

THE PENTECOST

ISSUE #41 FEBRUARY 2010



THE PENTECOST



Hello, friends and readers. In this February, 2010, issue of The Pentecost we will be continuing our two series, one on the history of the Bible, as a book, and the other on the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this issue, we will discuss the history of the Bible from the time of the New Testament into the Middle Ages. Concerning the Dead Sea Scrolls, we will be discussing their antiquity. God bless you!

Shawn Stevens

Yes, this is a very interesting issue where we introduce you to writings that were written years before Jesus came to earth, called the Dead Sea Scrolls. This amazing preservation of God's Word is just one example of how important it is to God that we should know Him and the truth of His Word.

Ramona Stevens



Zion
Christian Ministry
Shawn & Ramona Stevens

Mailing Address Phone 604.854.8141
P.O. Box 933, Email info@zionchristianministry.com
Lynden, WA 98264 USA ZionChristianMinistry.com

IN THIS ISSUE

THE BIBLE FROM THE DAYS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO THE DARK AND MIDDLE AGES 3-4

JESUS CHRIST AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS 5-6

BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY GHOST 7

ANXIETY 7-8

THE BIBLE FROM THE DAYS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO THE DARK AND MIDDLE AGES

In the period of time in which the New Testament was written, and for a couple hundred years afterwards, the Christian Church suffered terrible persecution. Many Christians lived in catacombs and caves. They were sometimes hunted down and many of their writings were burned. Under God's providence, the Scriptures were protected through this turbulent time. This was a mysterious period of time. The Church was young and much of what we know about its leaders is from some writings which survived from this period. Church leaders, prior to the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D., are referred to as the Anti-Nicean Fathers. It would be wrong to assume that they were unanimous in their understanding of exactly what was, and what was not, holy Scripture. However, it is interesting to hear what they have to say about Scripture itself.

Many Anti-Nicean Fathers did refer to New Testament Scripture and in many instances wrote down their views on Scripture. Like Paul, Clement of Rome (1st century) wrote an epistle to the Corinthians. In it, he quotes scriptures from the Gospels, such as Matthew 9.13, Mark 2.17 and Luke 5.32. He refers to them as Scripture. In the same quote, he cites Mark 9.42 after the introductory words "God saith." In this same work, he quotes Hebrews 1.3-7.¹ Polycarp (1st and 2nd century), a disciple of the Apostle John, refers to the New Testament in his epistle to the Philippians. He quotes Ephesians 4.26 and introduces this verse with the words "the Scripture saith."² Justin Martyr (early 2nd century) in his first apology, written between 150 and 155 A. D., refers to the Gospels as "Voice of God."³ Irenaeus (late 2nd and early 3rd century) in his work, *Against Heresies*, also refers to the Gospels. He says; "For the Lord of all gave the power of the Gospel to His apostles through whom we have come to know the truth, that is the teaching of the Son of God ... This Gospel they first preached. Afterwards, by the will of God, they handed it down to us in the Scriptures, to be the pillar and ground."⁴ Clement of Alexandria (late 2nd and early 3rd century) says; "There is no discord between the Law and the Gospel, but harmony, for they both proceed from the same Author."⁵ Hippolytus (late 2nd and early 3rd century) commented on both the Old and New

Testament. On the Old Testament and its writers, he said:

*The Law and the Prophets were from God, who in giving them compelled his messenger to speak by the Holy Spirit, that receiving the inspiration of the Father's power they may announce the Father's counsel and will. In these men therefore the Word found a fitting abode and spoke of Himself; for even then He came as His own herald, shewing the Word who was about to appear in the world. ...*⁶

Concerning New Testament writers he said:

*These blessed men ... having been perfected by the Spirit of Prophecy, and worthily honored by the Word Himself, were brought to an inner harmony like instruments, and having the Word within them, as it were to strike the notes, by Him they were moved, and announced that which God wished. For they did not speak of their own power (be well assured), nor proclaim that which they wished themselves, but first they were rightly endowed with wisdom by the Word, and afterwards well foretaught of the future by visions, and then, when thus assured, they spake that which was [revealed] to them alone by God.*⁷

Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, a 3rd century martyr, referred to Scripture as "Divine Scripture," "Divine commands," "Sacred Scriptures," "Scriptures from heaven," "precepts of the Divine Law," "wells of divine fullness" and "voices of the Lord."⁸ These references show us how early church fathers viewed the Scriptures as inspired of God.

These writings may have been inspired by God, but would they survive the efforts made to destroy them? The Roman Emperor Diocletian had ordered the destruction of the Christian's sacred writings but in God's providence not all of the copies were destroyed. In the reign of Emperor Constantine, the Roman government reversed its position and became friendly with Christians. Constantine even requested that Eusebius would arrange for copies of the Scriptures to be provided for the Empire's head in the East, Constantinople.^{9 10 11} Eusebius did so and had fifty copies prepared for this use. This created a further need

for the sacred Scriptures to be organized into a single book. The early Church needed a canon. The word “canon” is believed to have come originally from the Greek word *kanon*, which meant a *rod, measuring rod, staff or ruler*. The last usage, *ruler*, was expanded to include a *rule or standard for anything*. Early Christians used it to refer to a “rule of faith, normative writings, or authoritative Scripture.” Some Early Church Fathers from the time of Irenaeus referred to Christian teaching as “The Kanon of the Church,” “The Kanon of the Truth,” and “The Kanon of Faith.” However, the first clear use of the word was by Athanasius.¹² In 367 A. D., he wrote a letter in which he lists the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. This was the first time in recorded history that we had such a list. In 397 A. D., the *Council of Carthage* endorsed these twenty-seven books.¹³

The next major event in the history of the Bible, as a book, was the creating of the *Latin Vulgate Version*. The pope desired to have a standard translation of the Bible which would be accepted as authoritative by the whole Church. The skills of Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus (340-420 A. D.), better known as St. Jerome, were employed for this large work. Jerome was born in Stridon, Dalmatia, and at twelve years of age he went to Rome where he studied Latin, Greek and pagan authors for the next eight years. At age nineteen, he became a Christian. He was later baptized by the pope of Rome and he committed himself to the service of God. For many years he lived a semi-aesthetic life. He travelled east where he learned Hebrew from a Rabbi and he was ordained to be a presbyter in the city of Antioch. He conducted more studies in Constantinople and, in 382 A. D., the pope called him to be his secretary. That same year, he was commissioned to begin the work that he is now famous for, a revision of the Latin Scriptures. He began working on the Old Testament and continued on to work on the New Testament. Soon after Jerome had revised the Latin Gospels, the pope died. Much of Jerome's work was done in Bethlehem where he also spent time improving his Hebrew. Although Jerome's work began as a revision of an older Latin text, in the end his translation of the Old Testament was translated into Latin from Hebrew manuscripts. His complete work was finished in 405 A. D.¹⁴

What was the reaction to Jerome's translation? Some did not like him using Hebrew as a basis for his Old Testament work. They felt that the Greek Septuagint was superior. Even Augustine (354-430) was outspokenly against Jerome's Old Testament work. It is also significant that Jerome's New Testament work was rushed and was simply a minor revision of an older Latin translation. It was not done directly from Greek manuscripts. Opposition to the Vulgate Bible was offset by the pope's support for it. Before long, the Vulgate was generally accepted by the Church but there would be more revisions and editions of it. Interestingly, the Vulgate was not officially declared the standard text of the Bible for the Roman Catholic Church until the *Council of Trent* (1546-1563).^{15 16}

What was the long-term affect of the Vulgate's general acceptance throughout the Dark and Middle Ages? By insisting on reading the Bible in Latin, the leadership of the Catholic Church essentially separated the Bible from the common population of Europe. Most people in the Dark and Middle Ages could not read, let alone read in the foreign language of Latin. Neither could they understand Scriptures that were read to them in Latin. The Bible became isolated behind the closed doors of the monasteries. For centuries, it was figuratively “chained up” from being used by common men and women. These chains would be broken by the great reformers of the Church.

Shawn Stevens

ENDNOTES

- 1 Clement of Rome, Corinthians, quoted in Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 99-100.
- 2 Polycarp, Epistle to the Philippians, quoted in Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 100.
- 3 Justin Martyr, Apology, quoted in Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 101.
- 4 Irenaeus, Against Heresies, quoted in Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 101.
- 5 Clement of Alexandria, quoted in Edward J. Young, *Thy Word is Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 38.
- 6 Hippolytus, Contra Noetum, quoted in Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 102.
- 7 Hippolytus, De AntiChristo, quoted in Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 102.
- 8 Cyprian, quoted in Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 50.
- 9 Ken Connolly, *The Indestructible Book : God's Word to Man - How The Bible Began, Vol. 1*, Produced by Bueno Distribution, Video Cassette.
- 10 Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 180-181.
- 11 Constantine's letter commissioning Eusebius. “... I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church, to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practised in their art. The catholicus of the diocese has also received instructions from our Clemency to be careful to furnish all things necessary for the preparation of such copies; and it will be for you to take special care that they are completed with as little delay as possible.” Ibid., 181.
- 12 Ibid., 127-128.
- 13 Ken Connolly, *The Indestructible Book : God's Word to Man - How The Bible Began, Vol. 1*, Produced by Bueno Distribution, Video Cassette.
- 14 Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 335-337.
- 15 Ibid., 339-341.
- 16 The Council of Trent decreed concerning the edition; “Moreover, the same sacred and holy Synod, - considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions, now in circulation, of the sacred books, is to be held as authentic, - ordains and declares, that the said old and Vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many ages, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, held as authentic; and that no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever.” Ibid., 344.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Truth and wisdom are sometimes found in unexpected places. Two thousand years ago simple shepherds, in humble surroundings, were tending their flocks. They did not know that they were about to have revealed to them the greatest discovery of all time. Angels appeared above them and announced; "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2.11). The angels were a witness to them, and they followed this witness to Bethlehem, where they found Jesus the Christ. Almost two thousand years later, in a deserted area of the hot Judaeen desert, there were shepherds. Walking through their humble surroundings, they stumbled across a cave. This cave, and others, held a mystery and a treasure that had been hidden for more than a thousand years. The treasure is the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, and these scrolls are an ancient witness. If we follow their witness, to whom will it lead us?

In this series of articles on the Dead Sea Scrolls we will ask the question: Is there evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls to believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah? To determine this, we will examine ancient prophecies. Through prophetic Scripture, the Dead Sea Scrolls witness to us that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ; Jesus is rightly called the Christ because He fulfilled many ancient prophecies, concerning the Christ, that were written down before His incarnation. To arrive at this answer, we will need to examine several things. Firstly, how do we know that the Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient? Secondly, what prophetic Messianic Scriptures were found at Qumran? Thirdly, which of these prophetic Messianic Scriptures did Jesus fulfill on His first advent? Fourthly, which of these manuscripts predate Jesus' incarnation, being from the pre-Herodian era or earlier? Lastly, how are these Scriptures/prophecies to be understood?

When scholar W. F. Albright, of Johns Hopkins University, began studying the scrolls, he was amazed at their signs of antiquity. He stated; "There is no doubt in my mind that the script is more archaic than that of the Nash Papyrus ... I would prefer a date around 100 B. C."¹ Since the time of the earliest work on the scrolls, a number of scrolls have been dated even older than this. How do we know that the Dead Sea Scrolls are this ancient?

One way that we know that the scrolls are ancient is through the science of palaeography. Palaeography is the analysing of ancient scripts in comparison to other ancient scripts for the purpose

of dating a document. Writing changes over time, and it is precisely these changes that give us clues as to how old a document may be. James C. Vanderkam explains:

By observing the changes, the palaeographer can determine roughly where on the line of development a particular document belongs. In order to translate the relative position on the line into a chronological date, the expert must have some fixed point - especially texts that contain their own date - from which to extrapolate for those works whose dates are under investigation.²

Ancient documents, such as religious scriptures, are usually penned by professional scribes. Because of this, there usually is much uniformity between scripts of a particular age. Although there is much uniformity, there is also indication that different scribes copied different documents.³ Frank Moore Cross, of Harvard University, published a study of the Qumran and other related scripts in 1961. He defined and organized the ages of these documents into three periods. The Archaic period was from 250 to 150 B. C. This was followed by the Hasmonean period from 150 to 30 B. C. This was followed by the Herodian period, 30 B. C. to 70 A. D.⁴ The Herodian period can be further broken down into three sub-periods. The early Herodian period is 30 to 25 B. C. The Herodian period is 25 B. C. to 50 A. D. The late Herodian period is 50 to 70 A. D.⁵ From the Archaic period, archaeologists have a number of artifacts to which they can compare the Dead Sea Scrolls. The most ancient Hebrew writing in existence today is the *Gezer Calendar* that was carved on a limestone plaque and dates to the 6th century B. C.

Archaic Hebrew also appears on pieces of pottery which date to the Pre-exilic period and there is an inscription carved into the wall of an aqueduct that dates back to 700 B. C. Archaeologists who have examined the script of the Dead Sea Scrolls tell us that some of it more closely resembles the script on the artifacts just mentioned than it does modern script. It has been discovered that the Hebrew people, upon returning from Babylon, developed squarely shaped letters. Previously, the Hebrews did not write this way.⁶ Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls are written in the older style of script. For these reasons, palaeography on the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests ancient dates for these documents.

More indicators that the Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient are internal allusions within the texts.

Whenever an ancient historical figure is mentioned in a document, it becomes possible that the document is from that figure's lifetime. As well as biblical scrolls, at Qumran we have some apocryphal and other writings. These other writings mention Antiochus⁷ and Demetrius (Demetrius III Eucerus, reigned 103-76 B. C.). Another historical figure who is mentioned is Shelamsion, the Queen of Judea (76-67 B. C.). It is also noteworthy that while writing about a number of historical events, the Qumran writers never mentioned the destruction of the second temple (70 A. D.), an event that would be of enormous importance to any Jew living at that time.⁸ This suggests that their writings predate this event.

Further indications of the scrolls' antiquity are the archaeological artifacts found in or near the caves. It was discovered that within the vicinity of the Qumran caves were the ruins of some ancient buildings. Through extensive digging and studying, archaeologists, like Roland De Vaux, tell us that a settlement of people lived on this very spot in ancient times. De Vaux identifies two settlements, the more recent one being from the time of the Hasmonean King John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.).⁹ One building includes a large room with long tables and ink wells. It is believed that this is where the Qumran scribes copied the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is important to mention that not all of the manuscripts were penned at Qumran. Some of the manuscripts were brought to Qumran by its inhabitants, the Essenes. This ancient settlement suggests an ancient date for the Dead Sea Scrolls.

More evidence for an ancient date for the scrolls has been found in the form of pottery. In the cave where the scrolls were found, much pottery was also discovered. This pottery matches exactly with the pottery found at the settlement site. The pottery links the scrolls to the Qumran settlement and has been dated, some of it to between 31 B. C. to 14 A. D.¹⁰

The scrolls, however, do not have to be dated the same age as the pottery. It is believed that just before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A. D., they destroyed Qumran in 68 A. D. One theory is that, immediately prior to this, the Qumran community packed their ancient scrolls in new pottery and hid them in the caves.¹¹ The pottery, both in the Qumran caves and in the Qumran settlement, suggests an ancient date for the composition of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Another archaeological indicator to the antiquity of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the coins that were found at the Qumran settlement. Ancient

coins had stamped upon them the regnal year of the king who had them minted. At Qumran we have coins that were minted in different ages. We have Seleucid coins from both the reigns of Antiochus III (223-187 B. C.) and Antiochus VII (138-129 B. C.). We also have Jewish coins from Hyrcanus' reign (134-104 B. C.). A coin from the reign of Aristobulus (104-103 B. C.) was found, and also from the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B. C.). Alexandra Salome and Hyrcanus II (76-67 B. C.) leave us with coins, as does Antigonus Mattathias (40-37 B. C.). There were also coins found from the Herodian period that were dated between 37 B. C. and 6 A. D., as well as Procuratorial coins from Nero's reign (54-68 A. D.). From the coins found at Qumran we can see that multiple generations lived at this spot, the earliest being at least from 187 B. C. The occupants of Qumran wrote or copied the Dead Sea Scrolls,¹² and coins from this time suggest an ancient date for the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are both treasure and an ancient witness. Paleontologists marvel at the evidence for the incredible age of these documents. Script type, internal allusions, nearby artifacts, pottery and coins all point to a very ancient date for these scrolls. This is interesting, not only interesting, but important. Reader, you will see why this is important as these articles on the Dead Sea Scrolls develop.

Shawn Stevens

1 W. F. Albright, as quoted in Charles F. Pfeiffer's *The Dead Sea Scrolls And The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 25.

2 James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 1-2.

3 Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls And The Origins Of The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1999), 142.

4 James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 17.

5 Harold Scanlin, *The Dead Sea Scrolls And Modern Translations Of The Old Testament* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 48.

6 Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls And The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 27-29.

7 Either Antiochus Epiphanes, 165 B.C., or Antiochus IV, 168 B.C., or Seleucid monarch Antiochus, 64 B.C.

8 Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Qumran In Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 38.

9 James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 13.

10 Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls And The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 31.

11 Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Qumran In Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 34.

12 James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 22.

The following article was taken from the 1906 Apostolic Faith magazine, the official magazine of the Azusa Street Revival. May we be challenged and encouraged by the testimony of Geo. E. Berg.

BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY GHOST

When I first attended these Apostolic Faith meetings, I was very much puzzled because I tried to understand it with my head only, and was in doubt as to its being of God. But at the same time, the desire in my heart which had been there for years for something beyond sanctification, became more intense and gave me no rest till I enquired further into the teaching. The Spirit opened my eyes and understanding and helped me to see that this was the very thing for which I had been hungering. So when my own understanding and my notions got out of the way, God in His mercy baptized me with the Holy Ghost on the 15th of last September. No one had their hands on me at the time. I was meeting God alone and the Holy Ghost fell on me like balls of fire, and went through me from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. The Spirit flooded my whole being and enlarged my heart till I was afraid the vessel might not hold the glory and power that seemed to rush into me like water poured out. Before I realized it, the Spirit got hold of my tongue and used it for the glory of God in speaking in an unknown tongue.

In regard to the languages given here, I can testify that they are real languages, because I have interpreted not less than five messages given by different persons, spoken in languages of British India, which languages I know personally, having lived in India.

Geo. E. Berg, 1350 Channing St., Los Angeles.

Reference :
The Apostolic Faith, Vol. 1. No. 4, December, 1906. Los Angeles : Pacific Apostolic Faith Movement.

A NXIETY

*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
(1 Peter 5.7).*

Anxiety is something every man, woman and child can relate to. It is one of the unpleasant experiences of life that all of us face to some degree, daily. Anxiety has been the cause of more headaches, sleeplessness, and nervous breakdowns than can be recorded. Why is anxiety such a part of human mindsets? Many times it is because we are worrying so much about the future that we forget to live in the present. It is easy to lose perspective and create mountains out of molehills. Things, that in reality are insignificant, sometimes assume great importance in our minds. Other times, there are serious issues in our lives which are provoking us to anxiety. Billy Graham has said:

Man has always been beset by worry, and the pressures of modern life have aggravated the problem ... many of you are filled with a thousand anxieties. Bring them to Jesus Christ by faith ... I am learning in my own life, day by day, to keep my mind centered on Christ; the worries and anxieties and concerns of the world pass, and nothing but "perfect peace" is left in the human heart.¹

It is right to bring our anxieties to Jesus. David, the Psalmist, brought his fears to the LORD. He wrote; "I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears." (Psalm 34.4).

Friend, I encourage you to do this very thing. Why let anxiety eat you up? The Scripture says; "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him *For* the help of His countenance." (Psalm 42.5). This was David's counsel to his own soul. It is precisely what a believer should do with his own anxiety as well, respond in faith and hope in God.

How do I hope in God in the midst of fearful circumstances? First, be specific. What is causing your anxiety? It could be over your job, your friends

or your family, etc. What is it? Describe how you feel. Is there guilt tied to your anxiety? If there is, then perhaps you are not acting rightly; perhaps you are hiding a sin or a sinful practice. This is sure to create anxiety and the only way to deal with this is to bring it to the LORD. Ask Him for forgiveness and commit to change your ways.

Friend, could it be that you are anxious about dying? Could it be that you have not given your life to Christ, put your faith in Him and been forgiven? If this is you, then you must deal with this. No amount of psychology or counselling will make up for not having Christ ruling your life. You must settle this fundamental issue. You and I and all of mankind have sinned against God, and He is a just Judge who will one day judge the world. Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God and he came to this world to die for your sins, and for mine. He endured a cruel death. His back was whipped. His hands and His feet were nailed to a cross, and He died. He was laid in a tomb but, in three days, He rose from the dead. Now the price for our sin has been paid and we can be forgiven and changed if we will come to Christ, repent and put our faith in Him.

Friend, if you have not yet given your life to Christ, do so now. Approach Him in prayer. Pray in faith, giving up control of your life and future to the LORD. Commit to following Him.

Some may be reading who would say; "This is not my source of anxiety. I am a Christian already but I battle with fears." If this is you, then again I ask; Why are you fearful? Can you trace your anxiety to any one thing or to several things? The enemy (the devil) would like for us to be bound by fear. We combat this fear with God's holy Word. We do so by meditating on it, believing it, and even praying it back to the LORD. Brother or sister, meditate on some of these verses:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4.6-7).

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

(Matthew 6.33-34).

Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

(Psalm 55.22).

Here, we are given an alternative to fear and that is to cast our burden on the LORD. Here, we are instructed not to fear about tomorrow for tomorrow will fear about itself. How do we cast our burden of anxiety on the LORD? By prayer and petition and with thanksgiving we make our requests known to the LORD. The Philippian passage counsels us not to be anxious but, rather, to be prayerful and thankful. We choose between anxiety, which brings about stress, or supplication, which brings the peace of God which transcends all understanding. This is a promise to claim if we have presented our requests to God and determined not to be anxious. The Scriptures also say; "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." (Romans 8.28). This verse tells us that all things work together for our good, for those of us who love God and are called according to *His* purpose. If we believe this, what becomes of our fears? They vanish.

Once again I quote; "I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears." (Psalm 34.4). Let us come to Him, casting all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us. Fear and anxiety may come easily, but they are quickly dispelled when we are in a right relationship with God, and when we see all that that relationship really means, and when we give our fears and cares over to the LORD. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

References:

Graham, Billy. *The Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook*. Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.