morality detached from theology is bound to go wrong. Furthermore, there is an important order in this relationship. Biblical truth must have first place. The tendency today is to reverse the order and let behavior determine the bounds of truth. The result is a moral compass without any clear points of reference. Moral standards are self-determined. They change from place to place and year to year.

Henry Ward Beecher once called doctrine “nothing but the skin of truth set up and stuffed.” But a more biblical definition of doctrine is the integration of truth with life. Biblical morality is more than a way of living. Ultimately it is a way of seeing. It is the result of seeing and responding to the world through the lens of God’s truth.

For Further Study

For a helpful survey of Christian doctrine, read *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* by William Evans (Moody).

FROM THE EDITORS

by Paul Currie

Today in the Word Celebrates 25th Anniversary



Greetings *Today in the Word* readers! I have the privilege and honor of serving as executive editor of *Today in the Word*, and my staff and I are overjoyed that it is 2013. The reason for our joy is the 25th anniversary of *Today in the Word*!

We are thrilled to celebrate this great milestone and the many devotions that have been written and produced. But most importantly, we are thrilled to celebrate how God has used this publication to encourage hundreds of thousands of readers in their study of His Word. Just think of the many people who have deepened their relationship with Jesus by reading *Today in the Word* over the years.

Since the launch of *Today in the Word* 25 years ago, this publication has had many different “looks,” and we have added to its media platforms with audio, e-mail, and a website. But one thing hasn’t changed: our commitment to helping people study and apply God’s Word.

For 25 years, *Today in the Word* has offered readers of all ages rich content, equipping them with the truth of God’s Word. We want to be a cheerleader and coach to encourage you to consistently read, study, and apply Scripture to your life.

To celebrate our 25th anniversary, we have produced the *Today in the Word Notebook*. Because you are a part of the *Today in the Word* family, we would like to offer you this

gift as our thanks for your prayer and financial support. Please celebrate with us by requesting your *Today in the Word Notebook* today on the enclosed reply card.

Thank you for your faithful partnership that is equipping people around the world with the truth of God’s Word. As we look to the future, let us continue to study God’s Word, so that we may hear what He has to say to us today, in the Word.

From Our Readers

“Every issue has been strengthening my faith each day, bringing me peace and calm in a world we live in, with confusion and terror constantly in the news. Our Christian values and Constitution (Bill of Rights) are under attack. Through my love of country and our people, my ‘walk with Christ’ is to inform others to be aware. God bless *Today in the Word* and Moody Bible Institute!”

— Barb, Norwalk, OH

“For someone who never had a normal life (family), you’re my family: the body of Christ. It’s always good to receive my *Today in The Word*, month to month, and the love of Jesus keeps me growing,

Continued on page 36

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Paul B. Currie

MANAGING EDITOR
Heather Moffitt

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Elena Maffer

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
John Koessler
Kim Pickett

WRITER
John Koessler

1-800-DL MOODY
(356-6639)

www.moodyministries.net



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TODAY IN THE **Word**

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Foundations of Our Faith

A strange thing happened in New York recently. During the devastation left by Hurricane Sandy, the city dwellers returned to retro-technology. They rediscovered the old-fashioned coin-slot pay phones, since Sandy rendered useless all their iPhones, iPads, and laptops.

Suddenly old was new again. According to one newspaper article, many young New Yorkers had to learn how to work these low-tech contraptions on street corners, which they had passed before with nary a glance. Pay phones usually withstand natural disasters and power outages because they are mounted high behind glass stalls, and many of them are uniquely wired and don't require commercial power.

This month in *Today in the Word* we'll look at the basics of our faith. We'll revisit the theological "unique wiring" of Christian beliefs that give us hope and strength to withstand the storms of life. We'll heed the words of Christ: "The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock" (Matt. 7:24).

We pray this study will challenge you to a stronger commitment to Christ—the Rock of Ages, the chief cornerstone of our lives. Your gifts to this ministry enable us to send *Today in the Word* to more people who need Jesus as the firm foundation of their lives. Thank you for your partnership!

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The Focus of Our Faith

This month we will focus on the foundations of our faith. We begin our study with faith's most basic assumption: the assumption that God exists. God is the ultimate object of all true faith. According to the writer of Hebrews, it is impossible to know God apart from faith and it is impossible to please God except through faith.

Hebrews 11:1 offers what may be the most famous definition of faith found in the Bible. It describes faith as the marriage of hope and assurance. Although faith is compatible with empirical evidence, it does not depend upon empirical evidence for certainty. Instead, faith is its own kind evidence, providing proof of what is unseen. Faith is to the soul what eyesight is to the body. Faith sees in the visible universe evidence of the invisible God who made it. This knowledge is not conveyed by scientific evidence but by means of revelation. We know the universe was formed at

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

Psalms 14:1

God's command because God has told us so in His Word.

Abel and Enoch, the two Old Testament examples singled out in today's reading, are the first of many examples listed in this chapter who exemplify the faith the writer describes. Abel's faith was expressed in worship. Because of his faith, his offering was accepted by God while his brother's was rejected (Gen. 4:4). Enoch's faith was reflected in his lifestyle. He "walked faithfully with God" and

was taken to heaven without experiencing death (Gen. 5:24).

A twofold conviction guided these ancient believers. They were convinced of the existence of God. But more than that, they believed that God desires for those He has created to seek Him. Faith, then, involves more than intellectual assent to a points of doctrine. It is fundamentally relational.

Apply the Word

As we begin this study of the foundations of our faith, take an inventory of what you believe. What do you know about God? What does He expect from you? How does one enter into a relationship with God and what should that relationship look like? In the days ahead we will be exploring the answers to these questions and many more.

Pray with Us

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of *Today in the Word*, join us in thanking the Lord for using this publication to encourage thousands of readers in their walk with Him. We are grateful to God for your partnership that makes this ministry possible.

The Nature of God

The French philosopher Voltaire wrote, “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.” He argued that belief in the existence of God was beneficial to society. Christians know that it is not enough to believe in a deity imagined by humanity. According to today’s passage, we must believe in the God who truly exists. An invented god is merely an idol.

The apostle Paul challenged the idolatry of his own day when he spoke to the philosophers of Athens. Outraged at the sight of so many idols, Paul began to debate with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers there. The Epicureans believed that the ideal life was one free from pain and distress. The Stoics emphasized duty and resignation to one’s circumstances.

In our day people would probably describe the religious thinking of Paul’s contemporaries as “open” or “tolerant.”

They even had an altar dedicated “to an unknown god,” in order not to anger any god they might have missed. Yet according to the apostle this was merely a reflection of their ignorance. Paul boldly proclaimed to them the God who has revealed Himself in creation and in Scripture.

If I were hungry I
would not tell you,
for the world is
mine, and all that
is in it.

Leviticus 19:2

In his message to the philosophers, Paul emphasized several key attributes of God. God is distinct from His creation and is not dependent upon anyone or anything for His existence (vv. 24–25). He exercises sovereign control over all He

has created but is also near to us and willing to be found by those who seek Him in truth (vv. 26–27). Most important of all, He has commanded all people everywhere to repent and believe in the risen Christ, who will one day judge the world with justice. Now that God has revealed Himself definitively in Christ, ignorance is no excuse (vv. 29–31).

Apply the Word

Where do your ideas about God come from? Do they come from the Bible? Or are they the result of your own speculation? Review the inventory of beliefs you compiled yesterday. Where do you find these ideas taught in the Bible? If you cannot support your beliefs from Scripture, they may only be a matter of personal speculation.

Pray with Us

Will you ask the Lord to encourage the undergraduate school faculty serving in the Educational Ministries department at Moody’s Chicago campus: Gina Behrens, Christina Deppen, Timothy Downey, Dennis Fledderjohann, and Nancy Kane?

God of the Bible

The Internet has become the primary research source for a majority of students. Easy access makes it a convenient tool. Yet information gleaned from the Internet is only as reliable as the source of that information. Not all Web pages are trustworthy!

What about the Bible? How reliable is it as a source of information about God? In 2 Timothy 3:16 we are told that all Scripture is “God-breathed.” Theologian B. B. Warfield explains the significance of this language by noting: “What it affirms

is the Scriptures owe their origin to an activity of God the Holy Ghost and are in the highest and truest sense His creation.” The words of Scripture are the words of God Himself.

This is confirmed by 2 Peter 1:21, which describes the experience of those who spoke for God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They were “carried along” by the Holy Spirit. Acts 27:15

Prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21

uses the same Greek word to refer to a ship being “driven along” by the wind of a storm. The writers of Scripture did not act on their own but were under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit.

This does not mean that the writers of Scripture were mere recording devices. Their writings reflect their personalities and vocabulary. They exercised ordinary human volition when making decisions about what to write (Luke 1:1–4; Jude 1:3). Yet the Holy Spirit’s ministry guaranteed that

they would write only what the God wanted to be recorded. The result is a collection of written works unlike any other. Other books may contain wisdom and convey truth. But only the Bible speaks with God’s full authority. It deserves our trust. More than that, it commands our obedience. Like the apostle Paul, not only our teaching, but our entire way of life should reflect the truth of God’s inspired word.

Apply the Word

How well do you know the Bible? A daily reading schedule can enable you to read through the Bible in an entire year. The One Year Bible Online (www.oneyearbibleonline.com) can be a good starting point for those who would like to begin this discipline. Joining a Sunday school class or Bible study group is another way to learn more.

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for faculty in the Educational Ministries department, please remember Robert MacRae, Michael Milco, Elizabeth Smith, and Peter Worrall. Request that God give them continued passion for training the next generation of Christian leaders.

Jesus Christ: Word from the Beginning

The story of Jesus did not begin in the manger at Bethlehem. In fact the story of Jesus has no beginning, because in the beginning Jesus already was. John's use of the Greek term *Logos* to refer to Jesus in verse 1 reminded his readers of the way God used His word to call creation into existence. It also reminded them of the way Wisdom, which existed "at the very beginning, when the world came to be," is described as if it were a person in Proverbs 8:22–31.

But our reading today outdoes even these assertions by identifying Jesus as the God of creation. Before He was born in the manger, Jesus was the One through whom "all things were made" (v. 2). He was both "with God" and He "was God" (v. 1). It is clear who is in view in these verses: this is Jesus of Nazareth. He is the one who came to His own people and was

rejected by them (v. 11). Yet Jesus was not rejected by all. Some received him by believing in His name. To these He "gave the right to become children of God" (v. 12).

John borrowed from his Jewish religious heritage to explain the mystery of Jesus becoming flesh. The Greek term that is translated "made his dwelling" in verse 14 can also be translated "spread a tent" or "tabernacle." In the Old Testament, Israel's God was said to "dwell" in the

For in Christ all
the fullness of
the Deity lives in
bodily form.

Colossians 2:9

tabernacle, which was really a tent with two rooms or compartments (Lev. 15:31). God's glory shown in the innermost room, known as the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. John, however, beheld God's full glory in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the One in whom "the fullness of Deity lives in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).

Apply the Word

Are you a child of God? Only those who have received Jesus Christ have a right to make such a claim. To receive Christ is to believe on His name. This means that you must accept as truth all that the Bible says about Him and place your faith in what He has done on your behalf. Call upon His name today and become a child of God.

Pray with Us

Today begins Moody's annual Founder's Week conference held in downtown Chicago. Please pray for Dr. Paul Nyquist, Moody's President, as he teaches from God's Word this evening. Join us live throughout the week at www.foundersweek.com.

Jesus Christ: The Virgin Birth

“It is no wonder that thoughtful people find the gospel of Jesus Christ hard to believe,” theologian J. I. Packer observed, “for the realities with which it deals pass man’s understanding.” This is especially true of the Bible’s strange assertion that Jesus was born of a virgin. Matthew’s account of Jesus’ birth makes it clear that His birth was unique. Although His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, “before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit” (v. 18). Joseph was Jesus’ father only in a legal sense, not biologically. God was His real Father.

According to verse 22 these events fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” Although the Hebrew term that is translated “virgin” in this verse

can also mean “young woman,” Matthew took pains to indicate that Mary was a virgin in the literal sense. This was confirmed by Joseph’s response when he learned that Mary was pregnant. His initial decision to divorce Mary quietly makes no sense at all if Jesus was the result of a union between husband and wife.

But when the set
time had fully
come, God sent
his Son, born of
a woman, born
under the law.

Galatians 4:4

Matthew’s account of the Virgin Birth hints at the two foundational assertions Scripture makes about the nature of Jesus Christ. He is truly God and He is truly human. As we saw in yesterday’s study, when Jesus

was conceived in Mary’s womb by the Holy Spirit, He already existed as God from eternity past. At the incarnation Jesus acquired a human nature. The true humanity of Jesus did not make His divine nature less divine. Nor did Christ’s divinity elevate His human nature to superhuman status. Two natures were united in one person.

Apply the Word

The Virgin Birth underscores the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Other women in the Bible gave birth through divine intervention. But only Jesus was born of a virgin. Because He is human, He shares our nature and can sympathize with our weakness. Because He is God in the flesh, He is able to offer us mercy and grace (Heb. 4:15–16).

Pray with Us

Thank the Father for the ministry of Moody’s Stewardship Representatives: Ken Bugh and Walt McCord. May they be a blessing to Moody’s ministry partners visiting the Chicago campus during Founder’s Week.

Jesus Christ: Suffering Savior

In 2004 Hollywood actor Mel Gibson made headlines when he directed *The Passion of the Christ*, a film depicting the last twelve hours of Jesus' earthly ministry. Some criticized the film's graphic portrayal of Jesus' suffering.

What are we to make of the violence of the cross? Some prefer to understand the cross only as Christ's victory over the powers of evil, rather than seeing His suffering as satisfying the heavenly Father's demand for justice. In his death and resurrection Jesus "disarmed the powers and authorities" by "triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15). Yet the Bible is equally emphatic in emphasizing that God the Father had a hand in Jesus' suffering.

When Isaiah predicted the suffering of Israel's messiah, he explained that "it was the LORD'S will to crush him and cause him to suffer" and characterized

Messiah's suffering as "an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10). Like Isaiah, the apostles saw the suffering of Christ within the larger framework of God's redemptive purpose. Jesus was handed over to the powers of evil "by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge" (Acts 2:23).

Christ's suffering did more than make a public spectacle of the powers of evil; it was a payment for sin that satisfied the demands of God's law.

While Jesus' response to His enemies provides us with a good example to follow, the significance of His suffering goes far

beyond this. The Savior shed His blood as a "sacrifice of atonement" (Rom. 3:25). Some translations use the theological term propitiation to speak of this sacrifice, a word that emphasizes the personal dimension of the cross on our behalf. Christ's suffering reminds us that God's wrath is real and can be satisfied only by the blood of His Son.

Jesus also
suffered outside
the city gate to
make the people
holy through his
own blood.

Hebrews 13:12

Apply the Word

Beware of attempts to sanitize the gospel by removing the offense of the cross. The violence of the cross is a blunt reminder of what we deserve for our sin. The fact that God took such punishment upon Himself by pouring it out on His Son testifies to the Father's mercy and grace. Jesus has taken our suffering (see chapter 53 of Isaiah).

Pray with Us

Ask God to give Frank Leber, Vice President of Information Systems, insight as he helps Moody's ministries utilize technology to fulfill Moody's vision of equipping people across the globe, cultures, and generations with the truth of God's Word.

Jesus Christ: Resurrected Lord

When her flu-like symptoms refused to go away, doctors discovered that Debbie Habermas had stomach cancer. Four months after the diagnosis she died. Her husband Gary, a scholar and Christian apologist, wrote: “During Debbie’s suffering, I took refuge in the truth of Jesus’ resurrection.” The fact that Jesus rose from the dead gave him hope he would see Debbie again.

The hope of the gospel is grounded in the resurrection of Christ. Without the reality of His resurrection, the suffering of Jesus would be meaningless (1 Cor. 15:17). Jesus’ resurrection was a bodily resurrection. Jesus was not only seen by His disciples, they also touched Him (Matt. 28:9). Jesus rose with the same body that was His during His earthly ministry. The Savior’s resurrected body still bore the scars of His suffering (John 20:27). He showed the disciples His hands and feet and ate a piece of broiled fish to prove He was not a ghost (Luke 24:37–42).

These actions prove that the resurrection is essential to our understanding of the nature of Christ. Through the resurrection the Father and the Spirit demonstrated that Jesus of Nazareth was both man and God. Jesus was shown to be the Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4).

But the resurrection of Jesus is also essential to the self-understanding of those who are in Christ. If you belong to Christ, you should see yourself as united with Him in both

His death and His resurrection. As a result, you should “count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11). When we see ourselves in the resurrection of Christ, we recognize that we are under new management. We refuse to let sin be the reigning principle in our lives and we place ourselves at the disposal of the One who has brought us from death to life.

On the third day
he will rise again.

Luke 18:33

Apply the Word

How do you see yourself? Write Romans 6:11–14 on a notecard and tape it to your mirror. Every time you look into the mirror, these verses will remind you to view yourself through the lens of the resurrection of Christ. They will also remind you to offer the parts of our body as instruments of righteousness throughout the day.

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for Information Systems, ask the Lord to keep building unity in the Systems and Programming team: Sherman Jules, John Kim, Gina Lee, and Juan Lemus as they work together to best serve Moody’s students, employees, and friends.

The Holy Spirit: The Promise of the Spirit

Small children often experience something called separation anxiety. They become shy when meeting new people and feel fear when separated from their parents. Jesus' disciples experienced their own kind of separation anxiety when Jesus told them that He was about to depart and return to the Father.

To comfort His frightened disciples Jesus promised to send them "another advocate" to help them and to be with them forever (v. 16). By describing the Holy Spirit as "another advocate", Jesus distinguishes the Holy Spirit from Himself. Just as Jesus is not the Father, the Holy Spirit is not Jesus. At the same time, Jesus identifies the Holy Spirit's ministry with His own. Like Jesus, the Spirit is an "advocate." This Greek term described someone who came alongside as a helper or a defender in court. The same word is used of Jesus in 1 John 2:1: "My dear children, I write

Unless I go away,
the Advocate will
not come to you;
but if I go, I will
send him to you.

John 16:7

this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."

The Holy Spirit is also "the Spirit of truth" (v. 17). One aspect of His ministry has to do with the Word of Christ. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would remind the disciples of all that Jesus had taught and would continue to teach them. He is the "anointing" we receive from the Father, serving as our internal Bible teacher (1 John 2:27). Consequently, the Holy Spirit's

ministry is essential to the believer. Only those who are indwelt by the Spirit can truly understand God's Word (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14). He exercises His ministry in partnership with Christ. The Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son and is sent from the Father at Christ's request. All three persons of the Godhead are involved in our salvation.

Apply the Word

Whenever you study the Bible, it is a good practice to pray for understanding from the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help you understand what you read. Also ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to respond to what you learn. In tomorrow's study we will discover that the Spirit not only gives us insight into God's Word, He empowers us to obey it.

Pray with Us

Concluding our prayers for Systems and Programming, will you uphold in prayer Vinod Malachi, Pepi Manieson, Diane Rogers, and John Saucedo? They oversee Moody's databases and manage day-to-day use of the administrative systems at Moody.

The Holy Spirit: The Power of the Spirit

Waiting is hard, especially when you are waiting for a kingdom. During the forty days following His resurrection Jesus spoke to His disciples about the kingdom of God. At the end of this period they asked what must have seemed like an obvious question: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (v. 6) Their question may also have been prompted by Jesus’ command that the disciples not leave Jerusalem until they received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus’ disciples seem to have expected that the impending baptism in the Spirit would inaugurate the messianic kingdom. Their eagerness to see the kingdom begin is understandable since they had a vested interest in its advent. During His earthly ministry Jesus promised the apostles that when the Son of Man sat on His glorious throne, those who followed Him would also sit on twelve thrones, judging the

twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). But instead of political power, the coming of the Spirit endowed them with the power to act in faith. Like them, we too are given the ability to bear witness to the risen Christ through the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit (vv. 8–9).

He has received
from the Father
the promised Holy
Spirit and has
poured out what
you now see
and hear.

Acts 2:33

New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce defines the “power” in verse 8 as “that supernatural power by which miracles were wrought and preaching made effective.” The power of the Spirit is also power to obey. By the Spirit we are enabled to “put to death the misdeeds

of the body” (Rom. 8:13). Those who are led by God’s Spirit recognize that they have been freed from slavery to their sinful nature. This is what it means to be “led by the Spirit.” Finally, the Spirit not only empowers the believer to tell others about Christ, but He also reassures us that we belong to Christ (Rom. 8:16).

Apply the Word

Seek the help of the Holy Spirit today by praying or paraphrasing these words of Saint Augustine: “Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.”

Pray with Us

Join us in praying for Greg Thornton, Senior Vice President of Media. He provides vital leadership for Moody’s publishing and radio ministries that equip over one million people with God’s truth each week.

The Holy Spirit: The Gifts of the Spirit

“The gift that keeps on giving” is a marketing slogan dating back to the 1920s. It may first have been used to sell the phonograph. This catchphrase also accurately describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Himself a gift given to those who belong to Jesus Christ. Everyone who has trusted in Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9). But the Holy Spirit also bestows gifts on the believer.

Today’s passage is only one of several lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament (Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:8–11; 12:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11). Although they have much in common, they are not identical. This suggests that none of these passages was intended to provide a comprehensive list of all that the Holy Spirit enables believers to do.

Some of the gifts mentioned could be described as supernatural, but not all.

**If anyone serves,
they should do so
with the strength
God provides, so
that God may be
praised through
Jesus Christ.**

1 Peter 4:11

Elsewhere in the Bible the Spirit’s ministry is linked with the work of craftsmen, designers, and embroiderers. According to Exodus 35:31–34, God chose Bezalel and “filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts. And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others.”

This means that learning and practice are consistent with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Not only do we need to discover how God has gifted us, we improve the way we exercise those gifts through learning and practice. Although every believer is gifted by the Spirit, not all believers possess the same gifts. The Holy Spirit “distributes them to each one, just as he determines” (v. 11).

Apply the Word

If you would like to explore how the Holy Spirit has gifted you for ministry, you can begin by asking yourself two basic questions. First, what do you like to do? Second, what do you do well? Those who are empowered by the Spirit find joy in exercising their gifts. He enables them to be effective.

Pray with Us

Continuing our focus on Moody’s media ministries, please remember Moody Publishers Sales team: Gene Eble, Stephen Gemeiner, Laurence Rogers, and Roger Williams. May the Lord give them favor and fill them with joy as they serve Him.

In His Image: The Creation of Humanity

Many today view humans as little more than clever animals. Yet the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis indicates that we are much more. It is true that humans have something in common with animals. Like them we were created by God and are dependent upon Him for life and breath. However, humanity differs from the rest of earth's creatures in one important respect. We have been created "in the image of God" (vv. 26–27).

Humans were created in God's image so that they can "rule" over creation (v. 26). This language does more than put us at the top of the food chain. It places the responsibility of stewardship upon our shoulders. Because we have been created in God's image and likeness, we are charged with the duty of acting as His agents in this world. This responsibility gives humanity a dignity unmatched by the animals. Our

role as caretakers of God's creation means that we must have a regard for that which God has created (Prov. 12:10).

The divine image continues to be an element of human nature, even though it has been marred by sin. The recognition that we have been made in God's likeness is fundamental to human ethics (Gen. 9:6). Our treatment of others is shaped by our view of them, especially to the degree that we are able to recognize the divine image in them (cf. 1 John 4:20). When the effects of sin blind us to the

divine image in others, we behave inconsistently. With the same tongue we praise God and curse those who have been made in His image (James 3:9). As a result, it is necessary through faith in Christ to "put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Col. 3:10).

The LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

Genesis 2:7

Apply the Word

A culture that sees humans as little more than intelligent animals will treat people like animals or worse. Do not let the world press you into its mold. Train your vision to see the image of the divine, even in those people you find difficult to like. Showing respect for others is one way to show reverence for God.

Pray with Us

Today we commit to praying for the staff serving in Moody Publishers Fulfillment: Michael Alcazar, Junico Arroz, Lee Denton, and Arthur Eastern. These men work in the warehouse on Moody's Chicago campus, servicing customer orders.

In His Image: Created to Obey

Yesterday we saw that humanity was created in God's image to exercise dominion over creation. Being made in God's likeness, however, does not make us gods. According to God's original design, human beings were created to obey God. After Adam was formed, he was placed in the Garden of Eden. It is noteworthy that part of this idyllic environment included responsibility. Adam was put in the garden "to work it and take care of it" (v. 15).

Sin's entrance into the world has profoundly affected the way we experience work, but it does not diminish the inherent dignity of work. Work precedes the Fall. Work as a vocation was part of God's design for humanity from the very beginning. The infinitive construction of Genesis 2:15 ("to work" and "to take care of") is the language of purpose. Our Creator is always at His work, and we were likewise created to

work (John 5:17). His work gives dignity to our role as workers.

We should note that the idyllic environment of Eden included moral boundaries. God set limits on Adam's behavior. He was free to eat from all the trees of the garden except for one. The Lord warned that failure to obey this command would result in death (vv. 16–17). This was not an impingement upon Adam's freedom. That he was capable of staying within the limits God had set was itself a reflection of Adam's original freedom. It was as easy for him to

obey as it was to disobey. Tragically, Adam forfeited this "natural" freedom when he chose to ignore God's warning. One of the things the gospel does for us is to restore the liberty of obedience. The Bible's call to obey does not relegate us to the status of slaves. It restores to us the dignity of being children of God. We were designed to obey.

Your hands made
me and formed
me; give me
understanding
to learn your
commands.

Psalm 119:73

Apply the Word

How do you view obedience to God? Do you see it as a way of earning "points?" Jesus taught His disciples to obey His commands as an expression of their love (John 14:15). Every time you obey God, you show your gratitude for His gift of grace. You cannot earn God's favor—but you can express your love to Him!

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for Moody Publishers Fulfillment, let's ask the Lord to give safety and strength to Ernesto Laya, Chieu Nguyen, James Seffinga, Matthew Tran, and Nguyen Tran as they pack and ship orders today.

In His Image: Created Male and Female

At each stage in creation God evaluated His work and concluded, “it was good” (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). One notable departure from this pattern occurred after Adam’s creation. After Adam had begun his work in the garden, the Lord observed: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Gen. 2:18).

The Hebrew word that is translated “suitable” in this verse literally meant “what is in front of” and conveyed the idea of correspondence. Unlike the animals, which differed from Adam and among whom no helper could be found, Eve was comparable to Adam and suitable to the task. Eve’s equivalence to Adam was reflected in her creation. Although Adam and the other creatures were created from the earth, only Eve was taken from Adam himself. Adam so identified with Eve that he referred to her as “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23).

Adam was formed
first, then Eve.

1 Timothy 2:13

Eve’s comparability to Adam is also indicated by the first name given to her in the Bible. Although she was called “Eve” after the Fall, Adam’s initial name for her was simply the feminine form of the Hebrew word for “Adam” or “man” (Gen. 2:22). Eve was Adam’s female counterpart.

Although Adam and Eve were alike in many ways, they were not identical. God’s original design for humanity involved two sexes. When God created humanity in His image, He created them to be “male and female” (Gen. 1:27).

Eve shared dominion over creation along with Adam but fulfilled this calling through her unique role as “the mother of all the living” (Gen. 3:20). The New Testament affirms that men and women are equal in Christ and also acknowledges that they fulfill their calling differently (Gal. 3:28; 1 Tim. 2:11–15).

Apply the Word

The Bible reveals God’s original design for human relationships. The foundational values that guide the church are mutual love and respect. The New Testament commands husbands to love their wives and wives to respect their husbands (Eph. 5:33). Relationships between all ages and sexes should be marked by gentleness and purity (1 Tim. 5:1–2).

Pray with Us

Will you ask the Father to encourage Josh Reigel and Judy Tollberg who serve in Digital Support at Moody Publishers? Praise God for their work that is helping readers across the globe experience a fresh encounter with Jesus Christ.

The Problem of Sin: Sin's Origin

We don't have to look very far to find proof of the Bible's doctrine of sin. Not only is the evidence all around us, it is within us. The great American preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards once observed, "When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell."

Today's passage describes how sin entered the human race. Sin did not begin with God. Satan first introduced sin to mankind, acting through the serpent (cf. Rev. 12:9). Sin then passed on to the rest of humanity through Adam's disobedience.

Adam did not act for himself alone when he chose to ignore God's warning and accept the forbidden fruit from his wife Eve. Eve was deceived by Satan's false promise, but Adam was not. He disobeyed God's command knowingly and willingly (1 Tim. 2:14).

Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and ... death came to all people, because all sinned.

Romans 5:12

Satan's suggestion to Eve that she eat from the forbidden tree shows that sin existed before Adam fell. In a sense, sin was a foreign agent introduced into human experience from the outside. In their original state Adam and Eve were without sin. After they disobeyed, the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened as Satan had promised. But instead of becoming like God, they experienced a mutual sense of shame and alienation (v. 7).

The experience of Adam and Eve helps us to understand the nature of sin. Sin begins with desire before it expresses itself in action (James 1:13–15). Jesus warned that sin first takes root in the heart (Matt. 5:28). Satan's basic strategy has not changed since the first temptation. Temptation always calls God's goodness into question and invites us to step outside the bounds He has set to find contentment. Temptation always promises what it cannot deliver.

Apply the Word

Are you struggling with sin today? Then take comfort in the knowledge that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Accept the invitation expressed in Joseph Hart's classic hymn: "Come, ye weary, heavy laden, / Lost and ruined by the fall; / If you tarry till you're better, / You will never come at all."

Pray with Us

We invite you to pray with us for Moody's Catering team, led by Natoshia Portis. May the guests and employees they serve be blessed by their hospitality.

Question and Answer

By Dr. Rosalie de Rosset, Professor of English, Literature, and Homiletics



I am often afraid. My mother was afraid before me. I think it's my family legacy.

When I talk to people about my fear, they tell me to think about something else, to trust the Lord, or to memorize certain Scripture verses. Nothing seems to help for more than a short while. How do I overcome my fear?



I'm sure many people reading this question resonate with its painful honesty. I know I do. Many "what-if's" absorb my thoughts when I wake in the night or even when I sit at my desk during the day. I often feel queasy in spirit over friends' problems, family worries, and even the state of the world. Worry is tangible some days, a mist in the air about me. I find myself listening to sermons in the night or my favorite old hymns, needing the comfort they give me. And these things *do* help, as does committing to memory the Lord's reassuring and realistic words. Still, sometimes, I am afraid.

I have come to understand that no one is ever quite whole here on earth. Peter Marshall, whose life was recounted in the famous biography *A Man Called Peter*, was a Scottish immigrant who pastored one of the largest churches in Washington, D.C., and became chaplain of the U.S. Senate. He once asserted that God has "not promised

to surround us with immunity from all the ills to which flesh is heir." As human beings born into a fallen world, we may inherit injuries from our familial backgrounds, and we will be dealt wounds that leave scars that ache in certain kinds of emotional weather.

The point is not that we are completely delivered from our fears and anxieties; the point is that we remember who walks by our side in the midst of them. Our fears can actually make us more dependent on God. In the beautiful words of a hymn by Katharina A. von Schlegel, "Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake / To guide the future, as He has the past. / Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; / All now mysterious shall be bright at last." Or in the psalmist's familiar words, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). He is with us. That is no small truth.



I have been enjoying the Scriptures in the recently published narrative, *The Voice*.

Can this type of paraphrasing be a single source or should it be balanced with more traditional translations?



The short answer is that while a paraphrase, carefully chosen, can be a useful supplement, it should

Continued on next page

We need to remember that God walks by our side in the midst of our fears and anxieties.

Continued from previous page

not be used exclusively as the primary source for your Bible reading. To explain further, a paraphrase is based on a translation of the Scripture but it is put into the vernacular of the day, making it easier to read, giving the sense or gist of the passage. Sometimes the purpose of the user-friendly version is to reach new Christians and younger people. This may involve leaving out elements or adding others with the goal of clarity. But, of course, such an approach is more susceptible to taking on the perspective of the paraphraser, and in some cases, may even have a particular agenda that proves unfaithful to biblical teaching. Through the years there have been many, many paraphrases, some now outdated because of dated expressions. A translation, on the other hand, tries to stay as close as possible to the original text and is usually a phrase-for-phrase rendering of the text from one language to another. The result is truer to the original and more reliable for in-depth Bible study. Reading a reputable translation of the Bible must always be a top priority for a Christian.



I have a friend who often prefaces her remarks with the words, “The Lord told me.” The Lord tells her many things—to go here or there, to buy or not buy an item, sometimes even to give advice to a friend or church member. I have at times been the recipient

of that advice, advice I have seldom asked for and don’t always feel is right for me. How do I think about this and process that kind of spiritual certainty?



You are right to be uneasy about your friend’s approach. It is not a good practice for anyone to say the Lord has spoken to him or her about another person’s life. Such an approach can be presumptuous, and often lacks the foundation of a relationship context necessary for someone to receive such advice. Obviously, there are times when we should be corrected by good friends, especially if our lives are not in order. But even that should be done carefully and compassionately on the basis of scriptural truth, not on the claim to a personal message from God.

This kind of approach—to declare that the Lord has given specific advice for someone else—has the danger of spiritual abuse and manipulation. Furthermore, to liberally say the Lord is directing too many specific details of life is to treat Him like a GPS, when we already have and know the map that provides foundational biblical principles for conducting our lives. And these biblical principles also give us good common sense.

The Problem of Sin: Sin's Effect

In one chapter of *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis explains why we have good reason to feel uneasy about God. If God's nature is one of absolute goodness, He must hate what we do. God is both our only comfort and our supreme terror. God is the thing we most need and the thing we most want to hide from.

Adam and Eve's behavior following their disobedience in the garden is proof that Lewis is right. Sin alienated them from God by bringing guilt upon them and made them uncomfortable in His presence. Instead of turning to God for help, they fled from Him. Sin always has this effect (cf. Rev. 6:16). God, however, responded to their sin with grace. The question of verse 9 was not for the Lord's benefit but for Adam's. It was intended to draw him out of hiding. In the same way, the questions of verses 11 and 13 do not mean that God was unaware of what had taken place.

Once you were
alienated from
God and were
enemies in your
minds because
of your evil
behavior.

Colossians 1:21

They were asked in order to elicit a confession from Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve's answers to the Lord's questions reveal the fear and extreme self-centeredness that sin produces within us. Adam seems to have been more concerned initially about his nakedness than his disobedience. When directly confronted about his sin, Adam shifted the blame to Eve (and by way of implication ultimately to God). Likewise, Eve pointed the finger at the serpent.

This is the problem sin creates. It causes us to turn away from God and sets us against one another. The selfishness of sin is ultimately self-destructive. God made the first move in order to draw Adam and Eve to a place of repentance. By confronting them about their sin, He opened the way to grace and forgiveness.

Apply the Word

How would you answer the two questions posed in today's passage? Have you been avoiding God because of the guilt you feel over sin? Admit what you have done and turn to Christ. He will not reject you: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Pray with Us

With increases in enrollment at Moody's campus in Spokane, Washington, as well as online at Moody Distance Learning, Moody is equipping more students than ever before. Thank God for the leadership of Dr. Junias Venugopal, Provost and Dean of Education.

The Problem of Sin: The Penalty for Sin

In his *Meditations* the Roman philosopher and ruler Marcus Aurelius wrote that the act of dying is one of the acts of life. Death may seem like a natural stage in the cycle of human development. But as Scripture reveals the human story, death is an intruder. Death was not part of our original design. It is a curse and was the consequence of Adam's sin.

The entrance of sin fundamentally changed human experience and affected every area of life. Adam had been warned that the consequence of disobedience to God's command would be death (Gen. 2:17). Adam did not die physically until many centuries later, but the spiritual effects of death were immediate. Sin introduced a barrier in his relationship with God. All of creation was "subjected to frustration" because of his disobedience (Rom. 8:20). Childbirth became painful and work laborious.

For the wages of
sin is death, but
the gift of God is
eternal life
in Christ Jesus
our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Sin introduced the principle of entropy into human experience. We weaken and eventually die (v. 19). Physical death is the objective evidence that we have all been declared guilty as a result of Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12–14). Death, like the angel's flaming sword, is an ever present reminder that the gates of Eden are now closed to us.

If death is an enemy, however, it is also a kind of schoolmaster that leads us to Christ. Death's hard lesson exposes the true nature of sin (Rom. 7:13). Physical death is God's goad, puncturing our denial and prodding us to turn to Christ for relief from its sting (1 Cor. 15:56). More importantly, Jesus Christ has made death the gateway to eternal life. He is the promised offspring who would crush the serpent's head (v. 15). Having been reconciled to God by His death on the cross, we will be saved through His life (Rom. 5:10).

Apply the Word

We should not be surprised to feel uncomfortable at the prospect of death. Death is the "last enemy" (1 Cor. 15:26). But for those who know Christ, death is not the end but merely a point of transition into life eternal. If you are uncertain about what will happen to you when you die and want to talk with someone about Christian faith, call 1-800-DL MOODY.

Pray with Us

Today our prayers go to God for Jim Burdick who manages Moody Central. This new department on Moody's Chicago campus was initiated to better serve our students, creating a convenient, centralized location for all of our student services.

Salvation: Justification and Sanctification

“Grace has about it the scent of scandal,” Philip Yancey observes. The Bible asserts that there is nothing we can do to earn it. Prostitutes, thieves, and murderers can find acceptance with God through the grace of Christ. But doesn’t behavior also matter?

Behavior matters to God, but it is not the basis for His acceptance. The secret to understanding this lies in the distinction between justification and sanctification. Justification is God’s determination to forgive us on the basis of what Christ has done. It is a divine accounting, where God wipes out our debt of sin and transfers the righteousness of Christ to us. We make no contribution of our own to this transaction. We merely accept it on the basis of faith.

In sanctification we draw upon this account. To sanctify means “to make holy.” Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive

Put to death . . .
whatever belongs
to your earthly
nature.

Colossians 3:5

to God (v. 11). Sanctification is a product of justification. But unlike justification, which involves a change in our relationship with God, sanctification involves a change in our behavior. In justification God bestows righteousness upon us. In sanctification our behavior reflects that righteousness. In order for our behavior to change, we must experience new life or regeneration. This is the experience of being united with Christ in His resurrection so that we can live a new life.

Sanctification, since it reflects our practice, is a progressive experience. We can grow in the practice of holiness. Justification, since it is based upon the righteousness of Christ, is not progressive. When God justifies us, He credits all the righteousness of Christ to our account. Although the two are related, the order is vitally important. Justification always precedes sanctification. God must first make us holy before we can be holy.

Apply the Word

If sanctification is a result of justification, why don’t all Christians live for God? In some cases it is ignorance. It is significant that Paul begins today’s passage with an emphasis on knowledge. You may know that Jesus has forgiven your sins. Do you also know that He gives you the ability to live for God? Because you are under grace, sin is no longer your master.

Pray with Us

Will you pray for Engineering Operations: Al Campa, Thomas Drost, and John Fraats? Ask the Father to give these men continued health and protection as they maintain equipment on Moody’s Chicago campus.

Salvation: The Hope of Resurrection

A capstone is the final stone that is placed in a building. It is often inscribed with a date or other message that indicates that the work was completed. In God's work of salvation, bodily resurrection is the capstone of our redemptive experience. Our redemption is not complete until we are resurrected.

Some at Corinth dismissed the idea of bodily resurrection. They may have felt that physical existence no longer had a place in eternal life. Or they may have spiritualized the Scripture's teaching about resurrection, saying that they were already experiencing it. In defending the doctrine of a literal and bodily resurrection, Paul argues from the lesser to the greater. He points out that if there will be no resurrection for the believer, then there was no resurrection for Christ. If Christ was not raised from the dead, then there is no gospel. Not only would this make Paul a liar, but

also both preaching and faith would be useless (v. 14). In today's passage, Paul affirms these two foundational doctrines. Not only does he emphasize the bodily resurrection of the believer, he also makes it clear that Jesus rose bodily from the grave (cf. Luke 24:39).

By his power God
raised the Lord
from the dead,
and he will raise
us also.

1 Corinthians 6:14

There are significant differences in Christ's post-resurrection state. Physical barriers like walls do not seem to be an obstacle for Him. The fact that we will be like Jesus when we are resurrected suggests that our

physical experience will be different as well (1 Cor. 15:49; cf. 1 John 3:2). For one thing, our bodies will no longer decay. We will be raised to an imperishable glory (1 Cor. 15:42–43). Death will no longer have power over us. We will no longer struggle with sin. These changes are necessary because ordinary mortal life is not suitable for life in the kingdom (1 Cor. 15:50).

Apply the Word

The resurrection of the body underscores the importance of the body to spiritual life. Though death separates spirit from body, God will resurrect both body and spirit for His glory. And even now, the actions of the body have spiritual and moral implications for the life of the soul. How will you glorify God with your body today?

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for Engineering Operations—Jaime Ixcaragua, Gerald Malozienc, Steven Wenner, and Joshua Woods—praise God for their behind-the-scenes work that assists Moody's ministries by providing fully-functioning equipment.

The Church: The Promise of the Church

When the Roman philosopher and orator Victorinus told Simplicianus, the Bishop of Milan, that he was a Christian the bishop refused to believe him. “I will not believe it, nor will I rank you among the Christians, unless I see you in the Church of Christ,” Simplicianus replied.

How important is the church to the Christian faith? The church is not a human invention but a work of Christ. His promise to build the church is also a guarantee of its future existence (v. 18). Although it was not revealed in the Old Testament, the church was a part of God’s eternal purpose. It is the primary agent for displaying God’s wisdom revealed in the gospel (Eph. 3:9–11).

The promise to Peter that he would receive “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” in verse 19 was the opposite of Jesus’ criticism of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:13: “Woe to you, teach-

ers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.” The legalistic traditions of religious leaders shut out those who would have entered into the kingdom. Peter, in contrast, would open the door by proclaiming the gospel of Christ.

Likewise Jesus’ reference to binding and loosing came from a rabbinic metaphor for authority to declare what is permitted or forbidden. Jesus used the same lan-

guage in connection with the church’s authority to exercise discipline (Matt. 18:18). As we will see tomorrow, Peter “opened the door” to forgiveness by proclaiming Christ on the day of Pentecost. He was the first to reveal that Jesus Christ had ushered in a new age of grace that included people from every nation (cf. Acts 10:9–48).

He is the head
of the body, the
church . . . so that
in everything he
might have the
supremacy.

Colossians 1:18

Apply the Word

Jesus’ plan for the church extends to every age. Although it has had ups and downs throughout its history, the church’s future is secure. Nothing can stop it, not even the grave. Spend some time today praying for your church and asking God to pour out His power upon it. Pray for its leaders and ask for boldness in declaring the message of Christ.

Pray with Us

We have the privilege of praying for Ken Heulitt, Chief Financial Officer. Let’s ask God to give Ken and his teams wisdom as they steward the resources the Lord so generously provides through ministry partners like you.

The Church: The Birth of the Church

The Old Testament celebration of Pentecost (also called the Feast of Weeks) was one of three pilgrimage festivals prescribed by the Law of Moses. Pentecost was an inclusive celebration with men, women, slaves, and foreigners all invited to participate (Deut. 16:11). Other names for Pentecost were the Feast of Ingathering and the Day of First Fruits, making this festival a celebration of the harvest (Ex. 23:16; Num. 28:26).

In view of this, it is appropriate that Pentecost is regarded by many to be the church's birthday. On that day the church received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the gift promised by the Father through the prophet Joel (v. 16). Jesus had commanded His disciples not to remain in Jerusalem and wait for this. This helps us to understand much about the nature of the church. The church is a community of the Spirit. It is made up of people from every culture who are

united to Christ by faith and are empowered by the Holy Spirit. The church is also a community with a message. Its mission is to proclaim Jesus Christ.

The church is both sent into the culture and separated from the culture. Peter assured those who had gathered to listen on the day of Pentecost: "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (v. 39). This distance is not only one of time, alluding to Joel's ancient prophecy, but also of location. The mis-

sion of the church is to offer the hope of the gospel to all those who are near and far. At the same time, Peter warned those who heard: "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (v. 40). Thousands believed and were baptized as a result of Peter's message. Their faith marked the first fruits of the church's great harvest.

More and more
men and women
believed in the
Lord and were
added to their
number.

Acts 5:14

Apply the Word

One way you can share in the harvest is by supporting your church's outreach to those who are far off. In addition to providing financial support to your church's missionaries, you can also support them through prayer and encouragement. Why not write a brief note to a missionary today to tell them that you are praying for their ministry?

Pray with Us

Dr. Larry Davidhizar, Vice President and Dean of the Undergraduate School, leads a team of faculty members who teach over 1,600 Moody students. May God help Dr. Davidhizar lead these professors with grace, humility, and wisdom.

The Church: The Ordinances of the Church

Every church practices local customs that might distinguish it from another congregation. For one church it might be the tradition of closing the service by gathering in a circle to hold hands and sing the doxology. For another it could be the habit of sharing a meal following the service. One church meets in a cathedral; another in a living room.

Yet every congregation should baptize adherents and observe communion. These were commanded by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:24–25). Each proclaims Christ. For those who heard Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost, baptism was the rite of initiation that identified them as followers of Christ. Those who were baptized “were added to their number that day” (v. 41). Unlike the repeated washings that were a common feature of Judaism in Peter’s day, baptism was a one-time experience for the Christian. It signified the believer’s union

with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–4). Later in one of his epistles Peter described baptism as a pledge (1 Peter 3:21).

Many scholars believe that when the early disciples “broke bread” in their homes, they observed communion. Communion was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. Jesus transformed the traditional Passover celebration by distributing the bread and wine among His disciples, charging them to “do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). When we observe the Lord’s

Supper, we remember how He gave Himself for us. We also look forward to His return. When Jesus distributed the cup, He told His disciples: “I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29). The Lord’s Supper is both for meditation and proclamation.

For whenever you
eat this bread
and drink this cup,
you proclaim the
Lord’s death until
he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:26

Apply the Word

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are not local customs that a congregation observes; they belong to the whole church. Not every church observes them with same frequency or in the same way. If you are uncertain about the way your church observes these ordinances, consider discussing the subject with your pastor or a trusted church leader.

Pray with Us

Day One, an event for future undergraduate students, is being held on Moody’s Chicago campus today. Ask the Lord to guide each person in attendance and make them feel at home on Moody’s campus.

Angels Good & Bad: Ministering Spirits

Anne Rice is most famous for her books about vampires. But in a more recent series, *Songs of the Seraphim*, she focuses on angels. Many authors like Rice have speculated about the nature of angels, but our only reliable source of information about them is found in Scripture.

According to Hebrews 1:7, angels are God’s servants. They are created beings, but they are not made of flesh and blood. Instead, angels are spirits whose function is to serve God; the angels were created to do God’s bidding. Gabriel is an example of this. He stands in the presence of God and serves as God’s messenger (Luke 1:19; cf. Dan. 8:16; 9:21).

Michael is another angel mentioned in Scripture. He is described as a “great prince” who “protects” the people of Israel (Dan. 12:1). Michael is an archangel, one of highest orders of angelic beings, who disputed with Satan (Jude

1:9). Michael may also be the archangel who announces Christ’s descent from heaven when the dead in Christ arise and those who are alive are caught up to be with him (1 Thess. 4:16).

Their appearance is sometimes accompanied by God’s own glory (Luke 2:9; cf. John 20:12; Acts 1:10). Their presence usually provokes a sense of fear in those who see them (Luke 1:13, 30; 2:10). As God’s messengers, they are fellow servants along with us, “ministering servants who serve those who will inherit salvation” (v. 14).

I saw the LORD
sitting on his
throne with all
the multitudes of
heaven standing
... on his right and
on his left.

1 Kings 22:19

Today’s passage is a stern reminder that Jesus is far superior to the angels. Although angels are powerful servants, Jesus is God’s unique Son (v. 5). He can do what no angel is able to do because He is God in the flesh. Jesus sustains all things by His power and only He can redeem us from sin.

Apply the Word

The Hebrew Christians who originally read today’s passage had a high regard for angels. But our regard for angels should never be greater than our regard Christ. This is idolatry. Only God is worthy of our worship (Rev. 22:9). Do not let your regard for God’s servants, whether human or angel, distract you from the devotion you owe to Christ.

Pray with Us

Your prayers will be an encouragement to Lloyd Dodson. One of his tasks as Vice President of Human Resources is to fill open positions at Moody. Ask God to bring the right people who are passionate about Christ.

Angels Good & Bad: Satan Our Adversary

On November 5, 1979, Iranian leader Ruhollah Khomeini delivered a speech in which he used the phrase “the Great Satan” to describe the United States as Iran’s great adversary. According to the Scriptures, however, Satan is more than a figure of speech. He really exists.

Although the Bible does not describe his origin in detail, evidence suggests that he is a fallen angel. Some scholars believe passages like Ezekiel 28:12–19 and Isaiah 14:12–14 use the king of Tyre and the king of Babylon as an analogy for Satan, and that these texts reveal details of Satan’s fall.

When Satan fell, a large number of angels fell with him (1 Peter 2:4). God prepared the eternal fire of hell for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). The demons know that this will be their final destiny (Matt. 8:29; Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28). Although Satan is called “the prince of demons” in Scripture, Jesus

gave His disciples authority over them (Luke 9:1).

Satan is a personal being. He tempted Christ in the wilderness, and he is our enemy as well (1 Peter 5:8–9). His strategy with Jesus was the same he employed in the garden with Adam and Eve. Satan twisted God’s Word in an attempt to persuade Jesus to disobey. Like our Lord, we are to resist the devil with faith by submitting ourselves to God (James 4:7).

Satan is a powerful adversary but is no match for God. His ultimate defeat has been secured by Christ. He already stands condemned and will eventually be driven out of this world altogether (John 12:31; 16:11). Those who belong to Jesus need to be on their guard against Satan’s strategies, but they do not need to live in fear of him. He is an enemy—but a defeated one. The weakest believer can overcome Satan by relying on Jesus Christ.

I saw Satan fall
like lightning
from heaven.

Luke 10:18

Apply the Word

We can err by dismissing Satan or regarding him too highly. We should not take the threat posed by Satan lightly. He seeks our destruction. But we should not fear him either. As Martin Luther wrote: “The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure, one little word shall fell him.” Jesus is that Word!

Pray with Us

Calvin Robinson, manager of Underwriting, welcomes your prayers today. His department secures financial support for Moody Radio through the development of business and ministry partnerships. Please pray that God opens doors for godly partnerships.

Angels Good & Bad: War in Heaven

People who live in a war zone are well aware of the dangers they face every day. The evidence of deadly conflict is all around them. But spiritual warfare is different. Those who belong to Christ take part in a great battle against forces that remain largely unseen: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12).

Today’s passage draws the curtain back and gives us a glimpse of war in heaven. The symbolic nature of John’s description (the woman and the dragon are referred to as “signs”) has resulted in multiple interpretations. What is clear is that John draws on biblical images and events to set the stage for Satan’s final defeat. It is also evident that there is a correlation between the unseen

struggle that takes place in heaven and events that occur on earth.

All those who trust in Christ have been rescued from the dominion of darkness (Col. 1:13). Prior to this we, “followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Eph. 2:2). Now that we have been made alive in Christ, we are under the authority of Christ. Because sin no longer controls us, we have power to say no to the world, the flesh, and the devil and to say yes to God.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

Ephesians 6:11

This new ability to live for God does not go unopposed. The battle in heaven described in today’s passage mirrors the struggle we face in our own world. Satan is at work in today’s world in many ways. He attempts to obscure the truth of the gospel (Matt. 13:19). He sows discord between believers in an attempt to gain a foothold in the church (Eph. 4:26–27).

Apply the Word

The threat Satan poses to our spiritual well-being should be clear. The Bible reveals enough for us to say “we are not unaware of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11). If you would like to learn more about how to defend yourself against Satan’s strategies, you can read *The Strategy of Satan* by Warren W. Wiersbe (Tyndale House).

Pray with Us

Please uphold in prayer Collin Lambert, Vice President of Moody Radio. He leads his team in producing programming filled with biblical insight and creative expressions of faith. Moody Radio reaches millions of people on the airwaves and through the Internet.

Last Things: The Rapture of the Church

If you have ever taken a long trip with small children, you are familiar with the question: “Are we there yet?” When it comes to the return of Christ, those who know the Savior have the same sense of expectation but frame the question differently. For them the question is: “Is He here yet?”

Jesus promised to return. Scripture describes two distinct phases. The first involves Christ’s return for His church. Jesus promised that before the end He would gather the church to Himself (John 14:3). The theological term that is sometimes used to refer to this is *rapture*. Although this may sound a bit like the title of a romance novel rather than a theological term, it actually comes from a Latin word that means “to snatch or seize.” The Rapture will be experienced by those believers who are alive when Jesus comes for His church. At that time those who have died in Christ will be resurrected. Believers

If I go and
prepare a place
for you, I will
come back and
take you to be
with me.

John 14:3

who are alive will be “caught up” (i.e. raptured) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (vv. 16–17). This will take place “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52), and without warning.

The Rapture of the church should be distinguished from the Second Coming. At the Rapture the church is caught up and taken to heaven. At the Second Coming the church accompanies Jesus in His return to earth. This raises an obvious question. Why would God separate the return of Christ into a two-stage event? The answer has to do with His plan for Israel. In the intervening seven-year period between these two phases of Christ’s return, Israel will experience a time of unparalleled suffering and will be delivered by Christ (cf. Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; Rom. 11:25–27). This time of tribulation concludes with the Second Coming of Christ.

Apply the Word

The Bible’s teaching about the return of Jesus Christ is meant to be a source of comfort to the church. All believers may not understand all the fine points of biblical prophecy (or even agree about it) but we can be certain of one thing. If we know Jesus as Savior, our ultimate destiny is to be with Him forever.

Pray with Us

Paul Brackley, Brenda Crump, and Ed Jordan from Procurement are grateful for your prayer support. Please ask the Lord to give them wisdom as they authorize and purchase materials, supplies, and services to meet Moody’s needs.

Last Things: The Second Coming

Children usually look forward to seeing their father at the end of the workday, but not when someone says, “Wait until your father gets home!” This is a threat as much as it is a promise. Jesus’ teaching about His Second Coming also has elements of both blessing and warning.

For those who have trusted in Christ, the prospect of His Second Coming is one of blessing. They will appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). They will reign with Him (Matt. 19:28). But for all those who reject Christ, the Second Coming will be a day of great distress.

When He ascended into heaven, the angels assured the disciples that “this same Jesus” would come “the same way” they had seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11). Their promise underscored two important features of Christ’s Second Coming. First, it will be a personal return. The church is not waiting for a new incar-

nation of the Messiah. We are waiting for the same Jesus we read about in the Gospels and who was nailed to the cross and raised from the dead.

Second, the return of Christ will be visible. At His Ascension the disciples were able to see Jesus “taken up before their very eyes” on the Mount of Olives until “a cloud hid him from their sight” (Acts 1:9). Jesus’ Second Coming will take place “in the same way,” only in the opposite direction. Unlike the Rapture, during which only believers will see Jesus, the Second Coming will be visible to all (v. 27).

“Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him” . . . So shall it be! Amen.

Revelation 1:7

The cosmic portents that lead up to that day will culminate in the appearance of Christ in the sky (v. 30). Jesus’ feet will touch the Mount of Olives and it will be split in two (Zech. 14:4). The first time Jesus came to accomplish salvation. Jesus will come a second time to act as judge.

Apply the Word

Scripture is clear in the prediction that Jesus Christ will return, but it does not reveal the exact day or time. Jesus warned His disciples that it was not given to them “to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority” (Acts 1:7). We should not speculate about things which only the Father knows. Faith, not timing, will matter most on that day.

Pray with Us

It is our privilege to pray for Christine Gorz, Vice President of Corporate Communications. Ask God to guide her as she oversees communications strategies and leads Integrated Marketing Communications, Events and Guest Services, and Moody’s Customer Service.

Last Things: Final Judgment

James M. Gray, the third president of Moody Bible Institute, was once asked about the practical value of teaching about the Second Coming of Christ. He replied that all the virtues and graces revealed in the New Testament that are binding upon the believer are in some way associated with this doctrine. He believed that the spiritual maturity and moral character of the Christian are a reflection of how well they understand this teaching.

One reason for this connection between eschatology (the study of “last things”) and ethics (how we live) is the expectation of judgment. One day we must all give an account to God for what we have done. Those who have been redeemed by Christ’s blood will experience this day of reckoning very differently than those who have not. Those who have never trusted in Jesus Christ will be reckoned guilty for their sins. They will be ex-

cluded from the New Jerusalem and will eventually be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). Those who have placed their faith in Christ will be reckoned as righteous and will be rewarded for their work on Christ’s behalf (1 Cor. 3:11–14).

**We must all
appear before the
judgment seat of
Christ, [to] receive
what is due us for
the things done
while in the body.**

2 Corinthians 5:10

Why the difference in treatment? The answer is found in Jesus Christ: “Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting

for him” (Heb. 9:27–28).

Believers are not condemned in the final judgment because Jesus has already secured their eternal salvation. In the Christian life, godly living is motivated by a sense of gratefulness for a salvation that is to come rather than a fear of condemnation.

Apply the Word

We have spent this month examining many of the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith. But merely knowing doctrine cannot save you. Jesus Christ saves. If you believe in Him, His blood and righteousness will be your shield on the Day of Judgment. Reject Him and you will learn this: “It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

Pray with Us

We hope you’ve been encouraged by this month’s study, Foundations of Our Faith. As we reflect on those sure foundations, let’s ask the Lord to help us trust His Word and live out our Christian faith day by day.

FROM THE EDITORS

Continued from page 4

learning, and desiring to be more like Jesus. Thank you all for being my sisters and brothers in Christ. To God be the glory!”

— Valencia, Clearwater, FL

“Each morning I start my day in God’s Word, and *Today In the Word* uplifts and encourages me as I go along. I have been saved nine years (since October 2003), and although I still struggle financially and physically, I know I can read God’s Word and be encouraged by *Today In The Word*. I know that God is with me through every trial and tribulation I have. Thank you, and may God bless you.”

— Bonita, Kent, OH

“[By reading *Today in the Word*], I came to understand God’s Word in ways I could never imagine. Thank you for this ministry.”

— Robert, Dundee, IL

“I look forward to my quiet times every morning with God, the Bible, and my *Today in the Word* devotional. It is always timely for what is going on in my life—just the word I need for the day! It was most precious to me when my husband went to heaven in January 2004. The day of his graveside service, *Today in the Word* centered around Joshua 1:7–9. Just the word I needed to give me hope and courage when I was feeling so

overwhelmed. It continues to be a blessing to me every day and I am so thankful for it. Bless you all!”

— Patricia, Pinehurst, ID

“All of the devotions are so very good and they encourage [us] to keep true to the Lord and to better understand the Word of God. [Our] grandson and his wife both graduated from Moody. Thank you for your ministry!”

— Carl and Peggy, Santan Valley, AZ

“I have faithfully kept up and used *Today in the Word* as a daily devotional for over 20 years! It is concise, organized, practical, easy to comprehend, and uplifting. I look forward to it every day. It has been on many excursions with me, including taking it to work and sharing tidbits with the residents at the senior living community where I am employed.”

— Larry, McHenry, IL

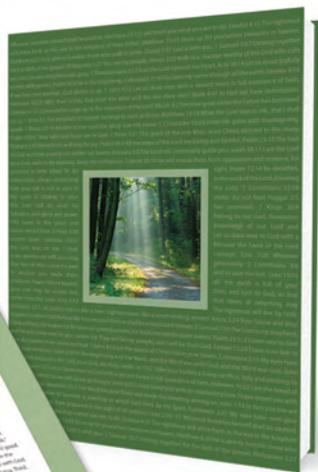
“I want to say thank you for sending copies of *Today in the Word* to me every month. After reading them, I pass them on to Chaplain Ben Malone at Mississippi Prison Correctional facility. Thank you for bringing words of Life and Light to a dark and lost place of humanity.”

— Mike, Madison, MS

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In him you too are
being built together
to become a dwelling
in which God lives
by his Spirit.
Ephesians 2:22

Ephesians 3:1-6

Today's Devotion

A Stewardship of Grace

For those who love detective novels, a mystery means that there's a puzzle that needs to be solved. Those who figure out the clues can solve the mystery. But in today's passage, Paul uses the term mystery in a different sense. This mystery was a matter of revelation. The mystery that Paul wrote about was something "which was not made..."

This Month

For many of us, the first word that comes to mind when we think about our relationship with the church is complicated. The critic in us looks around on Sunday morning and notices flawed people, the judge in us notes the lack of spiritual zeal in fellow-parishioners, the theologian in us suspects insufficient depth in the pastor's sermon. The list goes on and on, and too often we get mired in the...

Looking For More



This Month's Study at a Glance

A look at this month's devotions.



Today with Paul Nyquist

Because of His Great Love for Us



Theology Matters

The Submission of Christ

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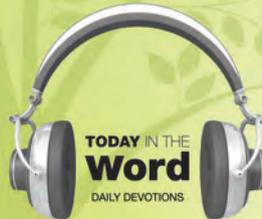
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*New for
2013*

The Love Language Challenge

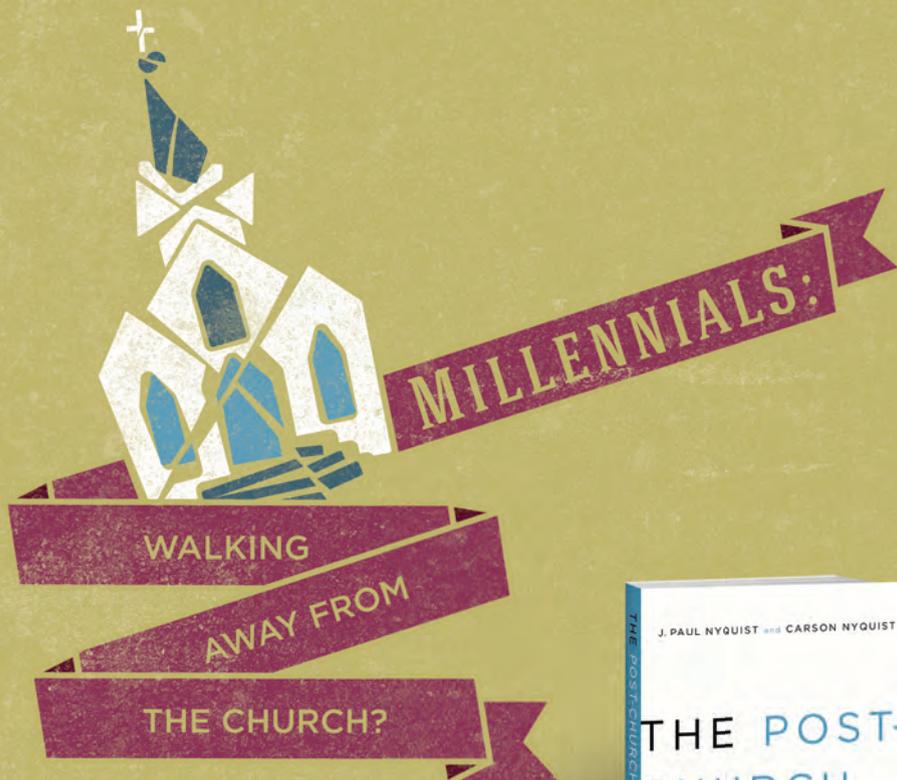
Give your marriage the gift of TRUE LOVE by committing to The Love Language Challenge. For five weeks you will love your spouse according to THEIR love language. Have your spouse take the quiz now, then sign up to receive weekly challenges with ideas that are a perfect fit for him or her and watch your relationship become a love story.

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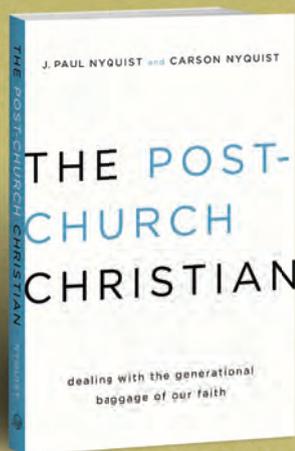
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AND

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