



Christian Ambassadors, Inc.

My Brother's Keeper

Volume 24, Number 1, First Quarter, 2019

GROWING on the WORD

A Scripture Study

The Word of God is the source of light, truth and power, for those who seek its meaning and apply it to their life. Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh, and we seek to follow him.

John 8:12 (NIV) – “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 12:46 (NIV) – “...No one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”

Behold! The Lamb of God

By: Sharon K. Griffiee

John the Baptist denies being the Christ

Word got out about a strange looking man preaching and baptizing in the wilderness of Judea, drawing large numbers. John the Baptizer, as he was known, did not conform to the typical stereotype of a priest. Nor did he conform to the religious systems of the day. His clothes were made of camel hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He lived off locusts and wild honey. John was indeed a rough outdoorsman with a powerful message:

Matthew 3:2 (NKJV) – “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

As expected, the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem were turned off by his looks and his brashness. John did not look or act anything like them, so they sent priests and Levites to check out this guy. When the ecclesiastical authorities of the day found John, they began to pump him with questions. When they asked John whether he claimed to be the Messiah, he flatly denied it.

John 1:20-22 (NKJV) – “I am not the Christ.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” And he answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”

John 1:23 (NKJV) – He said: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” (Isaiah 40:3)

Then, the Pharisees who had been sent, demanded that John explain *why* he was out in the desert baptizing people, if he was not the Christ or Elijah. At this point of grilling, all John wanted to do was to get the conversation moving off himself. After all, it was not about him. He was only there to baptize with water, to prepare for the great One coming after him, whom they did not know. John considered the One coming after him to be so great, that he felt himself unworthy to even untie His sandals.

John points to Jesus, the Lamb of God

John 1:29-34 (NKJV) – *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.”*

And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

What I love and respect about John the Baptist, the forerunner to Jesus, is that there was absolutely no jealousy in him. He was totally selfless. As soon as Jesus emerged on the scene, John began to encourage his disciples to leave him and to follow Jesus. That, brothers and sisters, is truly a humble person, a person of strength and character. Because of John's integrity he had prepared his disciples well. His testimony was heartfelt, bold, and unwavering.

It is exciting to read how John the Baptist reacted when he saw Jesus coming toward him. There is such impact and significance in what he said, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”*

Why John called Jesus the Lamb of God

In the Book of Exodus, we learn what the Jewish people were instructed to do, through the leadership of Moses and Aaron. They were directed to use a male lamb (or goat) without blemish, a male of the first year, as a sacrifice for the Passover Feast. As you recall, the Passover feast was instituted to celebrate Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt,

when God brought them out of Egypt with his mighty hand. Their compliance to the Lord's instructions, for that first Passover event, was to be precisely followed to insure their successful deliverance.

Exodus 12:6b-7 (NKJV) – *“...the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it [the lamb] at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.”*

Verse 13 – *“Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”*

The sprinkled blood on the Israelites doorposts and lintels was to provide protection from death when God destroyed the Egyptians firstborn. As the blood of a lamb was the means of escaping death for the Israelites, so Christ's blood is the means of redemption for believers. Paul underscored the significance of Christ's shed blood in his letter to the Romans and Ephesians.

Romans 5:9 (NKJV) – *“Much more then, having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”*

Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV) – *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”*

Jesus; the true Sacrificial Lamb

Foreseeing the inevitable turn of events, John the Baptist publicly confirmed that Jesus was the *true sacrificial lamb* for the Passover. Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross would now serve as the deliverance of God's people from their sins. Holy God could not treat sin lightly, for it required the sacrifice of blood.

Hebrews 9:22 (NLT) – *In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.*

As the son of Zacharias, who was a priest, John the Baptist knew all about the ritual and the blood sacrifices in the Temple. Every morning and every night a lamb was sacrificed in the Temple for the sins of the people. (See: Exodus 29:38-42) But now, there is something extraordinary happening. John sees into the future. He fearlessly declares to the crowd which had gathered, that *Jesus is the only sacrifice* which can deliver men from sin.

The prophet Isaiah, in the Old Testament, had the vision of the One who would redeem His people through His sufferings and sacrifice.

Isaiah 53:6 (NKJV) – *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”*

We get the picture. All Israel had turned aside from following the Lord; from keeping His commandments. The fundamental nature of sin is going one's own way, rather than God's way. That iniquity had to be punished, so the Lord laid the punishment of that sin, not on the sheep (Israel and other sinners) who deserved it, but on *sinless* Jesus who died in their place.

Isaiah 53:7 (NKJV) – *“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”*

Jesus did not try to stop those who opposed Him. Rather than defend Himself, he remained silent. Many still ask why Jesus would be willing to be led to his own death, without putting up a fight. There is only one reason. Jesus knew His sacrifice on the cross would forever benefit those who would believe.

The Apostle Paul is someone who came to know Jesus as the *true sacrificial lamb*. In his teaching concerning Christ's shed blood on the cross, he stated in his letter to the Corinthian saints;

I Corinthians 5:7b (NIV) – *“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”*

Jesus' last Passover with His disciples

In the upper room which had been prepared for them, Jesus sat down with his twelve disciples, now called apostles, and said to them;

Luke 22:15-18 (NKJV) – *“With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” Then He took the cup and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”*

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper

Jesus' death ushered in the New Covenant.

Luke 22:19-20 (NKJV) – *And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the **new covenant** in My blood, which is shed for you.” [emphasis mine]*

As **new covenant** Christians, we have the ultimate privilege of celebrating Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, through observance of the Lord's Supper; always remembering what Jesus did for us. Always aware that as we examine ourselves *before* partaking, we are signifying to Christ our repentance and sincere desire to keep the commandments He has given us.

(Continued on the next page)

Questions for Self-Study

What sign was John the Baptist given that confirmed to him that Jesus was the One?
John 1:32

For what purpose did Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross serve? Isaiah 53:6; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:9; Hebrews 3:6

When we partake of the Lord's Supper, what should our sacred attitude be?
I Corinthians 11:27-32



Sharing the Good News

"We are therefore Christ's Ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

II Corinthians 5:20-21

**From: Clarence M.
Greensville Correctional, Jarratt, VA**

Dear Sister Griffee,

I pray that this letter finds you doing well, and the ministry God has blessed you to facilitate. As always, I'm praying that God will continue to do great things through your ministry.

I'm a living witness how your ministry has encouraged me through many troubling times. I'm sowing a love offering into the ministry and pray that I'm able to continue as God gives me the ability to do so.

May God continue to bless you and the ministry.
Brother Clarence

**From: Chanyun P.
Chuckawalla Valley SP, Blythe, CA**

Dear Sister Griffee,

I would like to thank you for your continual support of your teaching of the Word of God through your newsletter. I have learned a lot. I will try to put them to practice daily. Thank you again.

Sister, I will keep you on my prayer list, and I will pray for you three times a week. I hope the Lord grants you abundant mercy and grace to spread the Gospel all around the states, and into the world.

Praise the Lord! May God bless you and your ministry to reach out, not only to inmates, but also into the world to those who need the Gospel, for God desires that everyone be saved.

Please pray for me that I may be able to send my donation to you for the ministries. I hope to hear from you again.

With my respects, Chanyun

**From: N-Simon M.
Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA**

Dear Sharon Griffee,

Greetings, I hope and pray that this letter finds you in good health and good spirit. Amen.

First of all, thank you; and thank you so very much for mailing me, very regularly, "My Brother's Keeper". I greatly appreciate that!

I 100% believe that if I keep reading your great spiritual material, then I will grow more in spirit. Please keep mailing me "My Brother's Keeper". Thank you so very much for your love and kindness towards me and the other inmates. God bless you and your loved ones.

Love through Jesus, Simon

From: Rebecca T.
CA Institute for Women, Corona, CA

Dear Sister Sharon,

Merry Christmas to you! Thank you for all the warm words from you in 2018. You make us feel loved always. Thank you! Please pray that I can go home Christmas 2019.

I pray that you and your staff will have a wonderful 2019 year.

Love, Rebecca

From: Frederick B.
Soledad State Prison, Soledad, CA

Dear Sharon and Alan,

I'm writing to thank you for the newsletters you've sent me throughout the year. They have been a blessing and encouragement in my daily walk with the Lord.

Your newsletter, "My Brother's Keeper", Volume 23, Number 4, Fourth Quarter 2018, was quite a beautiful and stern message, which I've got to share with a brother who fell under the "pride" spell. I loved every bit of it and will keep it in my repertoire.

I want to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a joyous and prosperous New Year.

Thank you, Freddy

From: Roger C.
Trinidad MR, Model, CO

Dear Christian Ambassadors,

Clearly, we are commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are told that our love is not shown in words alone, but in actions of love and deeds. Jesus stated as a principle in

Matthew 25:35 that to clothe, feed, and visit the stranger was to do it as unto Him.

In my own life I have experienced the love, care, and provision of many wonderful Christians, especially while in prison. Most of them were not rich or influential people, but humble, loving saints. We don't have to be rich and powerful to show the heart of the Father. Even from prison the Lord has enabled me to help many families and individuals financially, spiritually, and lovingly in their times of need. I would not be the person I am today if the Lord had not put such loving saints in my life. I am eternally grateful to God and to them.

I express gratitude for everyone, including you at CA, as you've labored to bless us in prison.

God bless you! Roger

From: Robert W.
USP Leavenworth, Leavenworth, KS

Dear Sharon and Alan,

Season's Greetings in the joyous name of our precious Lord and Savior of men, Jesus Christ. I want to thank you all for being my covenant missionary partners, and for always finding me (as I have been transferred 4 consecutive times this year). On to my next assignment and witnessing for our most high Majesty! It's purely my honor and my personal pleasure in accepting my mandate.

I want you also to know just how much you both have been an uplifting spirit to me in my times of doubt, and the steadfast encouragement that this ministry has instilled in me after 13 years. To thrive yet forward and continue to fight the "good fight of faith". I am due to be released to a halfway house next year. Please keep me in your prayers.

But I could not rest until I had the golden opportunity to share with you, just how much the last "My Brother's Keeper", and the December 2018, Letter and Spiritual Growth Lesson, "*Thou Art Worthy, O Lord*" by sister Sharon K. Griffiee, [meant to me]. It really stirred my spirit in ways and to such depths that I actually shed a real tear! You certainly know exactly how to evoke my soul to be led by the Spirit and the Gift of Christ Jesus, being at the very God Head, over and of my life. Please sister Sharon, continue to allow Him to use you!

I pray that in the coming years that we all will continue to let our glorious inner illuminating lights to shine ever so brighter before men, women, and children, who need to be led out of the dampest and darkest places that hold them captive. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

Your brother in Christ, Robert

**From: Kathryn C.
McClure Women's CF, Las Vegas, NV**

Dear Sister Sharon,

I wanted to say thanks for your newsletter and for allowing me to put poems in, off and on, since 2015. It has helped me to express how I have been making it through this time in FMUCC. Thank you very much.

Zephaniah 3:17 (NLT) – "For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty Savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

God Bless you, Kathryn



I Was There ...

By: Larry Thompson
Buena Vista CF, Buena Vista, CO

As the star shone down from above and the angels appeared bringing "good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10), I was there the night He was born; I was the manger into which He was placed.

As He grew and gained strength in Godly knowledge and wisdom, He lived a sinless life, yet He was falsely accused and betrayed; charged, tried, and convicted for speaking God's truth, and for performing miracles beyond measure; I was there...I was the basin in which Pilate washed the Innocent's Blood from his hands (Matthew 27:24).

The sentence was pronounced, and Christ was given into the hands of sinful man, though His trials were far from over. I cried for the thought of what was to come. I closed my eyes as He was chained to the whipping post and the scourge tore the flesh from His fragile body; I was there...I was the blind beggar to whom He had given sight; a man who could no longer bear to see.

When the hammer fell, and the spikes were driven through His hands and feet, I groaned because they also went through me; I was there...I was the tree upon which He lay.

Upon the mount of skulls, I came to the end of myself, for I was there when Yeshua cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." I was there...I was the thief who said, "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." (Luke 23:34, 42)

I was there to witness the anguish of His mother as He was lifted up...I was the Apostle whom He loved; the man, who by His word also became her son. (John 19:27)

I was there at the fulfillment of the Scripture. For the prophet Zechariah had written this of that very day: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for His only Son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for His Firstborn."

(Zechariah 12:10); for I was the soldier who pierced His side; the man who was bathed in the holiest of blood, and water (John 19:34). I was there at the moment when nature cried out, the earth shook, and the veil of the temple was torn in two...Yes; I was there when our Heavenly Father cried...For I am the tear that fell from His eye. I was the centurion who repented and confessed, "...Truly this man was the Son of God." (Matthew 27:51-54)

Salvation comes by Grace, and Grace comes by faith in Christ, the Lord. He willingly paid the debt that I owed, and just as He is here now, forever in my heart, I was there, and He said unto me, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

From the beginning until beyond...Praise be unto God; for I was there with my Lord. Amen.

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The Greatest Love Story

By: Michael Canez
Arizona State Prison, Buckeye, AZ

"The greatest love story ever known comes from your Creator in Heaven, who sits on the throne."

(The Father's Love)

Lovely and beautiful you are to me;
I came down from heaven in my Son,
for you to see.
Hoping you will realize how much
you mean to me,
filled with truth and grace,
to set the captives free.
Righteousness is my gift from Me to you,
only to be received through my Son Jesus,
who died for you.

(The Son's Love)

I came to reveal the Father's love,
bringing eternal life through my blood.
Come to me as you are,
I, Jesus, will be right there wherever you are.
Call out to me and you will see,
how much you truly mean to me.

I am your Savior, who loves you
with an everlasting love,
sent from our Heavenly Father above.
Receive my grace, the forgiveness of sins,
I am knocking at the door of your heart,
may I come in?

(Jesus Loves You)

John 3: 16-17 (NIV) – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.



God's ...

Holiness is as such He cannot tolerate sin
His purity and impeccable nature can't comprehend

Glory is that none could enter the temple
and this admonition was not inconsequential

Power is unmatched, there is no obstruction
if you attempt to stop Him, it will be destruction

Wisdom is such he retains all knowledge
His understanding cannot be learned in college

Name is lifted up, held in high esteem
reverence, respected, venerated what this means

Love in giving the world His only begotten Son
Who died to save sinners, all who would come

Mercy is being pardoned by His grace
because Jesus Christ took our place

Voice must be heeded and believed
His dear beloved Son is to be received

Word is reliable and the absolute truth
conveyed by the Holy Spirit is enough proof

Desire is that all would be saved
look at all the sinners He forgave

Wrath was poured out on His anointed
from the day of Jesus' birth, it was appointed

Son is worthy to be worshipped and praised
shouting hallelujah with hands raised

By: Ronald McClary
Maury Correctional, Maury, NC



My Brother's Keeper

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Inspirational articles, testimonies, and poems, especially from current or former prison inmates, are invited and will be prayerfully considered for publication. **Please request a copy of the publication guidelines before submitting an article for consideration.**

Vision Statement – Christian Ambassadors exists to bring the ministry of Jesus Christ into the lives of people; demonstrating how the gospel teachings can help a person live a more abundant life, filled with joy, hope, and purpose.

If you, a member of your family, or a friend, are imprisoned, wanting to find new hope, purpose and direction in life, please contact us at Christian Ambassadors.

Our website can be visited at: <http://www.christian-ambassadors.org>