



Creation

By Andy Snoke

And so begins the account of one of God’s most mighty works, in relationship to mankind. The eternal mysterious past known only to God, is interrupted with the timeless words “In the beginning.”

This “beginning” is not the story of all that God has done, it simply marks “our” beginning with the creation of the earth and the heavens that now are. It is the beginning of the story of God’s creation and purpose for mankind. As a good student studies and ponders the scriptures, you soon find out that there is much more that God has not revealed to man, than there is that is revealed to man.

It has been about 6,000 years since the time of “In the beginning” recorded in Genesis 1:1. This does not imply that the earth is only 6,000 or so years old. But simply this “beginning” is measured in time to be about 6,000 years. The things that God completed in the eternal past, before even the creation of time itself, belong only to God.

Genesis 1:2 “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

Very little is known about the time between verses one and two of Genesis. We know that somewhere in God’s timetable, our enemy, the

fallen angel called “Satan,” along with his angelic fallen beings, fell from their original position with God. It is not known if this rebellion is related to the verse that says “the earth was without form, and void;” It is not known if the “gap” between verse one and two of Genesis is measured in short time, or in countless ages. But we do know, that the “beginning” was centered around the “Spirit of God moving” upon the face of the waters. And thank God, from this beginning, the Spirit of God continues to “move” and complete His work.

As we move forward in this article, the purpose is not to dwell on that which is not known, but to rejoice and dwell on that which has been revealed. Deuteronomy 29:29, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

Very quickly in the creation story, the Lord reveals to the reader, what His ultimate plan and purpose is for mankind. We are blessed to have the collective writings in the 66 books of the Bible collected over a 1,500 year time period, with many writers (but only one author: God), yet it is my feeling that the entire Bible could be summed up in three verses:

“And God said, Let us make man

in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1:26-28)”.

God’s plan and purpose, is to create mankind, in His image, after His likeness, to have fellowship with God, and to have dominion over the creation. What God has decreed is predetermined. It is not complete as of yet, but it will be fulfilled.

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The millennia of sorrow, death, and sin measured from the day that Adam and Eve chose to obey the enemy rather than heed God's command will someday end with all of mankind made in His image and His likeness. The day shall ultimately come when the "curse" will be no more and all of creation shall live in that new day.

"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (Revelation 22:3-5)".

In a moment of time, in God's perspective, that is, the plan will be complete. It is impossible for us to understand that God is not only eternal, with no end to His years, but that He actually lives outside the state of time. Time, space, and matter, are things that God created. He observes them, He created them, but He lives beyond the limitations of them.

"By faith we understand that the universe was prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are invisible (Hebrews 11:3)".

It is by faith that we understand. Scientists struggle with the mystery of creation, as they painstakingly try to explain away a Creator. Things never add up and they never will from a purely academic standpoint, regarding creation. It is impossible to explain away a "Creator." Even with the prevailing theory of the "big bang" as the origin of the universe, there still lies no explanation as to where all the matter of the vast universe originally came from. It is by "faith" we understand, while leaving the details to God.

As one stands and gazes at the painting Mona Lisa in the great museum of France, all can recognize that there was an artist behind the

creation of the painting. We easily and quickly can recognize the brush strokes of its creator, the 16th century artist Leonardo da Vinci. Only a fool would say, "There is no artist." Only a fool would think that through the process of time and chance, the timeless painting came together and put itself on display at the Grand Louvre.

There is no observational evidence and there is not a soul alive today that can bear witness that they saw Leonardo da Vinci actually create his Mona Lisa. Yet, with common sense, we know that the Mona Lisa was created.

Whether we gaze into the celestial heavens with all its immeasurable immensity and glory, or whether we peer through an electron microscope in search of ever so small quarks and particles, we also can recognize the brush strokes of God. Only a fool can say, "There is no God." Mankind is so much more than da Vinci's Mona Lisa.

Tocqueville quoted more than two centuries ago that "Ignorance lies at both ends of knowledge." The world of academia today, most often close their eyes, and try to deafen the ears of their students to the roar of the heavens shouting out with evidence of the Glory of God!

"The heavens are recounting the glory of God, and the expanse proclaiming His handiwork. Day by day they pour forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words where their voice is not heard. Their measuring line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; in them He has set up a dwelling-place for the sun, and he comes forth like a bridegroom from his canopy. He rejoices like a hero to run a race; his going forth from the end of the heavens, and his orbit to their ends; and nothing is hidden from his heat (Psalms 19: 1 – 6, LITV)".

"For God's wrath is revealed from Heaven on all ungodliness

and unrighteousness of men, holding the truth in unrighteousness, because the thing known of God is clearly known within them, for God revealed it to them. For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things made, both His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse (Romans 1: 18 – 20)".

It is comforting to know that mankind is not a cosmic accident, or the result of immense time - heat, accident and chance in an illusionary, unobserved, unproved evolutionary cycle. We can recognize the brushstrokes of a Creator; we can see His divine DNA written throughout His creation. It is with purpose that God created man, to have dominion over the earth, to be in His likeness, and to have fellowship with the Divine!

The original state of man and creation fell into sin and death by a deliberate act of rebellion. And the enticement into rebellion came from a carefully posed question from Satan. "Has God truly said that you may not take of the fruit of any tree in the garden?" This sounds simple enough, does it not? And yet this same tactic is a method of the enemy to this very day. A question posed, not for the sake of knowing the "truth," but for the sake of questioning the very authority of God.

I am not judging "questions" posed to know and understand the truth, but I am presenting that questions posed to "question" God and His ways, is still a tool of the enemy.

"Now the snake was wiser than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, Has God truly said that you may not take of the fruit of any tree in the garden? And the woman said, We may take of the fruit of the trees in the garden: But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God has said, If you take of it or put your hands on it, death will come to

you. And the snake said, Death will not certainly come to you: For God sees that on the day when you take of its fruit, your eyes will be open, and you will be as gods, having knowledge of good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and a delight to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit, and gave it to her husband. And their eyes were open and they were conscious that they had no clothing and they made themselves coats of leaves stitched together. And there came to them the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the evening wind: and the man and his wife went to a secret place among the trees of the garden, away from the eyes of the Lord God. And the voice of the Lord God came to the man, saying, Where are you? And he said, Hearing your voice in the garden I was full of fear, because I was without clothing: and I kept myself from your eyes. And he said, Who gave you the knowledge that you were without clothing? Have you taken of the fruit of the tree which I said you were not to take? And the man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I took it. And the Lord God said to the woman, What have you done? And the woman said, I was tricked by the deceit of the snake and I took it. And the Lord God said to

the snake, Because you have done this you are cursed more than all cattle and every beast of the field; you will go flat on the earth, and dust will be your food all the days of your life: And there will be war between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed: by him will your head be crushed and by you his foot will be wounded. To the woman he said, Great will be your pain in childbirth; in sorrow will your children come to birth; still your desire will be for your husband, but he will be your master. And to Adam he said, Because you gave ear to the voice of your wife and took of the fruit of the tree which I said you were not to take, the earth is cursed on your account; in pain you will get your food from it all your life. Thorns and waste plants will come up, and the plants of the field will be your food;

With the hard work of your hands you will get your bread till you go back to the earth from which you were taken: for dust you are and to the dust you will go back. And the man gave his wife the name of Eve because she was the mother of all who have life. And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins for their clothing. And the Lord God said, Now the man has become like one of us, having knowledge of good and evil; and now if he puts out his hand and takes of the fruit of the tree of life,

he will go on living for ever. So the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden to be a worker on the earth from which he was taken. So he sent the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden he put winged ones and a flaming sword turning every way to keep the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:1 – 24, ASV)”.

As mankind walked away from the presence of God through disobedience, the Lord has made a way back home for all of mankind through obedience. By accepting the free sacrificial gift of God, through His only begotten Son Jesus the Christ (anointed one), we begin our journey back home.

Metaphorically, our journey through Jesus Christ, according to God’s great plan, is much like the book of Genesis but only in reverse. The book of Genesis begins with “In the beginning God,” and ends with “they placed his body in a coffin in Egypt” Gen 50:26. It is through Christ, and according to the workings of the Holy Spirit, that we can go from “a coffin in Egypt,” representing death, to “In the beginning God,” representing life.

It is with great purpose that we are all here. It is with great purpose that we were created. It is with great purpose that we live. It is with great purpose, that we experience the “sleep” of death, only to be raised in His resurrection for eternity.

Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world!

By Michael Greif

As Christians we will encounter this warfare as God’s Word speaks of it often. Ephesians 6:10 -18 speaks about the full armor of God, which is ours to take up and use. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so

that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF

RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (NAS).

This section of scripture starts by telling us to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. We are strong when we are in the Lord, in the strength of His might; the key here being in the Lord. This means that God is first in our lives. We are abiding and dwelling in Him. Then we have access to His strength.

Vs. 11 “Put on the full armor of God that you will be able to stand firm (fixed, unchanging, stiff) against the schemes of the devil.” We need this armor of God to withstand the onslaughts of Satan’s forces. “Gird your loins with truth...” Jesus is that truth; take Him into your whole life. Let Him be your life.

“Put on the breastplate of righteousness...” May His laws, rules, character, become our character. Put it on. Joshua 24:15 “...choose you this day whom you will serve...” Deut. 30:15-20 says, “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely

perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” This choosing Him will bring righteousness.

“...having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;...” This speaks of preparing daily, spending time daily, in the gospel of peace, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“...in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” Rom. 1:17 says, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’” In the midst of our fiery trials we must learn to take up this shield of faith. Martin Luther built his theology upon this premise: The righteous man shall live by faith. 2 Cor. 5:7 says, “we walk by faith and not by sight (or feel).” When I was a teenager I learned a song on an album I purchased at my dad’s music store. The words went like this, “We walk by faith and not by sight, the Bible tells me so. That’s the Christian rule of life you’ve got to know, you’ve got you’ve got to know, you’ve got to know.” That song was packed with truth! When Satan shoots his arrows of lies, doubts, fears, etc., we must believe by faith in God, His Word, and all His promises! We’ve all heard the saying, “You can’t stop a bird from flying over your head, but you can prevent him from building a nest in your

hair.” We can’t stop the enemy from firing his missiles at us but we can choose to rebuke him, stand against him, and choose not to believe him. Faith is a choice that we choose.

One other thought I have on faith before I move on. When you are in the midst of the battle and you might feel that your faith is wavering; this is when you have the opportunity to allow, seek, and ask for others in the Body to pray for you. Allow them to help carry your burden; they will with the fervor that you lack. This is the beauty of the Body of Christ. We have been commanded to love one another, to have compassion on others, to pray for one another, and to intercede for others. God has chosen to work through these vessels of clay, you and I, to reach the world. I think of the prayer of St. Francis in a song written by John Michael Talbot, and I quote, “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on Earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks, compassion on this world. Christ has no body now on Earth, but yours.” My wife and others in the Body here where I live really helped me through a tough time lately. Their faith carried me through ‘the night.’ Eph. 6:18 “With all prayer and petition pray at all times (Kairos in the Greek-meaning ‘strategic times’) in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.” There is much power in persevering, intercessory prayer. Pray at all times, in the Spirit, being on the alert, with all perseverance, for all the saints.

“Take up the helmet of salvation.” Our salvation is purchased already by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. We just need to accept it, believe it, and acquire it by asking for it and claiming it. This salvation will protect our minds.

“... and the sword of the spirit

which is the word of God.” The word of God, the Bible, is our offensive weapon. It is our sure foundation. It is what we stand on and believe in by faith. It is what we attack the enemy with, the scripture that we have memorized and hidden in our minds and hearts. The word of God, like Jesus, is the truth! It’s the written word. Jesus is the living word. Satan and his schemes are just LIES! When he tells you things are hopeless just believe it is a lie. Things are never hopeless. We believe in and serve the God of impossibilities. Luke 1:37, “Nothing is impossible with God.” Satan’s lies are just built upon sand and illusion. They ‘appear’ to be true but are just like a desert mirage. God tells us in Heb. 13:5-6, “...for He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you,’ -so that we may confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid what man (or the enemy) will do to me.’” Sometimes Satan tries to convince us that God has left us, deserted us, forsaken us, and has closed His ears and the gates of Heaven to us. But this is just another lie of his. God may delay our receiving the answer but He will never forsake us. This point is covered very well in a devotional I read often called ‘Streams in the Desert,’ and I quote, “His stillness is not acquiescence. His silence is not consent. He is only biding His time, and will arise, in the most opportune moment, when the designs of the wicked seem on the point of success, to overwhelm them with disaster. As we look out on the evil of the world; as we think of the apparent success of wrongdoing; as we wince beneath the oppression of those that hate us (including the enemy of our soul), let us remember these marvelous words about God being still and beholding. But He was only waiting the moment when He could interpose most effectually. Is He still to thee? He is not

unobservant; He is beholding all things; He has His finger on thy pulse, keenly sensitive to all its fluctuations. He will come to save thee when the precise moment has arrived.” (Cowman Devotional Book 1, July 17) (Cowman July 10 talks about this, also.) Believe it. These are God’s promises to you and me. They are more true than all the visible realm of this world that we observe with our eyes. That which seems to be invisible and withheld is more reliable than all we see. 2 Cor. 1:20 says, “For all the promises of God in him are Yes, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us” (NKJV). I really like this version and how it puts it. For all the promises of God in him (Jesus) are yes. They are all mine, yours, ours, in Jesus! They are in Jesus, Amen, or already done and won at the cross, Amen? (Sounds like something Brother York would say, doesn’t it?) 1 Jn. 5:4, “Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.” Another scripture that promises that God will never forsake us is Rom. 8:31-38. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things. Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns (the enemy)? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword Just as it is written, ‘FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.’ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor

principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It is really important to memorize scripture and to hide God’s word in your heart. When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the enemy, how did He do battle with him? He quoted the scripture. The word of God is called the sword of the Spirit. A sword, as my sons will tell you, is an offensive weapon. Jesus used it to go on the offensive. As it says in Ps. 119:105, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” The word of God will guide us, sustain us, feed us, and protect us. Ps. 119:11, “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.”

Referring back to Ephesians 6:10-18, I once read in my Greek dictionary that the word in this section ‘against’ is taken from the Greek word ‘pros’, which means ‘in front of, or superior to.’ It is the same word used today referring to professional athletes.

I once desired to be a professional baseball player and I did all that I could to develop the talent God gave me so that I could do that. After my college career, in which I did have the opportunity to play the game I loved and to continue my dream, I realized what it took to make it to the ‘Big Leagues.’ I realized that I just wasn’t quite big enough and fast enough, and my arm just wasn’t quite strong enough. In fun, I’ve often thought that if I could have made up a combination of my desire and work ethic of some of my older brothers, some of whom were bigger, faster, and stronger, maybe I could have realized my dream. But what I did realize through it all was that I wasn’t ‘superior to,’ or ‘in front of,’ my competition, like this scripture speaks about. Professional baseball players are

far superior in skill to most college players. Many times, the best college players are drafted into the professional ranks and then they go to the farm leagues where they have to spend their time honing their skills for anywhere from a partial season to many years before they become skilled enough to play with the big boys. 1 John 4:3-4 says, "and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." Who is it that we, God's little children, have overcome? Those of the 'spirit of the antichrist.' I used to think it was the antichrist himself that this was talking about, but I think it is talking about all those spirits we are battling in the spiritual realm who are following the devil. Those are the spirits that we have overcome. Why have we overcome them? Because as it says in vs. 4, "...greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." God and I, or you, or whoever, is a majority, and when He indwells us we are greater than he that is in the world, or the devil.

So, back to Ephesians 6:10-18, speaking of the Greek word 'pros.' Just as professional athletes are a cut above all other levels of athletes, so as we abide in Christ, and take up the full armor of God, when we come up 'against' the enemy, or his representatives as it says in the above text, "... against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." As you read this last verse substitute the words 'superior to' for the word 'against.' It seems to take on a different meaning and show that the enemy is a defeated foe. When we come up 'against' these forces,

we are 'in front of' or 'superior to' them because as we put on the full armor of God we will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil! As we abide in Christ we acquire the ability to stand firm against the enemy. It certainly isn't in our strength! The key is, we need to walk in the Spirit, daily, receiving as I have heard it referred to as a 'fresh touch' with God's Spirit. Gal. 5:16 and 25 says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.... If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." This requires each day spending time with God and placing Him on the throne of your heart, asking Him to lead you that day, being willing to yield to His will and Spirit.

How much time does He require? The lesson I feel I am learning lately is He just wants to be first; He wants me to include Him; this is what I mean by placing Him on the throne of your heart. That means He is allowed to sit in the driver's seat and take me wherever the car goes that day. Col.3: 17, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." 'Doing all in His Name' means doing all you do as representatives of His Name; your actions and words glorifying that Name. So, He desires us to put Him first, draw near unto Him, delight ourselves in Him, daily, unto the leading of His Spirit and then also to include Him in all that we do that day, whether in word or deed.

Now sometimes we aren't walking as we should, or there are other extenuating circumstances that interfere with our walk with God. This is when the enemy loves to attack. Eph. 4:27, "and do not give the devil an opportunity." The word opportunity here is taken from the Greek 'topos' speaking of 'a region or locality, a place, a room.' What I get from this is the enemy is always looking for

an opportunity to find a place, room, or locality in our heart, or as I like to refer to it, he wants to get his foot in the door so that he can get his jabs and attacks in. If we allow him to get his foot in the door he then wants to shove the door open wider. He attacks when our guard is down, when we are sick, hurt, weak, or distracted by the cares and concerns of the world; stressed out by life, feeling condemned, judging others, or when we are easily offended, angry, etc. These things make us vulnerable and distract us from our daily fellowship with God and others in the church. The opportunity he seeks, here in Eph. 4: 26-27, speaks specifically about getting us angry with someone. When we are angry this is opening the door to the enemy. It says here "...do not let the sun go down on your anger." If we do, he gets his foot in the door. This is when he shoots his arrows, or implants his lies in our minds, telling us to get even madder, and maybe to say some things we will regret later. Remember that he is the 'father of lies' and the 'deceiver.' Here is an opportunity for us to "take up the shield of faith and extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." The enemy attacks our faith, our minds, and sometimes tries to instill doubt as to the validity of God's Word. This is where we are commanded to stand on God's word and to believe it, whether we see an answer or not, or whether we 'feel' a certain way or not.

One of the enemy's tricks is to cause us to lose sleep over a variety of causes. When we lose sleep, our resistance is compromised somewhat. It is easier for us to find ourselves in a weakened state, anxious, worried, etc., as listed above, and more vulnerable to attack. Also, the more sleep you lose the more your mind's ability to make good judgments is altered. This is the same reason why sleep deprivation

is practiced when interrogators are trying to get information out of people. I think it is important to ask God's blessing upon your rest and to multiply it. Ps. 4:8, "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety." Ps. 3:5, "I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me." When we are sleep deprived our spiritual understanding can sometimes be dulled, making it hard to comprehend what is right. This is where listening to your spouse or to those who have been set over you, such as your elders who can give good sound spiritual advice, is so important. If your judgment is distorted and the decision you need to make is an important one, it is prudent to seek advice from a plurality of brethren, while you pray and diligently seek God for the right answer.

James 4:7&8 says, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Submit to God first. Place yourself in His military and yield unto His orders. Walk with God according to your gifts and in your place in His Body, placing yourself under the covering of His order. Next we are told here to resist the enemy when we are being assaulted by him. To resist means to strive against, don't give in to, fight, etc. Don't accept those thoughts, lies, flaming missiles and arrows that he is shooting at you. Verse 8 tells us to draw near to God and He will draw near to us. This 'if then' statement is a promise. He will draw near to us.

1 Peter 5:6-11, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls

around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen." This whole section of scripture is great to meditate on. Verse eight starts by saying we are to be of sober spirit and to be on the alert. I think this is telling us to live in a state of constant awareness of God's Spirit, or abiding in Him. Then verse nine again commands us to resist the enemy. Be firm, hard, stubborn and uncompromising in your faith, knowing that all in the world who know and serve Jesus are facing similar battles and conflicts. I love the way this scripture ends by helping us to understand that after awhile of suffering God Himself will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish us! These trials will not go on forever but will end with us being victorious through Christ Jesus. James 1:12 says, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

We must learn to "wait upon the Lord" as it says in Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." My father-in-law, Richard Baynes, used to tell me that the word 'wait' here refers to us twisting ourselves around God, like a vine around a pole. When I looked this word up in a Hebrew dictionary it said 'to bind together, perhaps by twisting.' We need to twist ourselves around and bind ourselves together with our Savior

and God. Then shall our strength be renewed. Here is another key to our victory.

Praise is something that will help us bring the victory. In one instance in 2 Chronicles 20:21-22, Jehoshaphat was confronted with a battle with the enemy. He had singers appointed to go before the army and to praise the Lord. "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten."

Believe in your prophecies and look to them often. If you have not been prophesied over, seek God and your elders that you can. These prophecies are God's direct and individualized promises to you!! Read them and realize how positive they are toward you. You will just be amazed. God truly is a God of love, hope, and a future. Jer. 29:11, "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'" 2 Tim. 1:6, "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (NIV). So fan your gifts into flames! Believe in them and pursue them.

Going through trial helps us to understand the deceits, lies and trickery of the enemy. Many are under attack right now and we need to understand how to combat him individually, and as the Body of Christ to help one another through our battles. We may be oppressed and battling, but

as Rom. 8:37 states, "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us." God's Kingdom and His Word shall stand in the end, so believe in them! Heb. 12:25-29, "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." To quote my wife, "When everything that can be shaken is shaken the word of God

will be the foundation upon which we will find safety and relief." There's a saying in the world right now, which I agree with, but from a different perspective. "There's a whole lot of shaking going on." The Church, and the individuals in it, are being shaken but God shall be victorious, and we shall also, as individuals, if we walk with God and persevere unto the end. Don't listen to the enemy. Don't ever give up! Take the words of Winston Churchill to heart, when he told the English people at a most dire time in WW11, "Never! Never! Never! Give up!" This was a very short speech but spoke volumes to the people hearing it. I remember something Dennis Greenidge from England spoke at the Spokane Summer camp. He said it many times in his talk from the pulpit. He said, "We serve a good God!" I have said it many, many times since and I say it now, WE SERVE A GOOD GOD!

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CALLED HOME

Alec Debenham
October 26, 2009
Victoria, BC

Nancy Simmons
Sept. 25, 2009
High Point, NC

North Battleford Young People's Camp
Dec. 30, 2009 - Jan. 3, 2010

We will begin with the supper meal Wednesday, December 30 and run through until after the noon meal on Sunday, January 3.

Please have someone from your assembly forward names of those hoping to attend.

Mail to: Sharon Schools
c/o New Year's Camp
Box 878, North Battleford, SK
S9A 2Z3
or email at globalinc@sasktel.net
Registration Fee: \$25.00 per person

Indiana Young People's Meeting
December 2009

Sunday evening, December 27 thru
Thursday noon, December 31, 2009
Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center, Mt. St. Francis, Indiana, 47146
Phone (812) 923-8817.

Location just 10 miles from downtown Louisville, KY. All under one roof, gym, recreation rooms, 400 acres of woods and hills to hike on.

Directions in September/October issue.
BRING: Bibles, notebooks, pens, pencils and personals.

CONTACT: Bob Wood, 7 N 933 Pharlap Dr., St. Charles, IL 60175
PHONE: 630-513-6642 or email sandrakwood@aol.com
COST: Adults \$65, Teens \$54 (11-17)
Children \$32 (2-10)

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
Sharon Children's Homes and Schools
Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3

IMPORTANT DATES

Indiana Young People's Camp Dec. 27 - 31, 2009
North Battleford Young People's Camp Dec. 30, 2009 - Jan. 3, 2010
Fort Collins, Co. Meetings Feb. 26 - 28, 2010
North Carolina Winter Camp Feb. 26 - 28, 2010

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