

# DESTINY BULLETIN

A commentary sent to the supporters of the ministry of Christian Destiny.

Dear “Special Friend” of Christian Destiny,

August 2003

## “THE CHRISTIAN DISTINCTIVE”

“The Christian distinctive”--what does that mean? It means that the group or the church still retains “the faith” which is essential Christianity. They then preach and teach things including the Triune God, the deity of Christ, salvation by faith in His blood, the return of the Lord Jesus. These are some of the Christian distinctives. To lose them is to cease to be Christian in our efforts.

It’s possible for a church to lose its Christian distinctive. Yes, the pastor may still preach on the beauty and majesty of God, the love of a Heavenly Father, the call to commitment to the Lord, the necessity of service to humanity. These things may be helpful, but alas, they are not Christian distinctives. It takes Christ and the blood of the cross to make a speech truly a Christian sermon. Even a song service can lose its Christian distinctive. Many songs about the majesty of God can be sung with equal vigor by a Moslem, a Jew, or an Unitarian. That there is a God and that He is majestic is not a uniquely Christian point of view. The fact that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and that Christ came to die that we might be reconciled to God--that is Christianity.

Everything that Christians do should have its Christian distinctive. A fun night for young people is not Christian unless it contains at least a short message from the Word and earnest prayer.

A camping trip, if it is Christian, must be more than hot dogs and the great outdoors. It must say a word about Christ and His power to save or it is not worth doing. Social action of any kind that does not contain the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not distinctively Christian. It is a waste of time and money unless it tells every recipient and onlooker that there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun and Jesus Christ makes the difference.

What makes a home distinctively Christian? It is not simply the presence of a Bible or going to church on Sunday. It is when the father (and the mother) of that home talk distinctly about Christ, about the grace of God, about sin and righteousness and judgment. Even “family values” are sweet nothings unless they are based on the Gospel and clear Christian distinctives.

Christian radio broadcasting, Christian telecasting, Christian publications must do more than simply use the word “Christian.” They must be committed to the Gospel and must invariably point people to the finished work of Christ on Calvary’s cross. In this, we fear that too much media time is being spent simply on spiritless humanism and has long since lost its Christian distinctive. This while increasing time is being spent on fundraising, social relevance, even the “implications” of Christianity (a very tricky subject) and not on what Christianity is essentially.

Christian education must retain the Christian distinctive. A vast religious academic community is developing in the name of Evangelical Christianity which has a smaller and smaller Christian distinctive. Many Christian schools have even sought to become “more secular” in order that they may gain secular accreditation or secular bond issues for financing their programs. A great mistake! When will we learn

the lesson? When we lose our Christian distinctive as individuals, as people, as churches, as schools, as religious enterprises, we have begun to move down the slippery slope to oblivion. Soon the cost of the charade will exceed the contributions. Worst of all, the blessing of God will be taken from the enterprise. This is sadly, what is happening today in too many cases.

The Christian distinctive--never forget it! Lose from our life and activity that which is distinctively Christian and all our words are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Retain the Christian distinctive and God will bless you with His presence and with His best.

*“Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col. 3:17).*

### **THE DAY IS AT HAND**

The passage of time is a most interesting thing. No one knows quite what it is, but we know that it profoundly affects us all. Having put us in the midst of time, God uses this experience of moving through the cryptic continuum of days and nights to make us aware of many things. One of those things is stated most strongly by the Apostle Paul when he says to each believer, *“The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Rom. 13:12).*

We can be confident that every living human being has some sense of what this means. It means that the darkness is about to be dispelled and our ability to see, move and live with animation will soon be multiplied by a thousand times. The relationship between darkness and light is approximately the same as that between death and life. Therefore, God reminds us that there is soon coming the time when we will move from the frustrating, limiting thing called darkness into a new day. The new day speaks of opportunity, clarity, possibilities, a new period of time bright with wider things than ever. The idea of a new dawn means that another chapter of thinking and doing is upon us. All of these are normal considerations which grow out of the promise that *“the day is at hand.”*

From the words of Scripture surrounding this passage, we can certainly understand what God is saying to us. Preceding the announcement of a new day He says, *“It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11).* **In saying this, Paul is speaking about the third aspect of salvation, salvation from the very presence of sin.**

We need to be reminded of this. When I receive Christ as Savior, **I am saved from the penalty of sin which is hell.** This is the first aspect of salvation.

When I walk with the Lord in my Christian life, **I am saved from the power of sin** (Rom. 5:10). I am saved from hell by the death of Christ and I am saved from the power of sin by the life of Christ.

Salvation takes its final form, however, in that one day Christ will take us home from this dark world--we will be saved from the very presence of sin. This is the sense in which salvation is nearer than when we believed.

We are called upon to *“awake out of sleep.”* It is time to strengthen our minds, to newly invigorate our personalities, to think more deeply, to be awake! Let not the golden dawn of heavenly transport overtake us unawares.

Also, because the day is at hand, we are admonished to *“cast off the works of darkness.”* In these

days, too many of the dark philosophies, the devilish outlooks, the evil works of the world have invaded the minds of Christians and even the sanctuaries of churches. Too many Christians have forsaken good morals and good sense and too many Christian leaders have fallen before the works of darkness, bringing shame and sadness upon the body of Christ in our present time.

These things must be deliberately cast off. To live a righteous life for Jesus Christ must be the positive, confirmed, no-nonsense decision on the part of every Christian. Gone must be the question, "How far can I go? How much can I get away with?" The ruin of making compromise with sin is now too apparent in the lives of too many who profess to believe the Gospel.

In the light of the coming dawn, we are also told, "*Let us put on the armor of light.*" Quite obviously, Paul is suggesting here that light will perform at least two functions. It will be a protection. The mind that is enlightened by the Word of God, that has a scriptural answer to everything, is protected. There's no better safeguard from the blandishments of the Devil than to know, to memorize the Bible, making it a part of our thought structure.

But also, the armor of light can dazzle the opposition. In this gloomy world we need more gleaming young Knights for the Lord. It is time for the heroes of the Round Table to gather again. It is time for those clothed in the armor of light to become bearers of the sword of the Lord and the shield of faith.

In the light of the dawn that is breaking upon us we are also told, "*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in revelry and drunkenness, not in immorality and wantonness, not in strife and envying*" (Rom. 13:13).

### SONS OF LIGHT

As a child of light, God wants you to be a bearer of the light of the Gospel. You'll recall that Jesus told his disciples, "*I am the light of the world*" (John 8:12). He then instructed them on what it meant to become the children of that light, the learners, the people that build into their minds and hearts what they are supposed to do for Christ.

Later, He spoke to the Church and said, "*You are the light of the world*" (Matthew 5:14). Is that a contradiction? Certainly not! Just as light is passed from one candle to the next, the message of the Gospel that we share carries the light of Christ to the world. Everyone who receives the light, also becomes the bearer of that light to the rest of the world.

If you believe God can use you to accomplish great things, you are not mistaken. The greatest possible task, the most fulfilling, the most rewarding, that you can ever be involved in, in all the world, is to be an exponent of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The challenge of this life is not the car you drive, the clothes you wear or the house you live in. The challenge is not fame, fortune, political success or anything like that. The challenge is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and then, to get out the Gospel so that others can believe on Him while there's yet time.

**There's a line that we cross by rejecting the Lord,  
Where the call of the Spirit is lost.  
Even now it may be that the line you have crossed,  
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?**

Have you shared that message with someone this week? Have you discovered the joys, the privileges, the adventures that come with living your life in light of the Christian distinctive? The Army challenges you to “Be all that you can be.” Think what you can be, if you dedicate your life to Christ and rise to the challenge of your marvelous Christian destiny!

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him” (I Cor. 2:9).*

Write or call for your copy of the booklet ***Sons of Light*** by Dave Breese.

## **PETRA**

**The city of most frequent biblical mention is, of course, Jerusalem.** From that well-known but soon to be utterly famous metropolis, Christ will one day rule the world. To the City of David will come ambassadors from every nation. There they will seek favor from the Great King, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**The second most well-known biblical city is Babylon.** This doomed metropolis was built on the twin ideologies of culture without God – “*Let us make us a name*” --and religion without the Lord-- “*Let us build us...a tower, whose top may reach to heaven.*” Babylon and its ideology progressively subverts the world and has arrived at near totality in our time. There is coming one single day, perhaps soon, in which the cry will go out, “*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.*”

**But there is another city, not far from these two that is most provocative as well. Remember the name “Petra”** – we will be hearing much more of this most provocative metropolis in the days to come. Through the centuries it has been the crossroads of much activity in the Middle East by armies, trading caravans, religious organizers, and fleeing fugitives aplenty. It became important in the lives of the Hittites, of Jacob and Esau, of Israel, of the Arabians, of the Persians, as well as the Greeks and the Romans. The Edomites made it their capital and fleeing warriors from many nations their hiding place. Petra, also identified with nearby Bozrah, has been visited by thousands of religious pilgrims who have been astonished at the “rose-red” city sequestered into that improbable place.

**But the past of Petra is but a prelude** to its coming significance as the prophetically significant last days come upon us. Conservative Bible scholars hold that Petra will yet be the city of deliverance, the defensible hiding place for the deliverance of His people Israel. Betrayed and then persecuted by the Antichrist, Israel will then be preserved, delivered by its new-found Lord. Indeed, the story of Petra’s past and its provocative future will fascinate every thoughtful Christian.

Noah Hutchings presents to us the account of that past and this future in his book **Petra**. It will be read with singular fascination and great profit by everyone who would know the connection between history and the Bible and who takes seriously the prophetic Word. I am sure that no reader will be anything but profited by carefully considering this book. Each reader will appreciate anew the consonance between these sources of information. We are promised that the pages of the prophetic Word will be made increasingly plain as we move toward the end of the age.

**Petra is pictured on the enclosed insert and listed on the order form.**

Taken from the writings of Dave Breese with Dave Weeden.

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