

## Mountain Tops of the Future

When God saved Noah from the universal flood, he was giving us many profitable lessons and was prefiguring the salvation that Messiah Jesus would accomplish for his people. The ark prefigured Christ Jesus himself who is our salvation, our deliverance from the wrath of God against sin and sinners. Noah represents the child of God who puts his faith in God. We understand this from the Scripture: *By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith* (Hebrews 11:7). God "... did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5). And we read in 1 Peter 3:18-22, For the Messiah<sup>[a]</sup> also suffered<sup>[b]</sup> for sins once for all,

an innocent person for the guilty,

so that he could bring you<sup>[a]</sup> to God.

He was put to death in a mortal body

but was brought to life by the Spirit...God waited patiently while the ark was being built. In it a few, that is, eight persons, were saved by water. <sup>21</sup> Baptism, which is symbolized by that water, now saves you also, not by removing dirt from the body, but by asking God for a clear<sup>[a]</sup> conscience based on the resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>22</sup> who has gone to heaven and is at the right hand of God.

After some of the flood waters receded Noah sent forth a dove from the ship. We read in Genesis 8:1 and following: *But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.... He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. <sup>11</sup> When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. <sup>12</sup> He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.* On the day the dove did not return, Noah opened the widow of the ark and looked out up the cleansed earth. It would be several days yet before the family could leave the ship. Yet they could see the promising tomorrow.

We continue to read in Genesis 8:13 and following:

*<sup>13</sup> By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. <sup>14</sup> By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.*

The Bible says that the day of this glimpse of hope was on the first day of the tenth month when the tops of the mountains became visible. This corresponds to our January 1<sup>st</sup> and is applicable to any time of new beginning for us.

Those mountain peaks speak of God's provisions for a bright new day. It is good to get the mountain tops into view before we have to walk in the valleys. This can enable us to keep a proper perspective in the days ahead.

One of the mountain peaks of the New Beginning is the mountaintop of **God's Promise**. He has guaranteed to us at least four (4) things for the coming days. First, his own presence. There is nowhere we can go nor anything we can face that can deprive us of God's own presence and His unending love for us. God has given this promise to many of his people directly as they faced new beginnings and challenges. To Moses and Israel in Exodus 33 God said, *"My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* After Moses died, to Joshua God promised, *As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you* (Joshua 1:7).

David in Psalm 139 testifies, *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?* (v.7) The author of Hebrews applies these promises to God's people today in Hebrew 13, v5. Hear Paul's stirring words in Romans 8:38-39: *For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from God's love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Second, God promises **His Protection** for his children. This does not mean we will not experience sorrow, setbacks, or even death! It does mean that the "valley of the shadow of death" is only a shadow. It does mean that though the enemies destroy our bodies they cannot harm a hair of our head. You see, as God's children we have eternal life and

can never perish. Nothing, no power in heaven or earth below can touch our redeemed souls. God is our Security and our Seal!

Hear these words from Proverbs 18:10: *The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.*

2 Timothy 4:18 says, *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

And Psalm 23:4, *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

And then Psalm 34:7-9 declares, *The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.*

In Ephesians 1:13 we read, *When you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.*

Thirdly, God promises **His Provision** for our daily needs. Nowhere does God's Word teach that we are all to be materially wealthy and socially successful. It does, however, teach us that God will provide to sufficiently meet our needs. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all the things necessary for life will be given to us – food, clothing, and shelter (Mathew 6:33) The Christian should never give way to worry. Instead, we are to bring our requests to him with thanksgiving.

A fourth divine promise is that of **Power**. Jesus knew that in our own strength we could not meet the expectations set before us. Therefore, he promised the Holy spirit to live within us and to empower us for each task. The Lord's own power is made available to us for the coming days. Jesus said, *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses.* (Acts 1:8 ). Paul reminds Timothy, *For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control* (2 Timothy 1:7). Paul praises God in these words, *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.* ( ) And he prays, *May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy* (Colossians 1:11).

**God's pledge of his own presence, protection, provision, and power is the first of the mountain peaks of the promising future.**

There is a **second mountain peak – the peak of spiritual possibilities**. To each of his children God gives the power to become what he has redeemed them to be - his sons and daughters in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Each circumstance is loaded with possibilities of conforming us to Christ's image and enabling us to hold forth the Word of Life. No matter what we face, we can confidently say, I can do everything "through him who gives me strength" (see Philippians 2:15-16 and Philippians 4:13). 2 Peter 1:3 reminds us, *God's divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.*

**A related mountain peak is the challenging opportunities of the new day.** Putting our past failures behind us, let us learn the lessons of the past and go on to trust Christ more and ourselves less. Thus we can seize each opportunity as a means of spiritual growth to the glory of our God. Hear Paul's own testimony: *"One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).*

**Another mountain peak is that of Christian privileges** – we have great blessings as believers that are constant but need nourishment through participation by faith. The greatest privilege is that of fellowship with the trine Jehovah – the Father and his Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle John writes: *That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).* The great Apostolic Benediction is, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14),*

But we also have the blessings of inner joy and peace. Paul reminds us of this truth, *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).* And he prays to that end for us, *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Romans 15:13).* Jesus says to us, *Peace I leave with you; my*

*peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid (John 14:27).*

Though it may be dark in the world, there is light and life within the child of God. Also we have the privilege of guidance through the medium of God's Word imparted by the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Isaiah writes, *And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail (Isaiah 58:11).* And Jesus says, *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come (John 16:13).* In Psalm 32:8 we read, *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;*

*I will counsel you with my eye upon you.*

The psalmist testifies in Psalm 73:23, *Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory.* Believe the proverb, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.* (Proverb 3:5-6)

**One last mountain peak is the glory capped one of the return of our Lord to the earth.** His sure return makes everything worthwhile and fulfills and completes every work of God. One day we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is. In beholding Him we shall be transformed into his image. Hebrew 9:28 states, *So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.* The Apostle John asserts in 1 John 3:2, *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.* As Paul declares, *our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. In accordance with God promises we are waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20 and Titus 2:13).*

Whatever your new beginning point – a new year, a new location, a new job, a birthday or anniversary – consider the mountains peaks of God's promises. Knowing the Lord's

love given us in Jesus Christ, let us look to the hills from where our help comes, it comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth (Psalm 121:1-2).

Wayne Conrad

December. 31, 2020