

The Bible Guys

September 2009
of Yesterday and Today 175



*A face to face
experience*

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The People of Truth
A Holy Nation

Who is my brother?

By David M. McNabb

Family is an important concept. After God created Adam, He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18), and the Lord made a "help meet" (suitable companion) for the man as an immediate remedy for man's loneliness. However, man's need for community is not limited to that which can be satisfied by the companionship of a wife. All humanity is created with social needs. We are made to desire and require fellowship with God, with a spouse, with parents, with children, and with peers. We need to fit in to a social system – a hierarchy. We are made to serve and be served. We find fulfillment in the fruits of our labors, whether the works of our hands or the realization that we have left a legacy with our offspring. All of these things meet our inherent need for community.

Some of our associations are closer than others. The family is one of the closest relationships that humanity has to offer. The various intimate relationships developed between parent and child, between siblings, and between husband and wife are some of the most precious, and most formative bonds on a person's life. Parents not only impart physical, familial characteristics to their children, but also mannerisms, as well as their world view. This heritage, both physical and philosophical, is passed on from generation to generation. Each generation may add nuances to what the next generation receives, but the family resemblance usually remains.

People who share the same parents are called "brothers" and "sisters." While no two children can be brought up exactly alike due to each individual's unique personality, perspective and experiences, they still share a common genetic and philosophical heritage, passed on from their common parents, and will inevitably be identified as family.

"Brother" and "sister" can also be used for people who share other common characteristics. Black people, at least in the United States, often refer to other people of color using these terms. Because they share a continent of origin, and some physical features, there is a certain bond that inherently unites them, and causes them to feel like extended family. The same is true within a country. A U.S. citizen might refer to other citizens as "American brothers and sisters," in that we share a common historical and philosophical identity. Any American travelling abroad, regardless of color or gender, is easily identified as an American by people of other nations. There is something we share, something which separates Americans from all other people of the world. Each nation develops its own views and traits, and the people of those nations, will inescapably display those traits.

Membership is often called a brotherhood as well. The shared values and goals that draw people to join clubs, lodges and other social organizations unite them in a type of familial way, giving them a bond that would otherwise not exist. They are brothers in purpose and ideology.

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The Marriage of the Lamb

By C. Elden McNabb

“A voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: **for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.** And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

What a day! What a momentous event! Six thousand years will have passed, from the time the allegorical prophecy of this great event took place in the Garden of Eden, until Jesus shall come to receive His bride unto Himself. In that allegory, the bride of the first Adam arrived on the scene, and Adam rejoiced, saying, **“This is now bone of my bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.”**

Anticipating the Marriage of the Lamb, Paul said, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish... **For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.** For this cause **shall a man leave his father and mother,** and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **This is a great mystery,** but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” (Eph. 5:25-32). Apparently Paul was not talking about all Christians, because there is no mystery about being born again and living a life of holiness (Isa. 35:8).

From the very beginning, God was planning for His only-begotten Son, and for that Son’s bride. He spent 4,000 years, with a well-chosen series of events, prophesying of the marriage to come, and another 2,000 years preparing a people to be that bride, and for her bridesmaids, and for the guests at the wedding.

What does He mean “Bride?” When God began to prepare a bride for the first Adam, He paraded all of the animals before Adam, to demonstrate that there was no existing creature, no animal, which would serve as a wife for the man. He then put Adam into **a deep sleep**, cut out a rib, and with it, made a woman and brought her unto the man. And so it was, after Jesus had given up the ghost, a soldier pierced His side, and out flowed blood and water. Thus did Jesus purchase His Bride with His own blood (Acts 20:28). (But it was His death which purchased the redemption of the believers.)

The term, the Bride of Christ is not about a woman, as such. As it is written, “That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual” (1 Cor. 15:46). And again he said, “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26). God’s wife is made up of a numbered group of angels, “fitly framed together” in a special way, as to be the Bride the Father’s wife (Eph. 2:21-22). Jesus shall surely have a wife in the fashion of His father’s wife.

Adam had 24 ribs, so Eve also was required to have 24 ribs, in order to be unto Adam, “bone of his bones.” According to Rev. 4, the throne of God in Heaven has twenty-four elders around about it. They are the “ribs” of God’s “wife.” **And the throne of Jesus on earth will be a replica of His Father’s throne** (Rev. 5:1-10). Therefore, whether the writer is describing God’s throne in Heaven, or Jesus’ throne on Earth, it appears to be the same.

How do you suppose The Bride of Christ is going to have 24 ribs? There were only 12 apostles in the Jewish Church. It is quite simple really. In John’s vision, “The Four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down

before the Lamb... And they sung a new song saying... Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood **out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests:** and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:1-10). Yes, God intends to raise up 12 Gentile apostles at this end of the Grace Age, and they also shall sit upon 12 thrones, together with the 12 Jewish apostles who Jesus appointed in the beginning of the Grace Age (Matt. 19:28).

Solomon told us what we will see in the Bride the Lamb’s wife, saying, “As it were the company of two armies” (Songs 6:13). She will be made up of two groups of 144,000 each; one Jewish, with 12 Jewish apostles (Rev. 7:2-8), and the other Gentiles, with 12 Gentile apostles (Rev. 14:1-4). In Revelation 21, you see both groups combined to portray the Bride the Lamb’s Wife (Rev. 21:9-21). Paul signified it with 12 Gates of pearl, which had 12,000 increments each (a total of 144,000), and **an angel at each of the 12 gates, having the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel on them.** By using pearls, which come out of water, he was showing us the Jewish Church was built in the “fifth day” from Adam. John also gave us the description of the Gentile faction of that bride. It “had a wall great and high” (Isa. 60:10), “...**And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**” (The Gentile apostles). He also said that the angel “Measured the wall thereof, and hundred and forty and four cubits, **according to the measure of a man,** that is, of the angel [the angel of Jesus (Rev. 1:1)].” It will indeed be a “glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,” but it will also be “Members of His body, of His flesh, and of his bones.”

As God was creating the earth, He let light appear, and then divided the light from the darkness. He called the light day, and the darkness He called night. We are accustomed to days and nights being about the same length of time, with seasonal variables. And if there be any phenomenon such as a strangely bright night, we might say,

“It is like daylight,” or if something causes it to become very dark during the day time, we might say, “It is black as night.” Something of that sort happened, in a spiritual sense, between the fifth century A.D. and the fifteenth century A.D. To this day, that period of time is called “The Dark Ages.”

Even so, as the light of the gospel has gone dim in the last half-century, we have come very near to the end of the Grace age, and the glorious appearing of the Bridegroom. When that happens, the light of the gospel of redemption will go completely out; partly because the wise shall “see the trouble coming” and hide themselves (Prov. 22:3), and partly because the one-world government which is forming, at this very hour, will demand that the spread of the gospel cease. Isaiah spoke of this time in history, saying, “The burden of Dumah. He calleth unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return come” (Isa. 21:11-12). Midnight is upon us, the call for us to “go ye out” to meet the Bridegroom is being made, and the morning will come very soon. At which time a special manifestation of the light of the Word of God will be given to the wise among God’s people.

That “day” of Biblical light will not last long, but it will bring the faithful of God *in the unity of the Faith*, and into the wedding chamber. The door will be shut, and those unwise Christians who did not get through the door in time, shall find themselves facing “The Day of The Lord.” And did not the Lord say, “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! (Oh, He is talking to Christians.) To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it” (Amos 5:18-20)?

Almost all of the Christians in the world have spent the last 50 to 60 years *spiritually asleep*. In the

more recent of those years, the shelves of the “religious” bookstores have become filled more with so called “Christian fiction” than with Bibles, and most of the Bibles they sell have been watered down so much that most of the Spirit has been drained out of them. Bible reading has diminished greatly, and the ministers cannot preach a truth which they have never studied. Worse yet, the covetous, idolatrous “prosperity” doctrine has become the mainstay of multitudes of churches, and, as Jesus said, “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon” (Matt. 6:24).

Jesus is coming soon, but not immediately as King. He is coming about a year before the six thousand years are finished, so He will have a year to spend with His bride, before He begins to take over the world (Deut. 24:5).

Christians, at least most of the Protestants among them, believe that when Jesus comes He intends to take us directly to Heaven for the wedding, and that nobody will know He is coming until He gets here. If that were true, why did Paul say, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, *as ye see the day approaching*” (Heb. 10:25).

It is true that He is going to provide us a hiding place somewhere, from the face of “The Beast.” Moreover, Isaiah was to the point, saying, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and *shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself* as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast” (Isa.26:20). Amos also boldly told us, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Jesus’ coming will be no surprise to the wise.

In Matt. 24:1-3, Jesus disciples asked Him three questions, including, “Tell us about the end of the world,” which He answered in a series of parables. In Ch. 25:1-13, He said, “*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went out to meet the Bridegroom.” But “while the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” Then, at midnight a cry was

made, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.” Some of them had enough understanding to prepare for His coming, but some did not. When those who were not ready finally came, the Bridegroom had already come, and the wise among them that were ready had already gone in “with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

In verse 13, Jesus admonished them to “Watch ye therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh.” Then He told them another parable to show the wise how to be ready, and the fate of those foolish ones who were not prepared. He said, they shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. He did not say they would be lost, only that they would have to endure the dark days of “The Beast.” In so doing, did not Jesus show that the marriage takes place during the time that the seven last plagues are being poured out?

Jesus also gave us the parable of “the marriage of the king’s son” (Matt. 22:1-13). Invitations to the marriage had already been given to some, but when the king sent his servants to tell them when the ceremony was going to take place, they refused to go. All of them had some kind of excuse. Some only chided, others who were invited even killed some of those servants. So the king told his servants to go invite others to the wedding, both bad (believers, but not consecrated), and good (consecrated believers). They went, and “the wedding was furnished with guests. When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him *into outer darkness*; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The marriage supper was in progress, the great dignitary had arrived, and someone had gotten in who was not dressed for the occasion. If you ever had an idea that Jesus’ marriage was to take place in Heaven,

this parable in Matthew 22 should be evidence enough that it will take place right here on Earth while darkness is upon the seat of “the Beast.” The wrath of God will be poured out upon all who have been unwise and unwilling to believe the word of God from the mouth of His messengers, and to obey His voice.

John the Baptist knew that when the Messiah came, the wrath of God upon natural Israel would soon follow. The second coming of the Messiah is almost upon us, and the wrath of God will be poured out upon spiritual Israel: Christians. When the unwise “shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3).

“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares... Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:34-36). 

Who is my brother?

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Likewise, Christians also use the terms brother and sister. We know that we share a common Father, and are being reared up in the “household of faith,” under the tutelage of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught us to be brethren, and to love one another. He taught us to approach God as a Father. Having been purchased by the blood of the Lamb, we are sons. As the Word of God says, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal. 4:4-6). As sons, though as it were adopted, we have become heirs of God. Glory to His precious Name!

So, brotherhood can be expressed in various ways. People can be brothers and sisters by blood, by race, by nationality, by social association, and by faith. Each of these expressions of brotherhood hold a certain amount of sway in the life of the individual. Unavoidably, these various brotherhoods must be prioritized in the mind of each person. Which tie binds the strongest? When push comes to shove, to which brother or sister am I the closest?

One day, when Jesus was speaking to the people, His mother and brothers had come and were standing outside. When Jesus was told of His mother’s and brothers’ presence, He answered, saying, “Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matt. 12:48-50).

And so, our faithful Savior, Lord and Master has given us the great example. When it comes to our associations, our most important is the brotherhood of the servants of God. It is more important than blood, the shared values of some social organization, our nationality, or skin color.

In 1995, Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam, a black supremacist, heretical organization listed as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, organized what he called the “Million Man March.” This rally drew men of color from many different social and religious sectors together to Washington D.C. Several Christian brothers from some of the predominantly black congregations with which I shared fellowship at the time also purposed in their hearts to march with their “brothers” on the Capitol. So, Bible-believing black brothers united themselves with the minister of hate, Louis Farrakhan. I asked them, “Who is your brother? Is Farrakhan your brother because he shares your skin tone? Or am I your brother, because we share the same heavenly Father? Who is *really* your brother?”

The Bible is clear on this subject. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). And again,

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor 6:14-18).

If we separate ourselves from the ties that bind us to the unbelievers, and unite ourselves together in Christ, we shall be His sons and daughters! Hallelujah! It matters not what your last name is, or what color your skin is, as the songs says, “I don’t care what label you may wear, if you believe in Jesus you belong with me.” Our desire for unity in Christ must exceed every other association or affiliation we have. As the early saints joined together in one accord, so also must we strive for that same “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Some may say that all people are children of God. Not so. There are two distinct families of man: the children of God, and the children of the devil. Jesus told the religious hypocrites of His day, “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. *Ye are of your father the devil*, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for *he is a liar, and the father of it*. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not” (John 8:39-45).

Two families: the people of truth, and the people of lies. God said, “*Surely they are my people, children*

that will not lie: so he was their Saviour” (Isa. 63:8).

The great Bill Gaither song puts it so beautifully, “You will notice we say ‘brother and sister’ ‘round here, It’s because we’re a family and these folks are so near; When one has a heartache, we all share the tears, And rejoice in each victory in this family so dear. I’m so glad I’m a part of the Family of God, I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His Blood! Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod, For I’m part of the family, The Family of God.”

Are our brothers and sisters merely defined by those of our color, or our last name? Do we count as brothers and sisters those who fly our flag? Are those who attend our congregation, or hold to our particular brand of Christianity alone our brethren?

We must learn to claim as kinfolk all those who do the will of our Father which is in heaven, and strive to unite with them to realize the great calling of God upon His People: to become a Bride prepared for her Husband.

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 John 3:10-13). Amen. 

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



THE FRUIT OF GOD’S SPIRIT should define us as Christians, and can never be reduced to a TO-DO-LIST. Galatians 5:22

The face to face experience

By Joel McNabb

There is an experience that we as believers desire to have: an up close and personal experience with the Lord our God. That may sound peculiar to those who believe they already have a personal relationship with God. But if we look at the Bible we see there are few that have had a one on one experience with the Lord Himself. I have heard many say that the Lord has spoken to them and I often wonder what they meant. Have they heard his voice? Did He come to them with a special visitation? I know God speaks to us by His written word which He has preserved for us. He also gives us dreams and visions so that we might know His will and what we should do, but they are not clear and have to be interpreted. He also speaks to us in our thoughts; maybe that is what they are saying. When God speaks to us this way, it is difficult sometimes to know if it is the Lord or just one of our thoughts. So I ask you the question, “Are you ready for a real face to face experience with the great Creator? Are you truly ready to have God speak to you and hear the voice of God?”

God talked to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, even Samuel, but what do we do with the verse that says, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Or as God said to Moses, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Jn. 1:18; Ex. 33:20). Something seems to be a bit out of place here if God spoke to them directly or in person. How does God speak to someone face to face and not be able to see him? When Jacob took his family and left Laban’s house to return to the land of his fathers, he came to Peniel and spent the night. That night Jacob had what I would call a rare experience: he got into an all-night wrestling match with a man. When the man saw that no one was going to win, he hit Jacob in the thigh and said, “Let me go, for the day breaketh.” Well, Jacob wasn’t about

to let the man go. He told the man that he would not let him go till he blessed him. The man changed Jacob’s name to Israel and said, “For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” Jacob knew with whom he had struggled, and called the place Peniel and said, “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” When he had the dream of the ladder years before, he knew that the house of the Lord was a fearful and dreadful place. Jacob didn’t really wrestle the Lord or a man as we know man; he had spent the night with the angel of the Lord (Gen. 32:22-32). Today, we have to have it all sugar coated, and if we don’t have a shout or dance, or maybe a sweet prophetic message or a sermon that makes us feel at ease, we don’t feel like we have had church. Maybe the face to face that God wants to have with us is more like the night that He spent with Jacob.

One day, Aaron and Miriam got upset with Moses when he decided to take another wife. They thought that God spoke to them too, and not Moses only. That got God’s attention, and they were about to have a face to face experience with the Lord. He set them straight as to how and to whom He speaks. He came down in a pillar of a cloud and called to them “Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? (Num. 12:1-16).

God can and does speak to us all, but He points out that with some He will make a difference and use plainness of speech. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday today and forever,” but have we read verses 7 and 17? Jesus is the same because He always has those that have the rule. James, in Acts 15, sitting in Moses seat, gave his ruling on what laws the Gentiles should have. Also, in Acts 2:42, the people continued in the apostles’ doctrine and fel-

lowship. To these men, God had made Himself clear. He did not speak to them in a parable or a mystery. God had given them specific instructions. When the disciples asked why He spoke to others in parables, Jesus answered, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:10-11). God has not changed. The question is, "Do we hear the different ways He speaks?"

Peter makes a statement that the scriptures were not given by private interpretation. When the word of God came to holy men of old, they wrote and spoke as the Holy Ghost moved on them. He sent His spirit to them and they said exactly what God had said. Peter saw Jesus translated, and was an eye witness to the majesty, yet, he knew that what he saw was not as sure as what was written by the prophets of God (1 Pet. 1:19-21).

There may be some that think God no longer speaks this way, but now we have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and it alone will lead us and guide us into all truth. It will, but God never changes. Faith still comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, and "how will they hear, without a preacher" (Rom. 10:13-17).

Paul said, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is

made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:25-28). God gave him understanding of the mystery, so He could explain to us Gentiles what we need to fulfill in the word of God. "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth his secret unto His servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7)

The conversion of Saul was not a normal call to repentance; nor was the work that he was called to do. Jesus left heaven and came personally to see Saul on the road to Damascus, years after His ascension (1 Cor. 15:8). As Saul and his men were carrying letters to the synagogues that they would bring believers, men and women, bound to Jerusalem, a light from heaven shone around them. Saul fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He didn't even know who it was, saying, "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The men that were with him were speechless only hearing a voice. Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Jesus told Saul to go to the city and he would be told what he was

called to do. When Saul opened his eyes he saw no man, and had to be led to Damascus, for he was blind. The Lord gave a vision to a disciple named Ananias, telling him to meet Saul. Ananias confirmed that it was Jesus whom Saul had seen, placing his hands on him Saul received his sight and was filled with the Holy Ghost. It is not said, but I would believe that Ananias also told Saul what the Lord had said about the work that Saul had to do (Acts 9:1-22).

Here we see in the New Testament some of the different ways the Lord speaks: He came in a light, spoke with a voice, was seen in a vision twice, and sent a word of prophecy by Ananias. Paul was visited and given the word of God, to show mercy to the Gentile and espouse them to Christ, he said he laid the foundation of that work and another would build there on (2 Cor. 11:2; 1 Cor. 2:10).

The men of the Old and New Testament that God spoke with, had what we would call an intimate relationship with the Lord, more like good friends. Abraham is even called the Friend of God by James in his epistle, which means God didn't keep anything from him. He told him everything and there was no question of what He meant. Moses, too, was spoken of as the Lord's dear friend, to whom God handed down His law to us, really telling him everything (James 2:23, Ex. 33:11). Even to the disciples, Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:13). How many of us have had a friend that you were able to tell everything to, even your darkest secrets, or just hang out with and have a chat about nothing? Most of us need to interact with someone that we can pour our hearts out to. We are created in the image of God and He wants to share with us all the things He has given us to know and be our friend, if we will do what He has commanded us.

The call of Abraham to leave his father house and family would enable him to have a closer relationship with

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the Lord. The worship of other gods had even affected his father's house, so God brought him to a place where there would not be the influence of those gods. It was as if God wanted to show Himself, but there were too many distractions. Years passed since the flood and the idolatrous doctrine of Nimrod had permeated throughout the world. God's promise to Abraham was that he would bring forth a people to whom He could talk to face to face and give His word to. When God brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, He did just that. He brought them to Mount Sinai and spoke to them face to face. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. **The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire**" (Duet. 5:1-4). This experience of hearing God's voice did not set well with the children of Israel, when they saw the thundering and the lightnings, and all that was happening on the mountain, they stepped away. They immediately asked Moses to speak for God, and that they not hear God speak, lest they die. Moses assured them to have no fear, for God was there to prove them, so that His fear would be before their faces that they sin not. (Ex. 20:18-26)

God is ready to send His Son back to earth again for another face to face with His people like he had with the children of Israel, giving them His covenant on Mount Sinai. He told them, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself" (Ex. 19:4).

One of the things we can do is to learn how He speaks. We must watch and listen, and hear His voice when He speaks, whether it is in the wind, or an earthquake, or maybe even the still small voice. God will speak to His people, to prepare them for the

coming of the Lord. God speaks to us through the Holy Ghost and by prophets today just as in the days of old.

God told men like Noah and Moses what He was going to do and gave them the time and they were to prepare the people. If all the Law and the Prophets prophesied as Jesus said, then all that was prophesied of Moses and Noah must be fulfilled. Noah got his family and the animals on the ark and God closed the door. Seven days later, the flood came as God had said, and Noah's face to face with God saved him and his family from the flood. Moses heard the voice of God. He told him to go down to Egypt with the word of God, and Aaron his brother would be his prophet, speaking the words for him. Moses and Aaron, as eagle's wings, brought the children of Israel to the meet the Lord.

When they got to the mountain, the Lord told Moses He was coming and the people would hear His voice when He spoke to him, and believe him. He was to go to the people and sanctify them for two days and let them wash their own clothes, to be ready for the third day, because on the third day the Lord was going to come down in the sight of all the people. Moses told the people that the Lord was coming and did exactly what God had told him to do, when the third day came the people were ready for their face to face.

Comparing this passage with 1 Thess. 4:13-18, we can see how this event was a shadow of the day of which Paul spoke: the Lord descending, the shout, the voice, and the trumpet. We even have the earth quaking so the dead in Christ will rise from the dead. It is all there, and they were watching and waiting for the Lord to appear on the third day for their face to face with God.

"To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). Those that have been prepared, who have their lamps trimmed and their eyes and ears open, will see him face to face. "For now, we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12). I want to be ready for my face to face.

Are you ready for your face to face? The wife will be ready for the marriage and purified even as He is pure, for she has been like Him, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. And unto her it shall be granted to be arrayed in fine linen, the righteousness of the saints. Be part of the bride if you want to, one of the five bridesmaids with your lamps trimmed, or even be one of the guests, and make it in before the door shuts. Open your heart and ears to the Lord. If any man hear let him hear. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, AMEN. 

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