

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5

# the OLIVE BRANCH

FALL 2009

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A publication of  
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Northeast Region

FROM THE OVERSEER'S DESK

## Standing in His Glory

### From Glory to Glory: Part 9

In our continuing examination of the theme “... from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18) we have considered various ways by which the Lord has chosen to reveal His glory to us and through us.

One might be led to ask: Is there anything that I can do to enter into those moments when His glory downpours upon my life? How can I recognize and embrace such moments? How might I prepare myself for such opportunities? And, finally, have there already been such opportunities that I have missed?

Fortunately, our Lord has prepared the way. Consider the passage in Ephesians 6:10-13 where Paul compares our service down here to that of a soldier in an army.

(10) *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

(11) *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*



(12) *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

(13) *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

The Christian's service is not simply *like* one serving in an army and participating in a war. Our service *is indeed* about fighting a war – spiritual warfare! Consequently, we must prepare ourselves for this fight! Paul describes in Ephesians 6:14-18 the nature of our armor, of our weapons, and of our preparation and readiness – that we might be able to *stand*.

**This brings us to the theme that this sermon considers: What**

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As we begin the new Assembly year, let us make a new year's resolution: Each church can be 100 percent in paying CPMA dues. Of course, for that to happen, each one of us must pay his or her dues. If we are faithful in paying our CPMA dues and contributing to the offerings at CPMA services, we can ensure that the headquarters property is maintained in good condition – and is not a reproach to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Of course, supporting CPMA is not all there is to being faithful to the Lord. One of the best ways to express our faith is to remember and stand on His promises. Despite the troubling times we are living in, we need to keep in mind that God's promises never change. Yes, the nation's economy is in sad shape – in fact, some analysts believe that we are on the brink of economic disaster. Unemployment is approaching 10 percent (and has already exceeded that in some states). A few states have gone broke (California had a "yard sale" to come up with needed cash). The national debt seems to be increasing at warp speed. Yet – one of God's names is *Jehovah Jireh, our provider*. We must never forget that He didn't promise to meet our needs – except when times are hard. It's up to us to keep the faith.

Perhaps the best way to be faithful is to reach out to the lost. In Matthew 27:19-20, Jesus told His disciples to: *"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."* He *didn't* say, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, except those with primitive living conditions (or those that persecute Christians, or during

# CPMA

2009-10 Theme:

*The Treasure of God in Earthen Vessels*



CPMA Coordinator  
Roger Fuester

hard times, etc.).

We do not have to go overseas to witness for Christ, but when witnessing, we find that our efforts are often met with resistance. When we tell people that Jesus can set them free from the chains of darkness, they might well reply, "Freedom? What Freedom? I am free, free from all restrictions, all sexual taboos. I'm freed from the bondage of the Bible. I'm free to worship the god of my choice, or none at all if I choose." No doubt about it, the world loves the things of the world, and seems to be obsessed with the pleasures of sin. What's more, they will probably deeply resent the fact that we told them about the Gospel of Christ.

In some respects, I suppose this is a logical response: Why? Because we are asking them to give up the things that are most precious to them – their sins. In their view, the Christian walk, seeking purity and holiness, looks like a type of slavery. When we mention the Gospel, it is an offense to their ears – it might even awaken their conscience, which they work full time silencing so as to shut out any thought that there might be a coming day of reckoning. This is why society has let loose a colossal attempt to eliminate anything that relates to Jesus.

How do we deal with this? By following the "new commandment" that Christ gave us: *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have*

*loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:34-35).

You may ask, "So what does that do?" Well, for one thing, it tends to provide a healing salve to counteract the hateful words directed at us from the world. Probably of greater importance is the fact that the Holy Ghost can demonstrate to this faithless and perverse generation (where have we heard that before?) its great sense of need. This is particularly true of young people who are indulging in senseless binge drinking, consuming drugs in prodigious amounts and increasingly opting for suicide as an escape.

Why? Because of the hurt, emptiness and misery resulting from sin. These people are suffering from a genuine love deficit disorder. Where can they find examples of the real thing? That's where we come in. If we obey Christ's "new commandment," then the lost will have a living example of God's love – through His dutiful, blissful, unselfish people, The Church of God.

May God be with you and bless you throughout the new Assembly year.

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*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. – James 5:16*

In the Bible, examples of praying people are everywhere. These people prayed God down on their world and He opened heaven to them.

For example, Moses had power in prayer. When he prayed, the Red Sea opened before Israel. When he prayed, God moved.

Joshua also saw the mighty hand of God work through his life and ministry. He knew the will and strategy of God in battle. Mighty cities fell before his untrained army. Where did this power come from – his prayer life!

But no one has manifested the power of God like the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Before He entered His public ministry He spent much time with the Father in prayer. This was the source of His power. He could do nothing unless the Father revealed it to Him.

Prayer is still a powerful force today. As we pray, there is a purpose that God may be known and worshipped in the world. The Holy Spirit also works on the one praying and on those who are the subjects of their prayers.

Perhaps that is why General Mission Coordinator Betty Bishop has requested missions leaders to

# WMB



2009-10 Theme:  
*Faithful Servants Pray*



WMB Coordinator  
Diana Seese

emphasize prayer in this new church year in addition to a continuing theme of "Faithful Servants" from Matthew 25:21.

Prayer is surely what we need more of in these last days. Think about it! Our families, loved ones, souls all around us – Satan is devouring them like a "roaring lion." We have to be on our knees, crying out to God Almighty for their souls!

Oh! What a Great Commission work we have to do – evangelizing not only our loved ones but the entire world. They need to hear the gospel. They need for you and I to pray, pray, pray for their souls.

To the human intellect, this task is overwhelmingly impossible. But, "with God, all things are possible!" The hearts of Bible-believing Church of God members are convinced The Church of God will fulfill her responsibility to this lost world.

How will we get the job done? Jeremiah 33:3 reveals the answer: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and

*mighty things, which thou knowest not."*

Our duty is to cry out to God in the midnight hour as Paul and Silas did when they prayed and sang praises unto God from their jail cell. It was powerful prayer – such that there was an earthquake so strong it opened the prison's doors and set every captive free. That is the kind of prayer we need in such a time as this, when the gross darkness of spiritual night is upon us.

In this new church year, let us commit ourselves to more effectively engage in the mighty instrument of prayer. Let us have a desperate earnestness, a zeal in our petitions and spiritual understanding of this vital power! Pray that God will place a burden on every child of God to cry out to Him for the lost souls!

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## CONTACT US

*The Olive Branch* is a publication of The Church of God Northeast Region, which serves churches in Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania and new works throughout the greater area. It is available in *English and Spanish* online at our website: [www.tcog-ne.org](http://www.tcog-ne.org).

Reports and other **submissions for the WINTER 2010 issue** should be received by **December 1**.

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# Around the Region

We registered 95 people in attendance at our *Regional Convention*, July 10-12 at the Uniontown, PA Church of God. Bro. Donald Branscum from General Headquarters was guest speaker. The theme was, "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints..." taken from 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

This was our region's first *bi-lingual convention*, with Spanish/English interpreters from the Lawrence, MA church and Virginia assisting.

## In other regional news:

– **The Olive Branch** also is now a *bi-lingual publication*. Check out both our *English and Spanish* versions at <http://tcog-ne.org> or write to the Regional Overseer James Smith at the address on page 3 for a paper version of either edition.

– Four members from our region attended International Youth Camp training held prior to the General Assembly in September. They were Regional Overseer James Smith, his wife Sis. Nancy Smith, Karns City, PA Pastor Thomas Kelley, and Youth Camp Coordinator Alma Kelley.

– Ford City, PA Pastor Wendell Flick was ordained a bishop at the General Assembly.

– Uniontown, PA Pastor Elliot Leighty preached a sermon at the same event.





*All photos on these pages are from the Regional Convention.*



**Luke 10:30-37**

(30) *And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

(31) *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

(32) *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*

(33) *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.*

(34) *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

(35) *And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

(36) *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour*

*unto him that fell among the thieves?*

(37) *And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. The said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

The parable of the Good Samaritan offers each one of us a valuable lesson on how we should express God's love to one another. Scripture tells us the Samaritan was on a journey – yet, for two days, he allowed his plans to be interrupted so he could care for the needs of a total stranger. The Samaritan also gave of his own money, paying the inn keeper two days wages and promising him more if the injured man's care so required.

Our time and money seem to be the two things that people guard quite passionately. But, as the scriptures say, the Samaritan gladly shared both.

Likewise, we should be flexible with our time so we can minister to anyone whom the Lord may bring across our path.

# ABM

2009-10 Theme:  
*Making a Difference,  
Through Fasting and Prayer*



*ABM Coordinator  
Nancy Horchar*

Most people today have no problem loving and helping a family member, but what about the ones we consider the unlovable, or the one that might be just too hard to get along with?

True love was demonstrated when Jesus gave His very own life for those who hated Him. Remember, our love for God is greatest when we, like Jesus, love our very enemies. As each one of us travels our own life's journey, we must take time to do whatever may be needed to show Jesus's love to those on our pathway.

As we start this new Assembly year, take time to host a prayer band meeting. I know it will be a blessing to someone. Let us also Pray, Pray, Pray. Prayer is the key.

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## 2009-2010 Calendar

*Ministers Convention, Western District,  
Oct. 16, Uniontown, PA*

*Ministers Convention, Eastern District,  
Oct. 17, New Rochelle, NY*

*Youth Convention, May 14-15, Uniontown, PA*

*Ladies Retreat, Apr. 30 - May 2,  
Camp Sunrise, Markleysburg, PA*

*Bible Training Institute, May 30 - June 13,  
General Headquarters, Charleston, TN*

*Youth Camp, June 10-14,  
Mt. Chestnut Nazarene Center, Butler, PA*

*Regional Convention, July 9-11,  
Uniontown, PA*

*General Assembly, Sept. 7-12,  
Abba's House, Hixson, TN*

There are several scriptures in the Bible that relate to the potter and his works of clay. These passages are used to show us something about our relationship with God.

In Jeremiah 18:2-4, God told the prophet Jeremiah to:

- (2) *Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and, there I will cause thee to hear my words.*  
 (3) *Then I went down to the potter's house and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.*  
 (4) *And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.*

Bearing in mind that another prophet, Isaiah, explained: "... O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" (Isaiah 64:8), let us look more closely at what Jeremiah saw.

First, he noted the potter thought the clay was marred, or damaged, and that he started his work over constructing a new vessel as a result. The potter knew that marred clay would never make a good final product, so he reworked it, remolded it and tried again.

Are we not just like the potter's clay? God created man in His own image. His first work of human pottery, Adam, sinned. God's work was marred in Adam and all his descendents – including us. We all inherited the same sinful nature: "*Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for*

*that all have sinned.*" (Romans 5:12)  
 Another key scripture: "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" (Romans 3:23)

The sins in our lives are like the cracks and impurities that appear in the potter's clay. If the potter overlooks the impurities in the clay, he still may produce a vessel. However, that vessel could be flawed and could possibly explode when placed into the flames of the potter's kiln for hardening.

The result would be the remains of what could have been a master piece, but now is only good for the trash. Our sins need to be destroyed before God can begin a work in the Christian's life.

Another point to draw from Jeremiah's experience: The potter put the clay through trials and tribulations by molding and working it. This prepares the clay for the future. This can be compared to God's way of allowing His children to experience trials and tribulations, bringing them closer to Him.

Through the art of His handiwork, a little life nudge here, a little nudge there, the clay that is you and I thus is readied for shaping into a vessel. The difficult part for us is our remaining "centered" on God's wheel and focused on what He intends for our lives.

The potter also must have purified the clay before it could be of any use. Likewise, sinful

# VLB

2009-10 Theme:  
*The Potter's Wheel*



VLB Coordinator  
 Stephanie Satanek

people must also be purified before they can join God in heaven. God uses two elements to clean up the sinner. First is the Bible, the Holy Word of God. God uses His Word to cleanse people "...with the washing of water by the word," (Ephesians 5:26). Jesus said, "*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*" (John 15:3)

God also washes our sin away with the blood of Jesus. "*...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" (Rev.1: 5)

Being born with sin, we need to be forgiven and remade – just like the marred piece of pottery.

Jesus said "*A man must be born again*" (John 3:3). It is when we are born again that our lives are made new and are pleasing to God. We thus become new creatures and can fellowship with God, and He will direct the purpose and meaning He has for each one of our lives!

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## OVERSEER

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it means to **stand in His glory!**

Elements of what the Church believed about God's wonderful plan for mankind are scattered throughout the New Testament. In Ephesians 1-5, which could be called "Paul's pocket theology," Paul presents a summary of the complete program of God: beginning with its determination (in the mind of God) "... before the foundation of the world." (Ephesians 1:4b), and culminating in the glorious perfection of His Bride, the Church, when He will "... 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." (Ephesians 5:27)

Some Bible scholars have looked upon Ephesians 6 as an appendix, or afterthought, of *practical* considerations – distinct from the deep theological treatise of the first five chapters. Such is not the case.

After having presented God's glorious plan, "from the foundation of the world," Paul then addresses the spiritual battle that now must be fought by God's people down here "... against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (verse 12b).

There are battles to be fought and won in the name of the Lord, before He returns for His glorious Church! We see what it means for us to *take a stand* for the Lord – to actively engage in this ongoing spiritual warfare!

Many have focused upon the *defensive* phrase in Ephesians 6:13: "... take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" as though our goal was to somehow manage to "endure to the end" – until He rescues us from this earth. Certainly

we must be on the defense. We are warned in

1 Peter 5:8 to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

This does not mean, however, that we are to "circle the wagons." Paul, in fact, meant something far more *offensive* (rather than *defensive*) as he continued with the phrase "...and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore..." (verses 13b-14a). The phrase "having done all, to stand" means "having done all to ready ourselves to do battle (to go on the offense) for the Lord!" Paul then continues with a description of the spiritual armor that we require for doing the Lord's battle!

The commentary *Barnes Notes* explains that the Greek word used here to 'stand' actually means to 'overcome.' No, the King James translation did not 'mess up' here. In the times of King James (as well as Biblical times), "standing" on the front line confronting the enemy was a well understood concept of warfare. Everyone – 'standing shoulder to shoulder' – at their commander's signal would march forward into the battle! Barnes explains that stand "... means, to work out, effect, or produce; and then to work up, to make an end of, to vanquish. ... they were to overcome or vanquish all their foes, and thus to stand firm. ... every foe was to be subdued – no matter how numerous or formidable they might be. Safety and triumph could be looked for only when every enemy was slain."

**It is in our doing battle (in standing) for the Lord that we will realize those opportunities for His**



*Regional Overseer  
James Smith*

**glory to be manifested through us.**

The examples that we find in the Scripture are too numerous to share them all here; but we will consider a few of my favorites. Each demonstrates a different aspect of how God's glory is revealed in those who "stand and do battle for Him." To fully understand these examples, we must remember the nature of our warfare as Paul explained it in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

(3) *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:*

(4) *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

(5) *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Consider now the experience of the three Hebrew children: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as given in Daniel 3. Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Babylon, had erected a golden image in honor to himself some thirty yards tall and three yards broad (verse 1).

He further commanded all his leaders to attend its dedication. In particular, he commanded everyone (with the playing of music) to "fall down and worship the golden image" (verse 5). We know the response of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego given in Daniel 3:17-18:

(17) *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.*

(18) *But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

These three were determined to make a *stand* for their Lord, regardless of the outcome. They were fully persuaded of their Lord's ability to deliver them – "our God whom we serve is able to deliver us," but they

also were determined to *stand true regardless* of what their Lord did or did not do!

This situation is common to all the examples that we'll consider. In each instance, the person(s) making a stand for the Lord did so: 1) *fully persuaded* of the Lord's power to grant victory, but 2) *determined to stand* for the Lord *regardless* of the outcome, *regardless* of what harm might be endured to reach that outcome, and 3) *knowing* that He (and, hence, they) *would be glorified* through their stand for Him.

Our standing cannot be conditioned on a demand that the Lord respond as we would desire. Each of us must enter this spiritual warfare likewise *fully persuaded* that our "fight is right" – we are indeed fighting a righteous war!

**Our cause is His cause; our fight is His fight; and our victory will be His victory – which will surely come, but as it pleases and glorifies Him. And, thus we too are glorified in Him!**

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In the case of the three Hebrew children, the Lord did indeed deliver them – not by extinguishing the fire nor by allowing their escape. He *went through the fire with them!* We find in Daniel 3:23-25:

(23) *And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.*

(24) *Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.*

(25) *He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*

In this example, the power of God to deliver was gloriously manifested to everyone present. The trust

of these three in their God was fully vindicated before all. That which was supposed to destroy them (the fire) became the instrument by which they were released from their bonds! As Nebuchadnezzar described it (Daniel 3:25), "*Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*"

His next time to address them (Daniel 3:26) was as "*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God.*" He further declared (Daniel 3:29): "*... there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.*" Thus was God and His servants glorified before all!

**What greater honor could we receive down here than to have fought (stood) for Him, and to be recognized as "His servants?"**

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Consider now an example from the early Church of standing together as recorded in Acts 1-2. The apostles, together with other followers of Christ, returned from His ascension (Acts 1:9-10) to an upper room where they (Acts 1:14): "*all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication*" for the Holy Ghost to come – as Christ had promised (Acts 1:5): "*ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*"

We know how the Holy Ghost came down upon them on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and that many from all over Jerusalem and "*devout men, out of every nation under heaven*" were witnesses to this outpouring (Acts 2:5) – though none understood the meaning (Acts 2:12) of this manifestation.

Just as the disciples had been in "*one accord*" as they returned to the upper room to pray (Acts 1:14), and continued in "*one accord*" on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was given (Acts 2:1), so now did they now "*stand together*" (Acts 2:14): "*...Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice*" to declare unto this crowd the glorious outpouring

of God's spirit that the people had just witnessed.

Two points need to be emphasized: *First*, no one knew what the response of the crowd would be. Christ had ridden into Jerusalem on a donkey to the joy and praise of the people, and a week later had been brutally crucified by them!

What fate might they now face as they "stood together" to declare not only what God had done, and indeed would yet do (Acts 2:16): "*... I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh,*" but also that the people had (Acts 2:23): "*... delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*"

*Second*, while Peter served as spokesman, they all stood together: "*...Peter, standing up with the eleven...*" What one declared, they all declared! When their master was crucified, they had scattered – 'every man for himself.' Such would not be the case this time; now they stood 'shoulder-to-shoulder' (being in one accord!) for the cause of Christ. And God's glory continued to rain down upon His people!

Would this crowd listen, repent, and receive God's promises? Or, would the disciples now be taken by the mob and slain, as had been their master? Yet these stood as one to declare God's mercies: "*...let me freely speak unto you...*" (Acts 2:29), and their condemnation: "*Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*" (Acts 2:36). Who among them could have imagined that the Holy Ghost was not finished for the day – that their group of 120 was to grow by another 3,000 souls?

We have thus considered two examples (one each from Old and New Testaments) of saints of God who were determined to "Stand in His Glory!" and how that the Lord's glory was indeed manifested.

If every time we did battle in

## OVERSEER

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standing for the Lord we immediately were rewarded with His *glorious* divine intervention, who would not want to be on the Lord's side? But our standing for the Lord cannot be preconditioned upon His immediate movement and demonstration.

**Remember, “we walk by faith and not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7) We believe that our cause is just and that He will deliver and reward, but “in His time.”**

To reinforce this truth, we now look at another example of “standing for the Lord.” The life of Joseph is recorded in Genesis 37-50. A complete series of sermons could be developed around Joseph, whose life serves as a *type and shadow* of Christ, as well as of the Church.

From the day his brothers sold Joseph into slavery until the day he was reunited with his family spanned some 20 years of continual testing and trials – of his *standing steadfast* in the Godly principles he had been taught despite what came his way.

Though he was sold into slavery; still, the Lord gave him favor in his master Potiphar's house: “... *the LORD was with Joseph, ... his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him.*” (Genesis 39:2-4)

We see that God's glory shown upon our lives may not result in immediate glorious manifestations as seen with the Hebrew children, or for the Church on the Day of Pentecost. We must be willing to graciously accept whatever manner He may choose to impart His glory on us or through our standing for Him.

Joseph applied himself that he might be the best slave he could be – following the way that Paul later described in Colossians 3:23-24: “*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily,*

*as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*”

But the day came that Joseph must make a choice: would he follow the worldly principle of *situational ethics*, that teaches one's behavior can *justifiably* be adapted to fit the situation in which one finds oneself, e.g., when among liars, you may need to behave as a liar? Or, would he *stand true* to the godly principles he had been taught, regardless of what the cost might be?

Being determined to *stand true* to God's principles is not a small matter. His decision to “*Abstain from all appearance of evil*” (1 Thessalonians 5:22) was clear from his question of Potiphar's wife: “*how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*” (Genesis 39:9)

His *stand* resulted in his being falsely accused and cast into Pharaoh's prison. His situation seemed only to get worse; still, “... *the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.*” (Genesis 39:23) God's glory upon Joseph thus was manifest in His way.

Through all that Joseph endured, he (like Job) maintained his integrity with God. He continued to *stand by* the godly principles he had been taught. The day did come when his persevering *stand* for the Lord was more than vindicated “... *exceeding abundantly above all that*” he could “*ask or think*” (Ephesians 3:20).

When he was exalted in Pharaoh's realm, it was because of the *glory of God seen upon him*. The wisdom and discretion he possessed was clearly from God above: “*And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*” (Genesis 41:38)

**Our standing for our God cannot be conditioned upon how quickly He will intercede, or upon the severity of the situations in which we find ourselves. We must**

**stand unconditionally for Him!**

As another example of God's varied responses and the need for our consistency, when Paul made his way toward Jerusalem as he completed his third missionary journey, he accepted “*that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.*” (Acts 20:23)

His response was that if this was God's will, then so be it: “*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*” (Acts 20:24)

In fact, this did not signal the end of his ministry, as Paul would have many more opportunities “... *to testify the gospel of the grace of God*” before kings and those of authority, as well as to write (often from bondage) the Pauline epistles that comprise half of our New Testament!

This theme of *standing* that Paul described in Ephesians 6 he also echoed in his words to the Hebrews. As he brought that treatise to a close, he again spoke of *standing in the faith*: Hebrews 10:23-25

(23) *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

(24) *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

(25) *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.*

**“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,” we are to ‘stand shoulder to shoulder’ in our spiritual warfare, in both defense and offense without wavering.**

Paul then devoted Hebrews 11 to discussion of that faith. This essen-

What a great opportunity Bible Training Institute is for all who desire to learn more of and to know our Lord. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus said: *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”*

BTI equals training in God's Word. Praise God that we can be empowered to “Go ye” as we are commissioned in Matthew 28:19-20: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

# BTI

2009-10 Theme:  
*That We May Know Him*



*BTI Coordinator  
Wendell Flick*

Truly, our great commander in chief will be with us – always – to the end of the world. Praise His wonderful name. God bless you and God bless BTI.

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## *New Facility*

The Church of God in New Rochelle, NY has secured a new facility at 200 North Ave, New Rochelle, NY 10801 to accommodate its growing congregation. New Rochelle is a suburb of New York City.

The church, pastored by Sis. Pearlene Taylor, is meeting on the second floor of this commercial site. The worship facility will be dedicated October 17, during the Eastern District's Ministers Convention.



## Some final thoughts...

Early in the summer, we had our roof redone. By the time the crew had nailed the last shingles in place, a large spot of dead grass stood in the back garden where a pallet of equipment had rested throughout the project.

A combination of small children running through the yard, dog damage to surrounding grass and hot weather laziness caused us to respond in a minimalist way. We opted to let nature take its course and simply watched the brown spot turn back to green over the next couple of months.

I'm not mentioning this as horticultural advice – turf lovers forgive me, please – but because what happened in the yard became a spiritual application for me the day our oldest daughter started kindergarten. Feeling the quietness of the house that morning, our younger daughter and I went out to the garden to play. I noticed that the space had largely filled in. It wasn't with

grass, as it had been before. It was with creeping plants that lawn lovers would normally rip from their yards. But – interestingly – these “weeds” were strangely beautiful given the large space they had. One formed a lovely, almost spiral pattern, with curving rose-colored stems and dark green leaves shaped like those of a jade plant.

What is in that spot in our garden is not what was there before. But, it is filled. It is green. And – to a person who's already comfortable with the topsy-turviness of a British-style cottage garden – it is beautiful.

My husband, who enjoyed watching the fill in so much he photographed its various stages, commented that “nature doesn't seem to like emptiness.”

That's where the spiritual part comes in. No, nature doesn't like emptiness. It always works quickly to fill earth wounds with some kind



Assistant Editor  
Nora Edinger

of green. Perhaps this is because God does not like emptiness, either.

Whether it's the quietness left behind when a child goes off to school or moves out, or the loneliness resulting from a death, a move, a job loss or some other jolting change of circumstances – God has a way of filling in the emptiness.

The Virgin Mary commented on this in her song of joy found in Luke 1:53a: “*He (God) hath filled the hungry with good things...*”

God's people can be hungry for more than food – something He understands as He is a God who “*understandest my thought afar off*” and is “*acquainted with all my ways.*” (Psalm 139)

Yes. I knew that day that, as God had filled in that brown patch of lawn, He would fill in the new emptiness in my life. And, He already has.

Is that something God also wants you to know today? Are you “hungry?” I would urge you to give God the space and time to fill you with “good things.”

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## OVERSEER

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tially is the same theme from Ephesians 6:13 “*...and having done all, to stand. Stand...*” Ephesians tells us *how* we are to stand; while, Hebrews provides us with many stirring *examples* of others standing in the faith that we can emulate!

In example after example, Paul showed how children of God stand faithful – whether standing together, or standing with no one but themselves and the Lord. Then beginning with Hebrews 11:32 Paul launched into a never-ending recount of how one after another *stood faithful* in the face of all manner of adversity.

Paul clearly was not focusing on *faith* as in consideration of “*What do you believe?*” but rather as “*Where do you stand?*” The people he described did

more than simply *believe*; they were moved time and again to take their *stand* for the Lord, despite how difficult the immediate and long term consequences they faced.

**Yea, we rush forward shoulder to shoulder to engage and to defeat our enemy, Satan. For in our standing for Christ, we have His promise of victory: Revelation 3:21 “*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*”**

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