

# The Ryburn Christian Clarion

BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE

*Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word*

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Unless otherwise noted, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within scripture verses are enclosed in brackets [ ].

## DYNAMITE FROM HEAVEN!

*“Power From On High”*

**W**HEN MOST PEOPLE THINK OF DYNAMITE, they usually think of its tremendous destructive potential. It’s interesting to note, however, that this powerful material is not only used in demolition projects, but is indispensable in construction, mining, and even the reclamation of our nation’s wilderness areas. When used skillfully by a well-trained individual, dynamite’s sudden release of energy can bring about remarkable benefits that enhance the world around us. As children of the One True God, we have received, from our Father, what could be called *spiritual dynamite*. The Bible simply calls it “power from on high”.

In Luke 24, we read about the Lord Jesus Christ presenting Himself to His followers in His resurrected body, and teaching them that “...they might understand the scriptures,....” (verse 45) The context (See verse 33.) shows that He was speaking to eleven of the apostles; the two men He had appeared to on the road to Emmaus (first mentioned in verse 13); and others “...that were with them,....” (Again, note verse 33.) Finally, in verse 49, the Lord talks about sending “...the promise of my Father...”, saying, they would be “...endued [“clothed”] with power from on high.” What’s fascinating is that Jesus, before ascending into heaven, told His disciples (not just the apostles, as some have taught) that they would be clothed with “power” in order to carry out the Lord’s work. Even more interesting is the fact that the word translated “power”

*continued on next page...*

### INSIDE AT A GLANCE

**HAVING THE MINISTRY** of reconciliation, and being entrusted with God’s Word of reconciliation, it is paramount that we learn about our God-given abilities, so we can carry out our Father’s business.

**“DYNAMITE FROM HEAVEN!”** One could scarcely imagine a more unlikely combination, and yet, the Bible tells of dynamic spiritual abilities bestowed upon the Christian believer by a loving Father Who wills to bring significant deliverance to His people and those they serve.

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1*

**“GOD’S MATCHLESS WORD”:** Do you study God’s Word, but find it difficult to put it into practice? Do you put God into a box, earmarked only for Sunday mornings? Are you a pew-sitter? **“Three, Two, One,...Action!”** takes a look at God’s ongoing call to “do” The Word.

*by Rhonda C. West.....3*

**“FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT”:** In our daily routines, we may experience mental numbness that dulls our appreciation for the Truth. God is always calling us, though, and, as **“Reflections Of A Sunday Morning”** shows, He sometimes touches us in very simple ways.

*by Henry S. Altheide.....5*

**“FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT”** presents a unique aspect of Christ. He is our lord, our advocate, our Passover, and more. In **“Jesus Christ: Our Mercy Seat!”**, we see that He was the perfect sacrifice, AND the *place* where the blood offering was accepted by God.

*by Keith Jamison, Columnist.....6*

**“GOD AND COUNTRY”** returns, recounting the sweeping spiritual changes of late Middle Ages Europe that produced men eager to see beyond the horizon. Social and religious boundaries erected by an intrusive church to control men began to crumble. **“America’s ‘Christ-bearer’”** sets the stage for the Age of Discovery.

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....7*

is the Greek word *dunamis*. We derive English terms such as “dynamic”, “dynamo”, and, of course, even “dynamite” from this word. The basic meaning of *dunamis* is inherent or potential power. It is power that lies dormant until activated for use, like a stick of dynamite that accomplishes nothing until it is ignited. Similarly, God has clothed His sons and daughters with *potential*, spiritual power that can be *exerted* as the child of God believes The Word in carrying out the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18 and 19).

In Acts 1, we see an account similar to the one in Luke. This time, however, Christ is speaking specifically to His apostles (verse 2), and, again, refers to “...the promise of the Father...” (verse 4), as He did in Luke 24:49. Then, in Acts 1:8, the Lord Jesus admonishes His men by saying, “But ye shall receive power [*dunamis*], after that [“when”] the Holy Ghost is come upon you:....” Once more, we see God’s promise of great, spiritual power that would be available to those who believe on His Son.

Later, in Acts 2, after the tremendous events which occurred on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter declared to the assembled crowd, in verses 32 and 33, “This Jesus hath God raised up,...Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise [For the third time, we are told of the *promise* of the Father.]..., he [Jesus Christ] hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” Twice before Pentecost, we see the promise of the Father referred to (Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4), and in both cases, the reference is linked to the “power” (*dunamis*) that God would provide for His people, not only apostles (leadership), as indicated in Acts 1, but other saints, as well, as shown in Luke 24. It’s plain, based upon the record in Acts 2:33, that on Pentecost, Christ “received” the Father’s promise and “shed forth” the *dunamis*, the “power from on high”, which is *still* available to God’s people today.

According to Ephesians 3:20, written to the “saints” and the “...faithful in Christ Jesus:...” (Eph. 1:1), God is “...able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power [*dunamis*; potential, spiritual power] that worketh [“energizes”] in us,....” Incredibly, God is able to do wondrous and mighty things as the *spiritual dynamite* within a believer is energized, or ignited. In the Book of I Thessalonians, chapter 2 and verse 13, it declares that “...the word of God,...effectually worketh [“energizes”]...in you that believe.” As we believe and literally act upon The Word, God energizes the spiritual potential (*dunamis*) within us (I Cor. 12:6), and splendid moves of God ensue.

Our God has not changed; He is not one iota less powerful than He was in ages gone by (Mal. 3:6a). Furthermore, the Bible says that Jesus Christ is “...the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” (Heb. 13:8) Since we are still living in God’s Age of Grace, with dynamite from Heaven latent within every believer, it seems to me that we have been well-equipped by the Lord to walk as the “able ministers” He has “made us” to be (II Cor. 3:6a).

As you think on and study these things, pray for us as we complete our third year of offering the *Clarion* to those who enjoy its Biblical research approach to the Scriptures. Also, take a moment to look at our website at [www.godslivingroom.com](http://www.godslivingroom.com). There, you will learn a little more about us, and will find the current issue of the *Clarion* posted for downloading. We are also beginning to archive back issues so you can soon view or print any that you do not have. Never forget that your interest and support are greatly appreciated. If the Lord doesn’t return, we’ll be greeting you with a fresh, new edition in the fall. If He does return, maybe you’ll be one of many that we meet in the air. God bless you.

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

### *An Invitation To Share!*

*If you are interested in submitting an article for our “God’s Matchless Word” column or, perhaps, an essay, some original Christian poetry, or a testimony for our “For Your Spiritual Enrichment” column, please note that it is best to send them on a 3½” floppy disk, using a standard Microsoft™ Word® format. You may also e-mail your submissions, in a “plain text” format, sending them to [ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net). If you desire, you may send a fax to (937) 276-5534. For more information, feel free to call us at (937) 275-3316. If you would like to send a letter to the editor, you may use our e-mail address or fax number, or simply write **The Ryburn Christian Clarion**, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552. If you would like to support our outreach work financially, please make your offerings payable to “The Ryburn Christian Clarion”, and mail them to the same address.*

The Ryburn Christian Clarion: A Biblical Studies Resource For The Household Of Faith!  
“Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word”

# **GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD:**

## *A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life*

*(This column features a wide range of subjects from God's Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)*

### **“Three, Two, One,...Action!”**

*by Rhonda C. West*

**A**S I WAS READING through The Word recently, something caught my attention in the Book of James that I know I have read before. In James 1:22, it states, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” This verse kept rolling over and over in my mind. Am I a doer? Am I taking action, or am I deceiving myself? As I pondered this, I started thinking about all the action words that can be found in the New Testament. This is a portion, actually a small portion, of a study I started (which has been fun to do). We'll look at some verses where I've emphasized (in CAPS) many action words. Let's start in Philippians.

#### **Philippians 2:12 and 14-16a**

*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, WORK OUT your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

*DO all things without murmurings and disputings:*

*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye SHINE as lights in the world;*

*HOLDING FORTH the word of life;...*

Here, we see that we need to work out (not at the gym, but) our own salvation. How? The Word says with “...fear and trembling.” According to Bishop K. C. Pillai, D. D., this is very much an Eastern expression. Paul is not talking about *doing works*, but showing them; we should replace those “old man” actions with “new man” actions. “Fear and trembling” is not (thank goodness) running and trying to hide from God with your whole body a-jitter, afraid of what He might do. Instead, it means with *reverence and obedience*. God is our Heavenly Father, Who wants the best for us. Since we love and respect Him, we demonstrate to others our salvation by reverent and obedient *action*.<sup>1</sup> We also need to “do”. Do all things without murmuring and disputing. We need to “shine” as lights in the world (Doing what?), holding forth (Again, what?) the word of life!

#### **Philippians 3:13-16**

*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, FORGETTING those things which are behind, and REACHING FORTH unto those things which are before,*

*I PRESS toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [“mature”], BE THUS MINDED: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

*Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us WALK by the same rule, let us MIND the same thing.*

Paul is telling us that he's learned that we need to forget the past (It's over and done with, and gone.) and reach for what is set before us. He also encourages us to be of the same mind and walk as The Word directs. Now, let's look at the books of Corinthians.

#### **I Corinthians 1:10**

*Now I beseech [“implore”] you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all SPEAK the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

In this verse, we are further encouraged to speak. I can do that, nonstop. Just ask my husband; he will confirm it. What, then, are we to speak? We speak the same thing (The Word), so there are no divisions, and we accomplish much, being “perfectly joined together” with the same mind, having the same judgment.

#### **II Corinthians 4:13 and 18**

*We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also BELIEVE, and therefore SPEAK;*

*While we LOOK NOT at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

We believe; we speak. Again, *what* do we speak?

We speak the Word of God! This passage also challenges us to look not at the “seen” things, but the eternal things. I can’t wait until I can do that every moment of every day!

**Ephesians 4:14-15, 17, 22-25, 28, and 31-32**

*That we henceforth BE NO MORE children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

*But SPEAKING [What?] the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth WALK [Here we go again with the walking. This is not a hike, but our daily lives.] not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

*That ye PUT OFF [Here’s what we need to “do”.] concerning the former conversation [“behavior”] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

*And [God is great! He doesn’t just say, “No. No! No!!” He gives us the alternative to the bad “behavior”.] BE RENEWED in the spirit [“life”] of your mind;*

*And that ye PUT ON the new man, which after God is [“was”] created in righteousness and true holiness.*

*Wherefore PUTTING AWAY lying, SPEAK every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

*Let him that stole STEAL NO MORE: but rather let him LABOUR, WORKING with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to GIVE to him that needeth.*

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, BE PUT AWAY from you, with all malice:*

*And BE YE KIND one to another, tenderhearted, FORGIVING one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.*

Paul is encouraging us to grow up. How are we to accomplish this? Hmmm. Do you see a pattern here? We are to speak the truth (God’s matchless Word), and do it lovingly. Also, we need to stop lying (which

includes even those little “white” ones that are not supposed to hurt anyone), and speak the truth. Last, but not least, Paul caps this by telling us to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving. Wow! To be able to do this every day would be an accomplishment.

**Titus 2:1 and 7**

*But SPEAK [Again, I get to use my favorite thing, the mouth.] thou the things which become sound doctrine:*

*In all things SHEWING THYSELF a pattern of good works: in doctrine SHEWING uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,*

We are exhorted here to speak “sound doctrine”. “Where would that come from,” you ask? Do you think it might mean God’s Word again? This is how we will come to show ourselves as examples of good works, and studying The Word and knowing it will show forth untainted respect and sincerity for the doctrine.

We have seen only a portion of the actions we are to take as believers, and I’m surprised to see how many of them deal with *speaking* God’s Word. Perhaps, it’s because it is important to God to have it spoken, and we do have mouths. Also, we need to know His Word in order to speak it. So, maybe, just maybe, this will challenge all of us to take a closer look at what God says is important for us to “do”. All this has led me to pray every day, “God, just show me what I can do for YOU today.” I pray also that you’ve enjoyed this, and that you will continue to study His Word.\*

**Endnotes:**

- 1) Pillai, Bishop K. C., D. D.; *Orientalisms Of The Bible*, Volume 1; The American Christian Press; New Knoxville, Ohio (1984); pp. 25-35.

*(Mrs. Rhonda C. West was introduced to Biblical studies in 1984, and has since graduated from many courses dealing with scriptural accuracy. She has coordinated several home Bible fellowships, and is now the secretary of Akribos Theological Seminary (For more information about the seminary, visit [www.akribos.org](http://www.akribos.org)). Rhonda and her husband, Stephen, currently live and fellowship in Huber Heights, Ohio.)*

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**“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

James 1:22

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# FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

## Meditation

(This column offers our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this “grab-bag”, appearing from time to time, you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, letters, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God’s people.)

### “Reflections Of A Sunday Morning” (or “Staying Well Informed”)

by Henry S. Altheide

**A**H, SUNDAY MORNINGS! It’s the chance to sleep in a little, eat breakfast casually, and look at the Sunday paper: no rushing about, no tight schedule to keep. You have the picture. As for me, Sundays tend to be the most restful day of the week and provide some much needed relaxation.

On one Sunday morning recently, I did something right (Please hold your applause.). I took some quiet time with God and His Word, and left the newspaper lying in the driveway. I spent, not just ten or fifteen minutes, but, much longer: enough time to actually think about what I was reading and get excited about it. There it all was, in black and white, just as God had placed it: the history of God’s incredible love and intervention; the present condition of the world and its staggering masses of people (both with and without a savior); and God’s glorious plans for the future. I didn’t read the entire Bible, mind you: just a few passages from the Church Epistles.

In Ephesians 1:4, I was blessed to read that I, like every believer, stand in God’s very presence “...holy and without blame [“blemish”] before him [or “face to face with Him”] in love:....” This verse is a real gold mine. Every Christian has this status because of Jesus Christ and what He did: not because of anything we do or have done. Our minds have some trouble believing this, because it is so big and wonderful, yet, like many other things in the Bible, it is not too good to be true, but too true to be ignored.

“For God so loved the world,....” (John 3:16) God wants everybody to enjoy this status with Him. He has already done the work through Christ. He calls people to His Word, which reveals His redemptive work, and He patiently waits for them to believe it. He has so richly provided for the needs of the human race. His written Word chronicles, records His awesome love and acts of provision since the beginning of time.

I ended my time in the Bible feeling refreshed, comforted, and informed. Finally, I did make it to the driveway. Yes, the paper was still there. Wars, the threat of violence, protests, economic instability, epidemics, disasters, debates on the definition of “marriage”, crime, racial tensions, and politicians’ promises: there it all was before my eyes. The news media, one of our modern “services”, was reporting it, so the public would be well informed.

Well, try as I did, I just couldn’t seem to locate any real answers in the paper: any genuine *solutions* to all the dreadful problems. Furthermore, I couldn’t locate a single article about anyone being born again, healed, or delivered by God. Somebody at the paper obviously goofed! It seemed that the greater part of the paper was dedicated to chronicling things that were the result of Adam, and not a result of “the second Adam”, the Lord Jesus Christ. Is the newspaper all bad? Well, no. I did manage to obtain a chuckle or two in the comics’ section, and the coupons in the Sunday edition can be quite helpful at the supermarket, *and*, upon checking the obituary page, I was quite happy to see that my name did not appear. No. It isn’t all bad. Perhaps, I could talk them into just bringing me the good stuff and lowering the price of my subscription.

At any rate, I was glad I took the time to read the *literature of eternity* before reading the literature of the hour. I was grateful for the opportunity to begin my day with God’s perspective on life. Remember, if we want to understand the true condition of the world, and of ourselves, the Bible, not the newspaper, is where we go. **It** will keep us well informed.\*

(Mr. Henry S. Altheide has been a student of God’s Word for many years. He and his wife, Vickie, reside in La Quinta, California, where they are active in Christian outreach. “Hank” may be reached by e-mail at [altheide@aol.com](mailto:altheide@aol.com).)

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# FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

*(This column, featuring the work of Keith Jamison, examines God's Word and how its application in our Twenty-First Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)*

## “Jesus Christ: *Our Mercy Seat!*”

**J**ESUS CHRIST SHED HIS BLOOD and died for our sins. He was the perfect sacrifice of atonement for us all. In fact, there are three places in the Bible where Christ is called the “propitiation”. This is a word seldom used, if ever, in modern English. It comes to us from the Latin word *propitiatus*, and means something that appeases or conciliates a deity. In this article, we will take a closer look at the words translated “propitiation” to see their relationships in the Bible, and how they are surprisingly linked to the Old Testament’s “mercy seat”.

The mercy seat itself was the lid, or golden plate, that covered the Ark of the Covenant and its contents. Its placement is emphasized in the Bible, for it lay above, and covered, the testimony placed within the Ark, namely, Moses’ tablets of stone and the accompanying scrolls. This placement is referred to five times in the Book of Exodus, and a total of seven times throughout the Word of God. We are also told that the Ark of the Covenant, with the mercy seat, was placed in the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, first in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. In I Chronicles 28:11 and 12, the importance of this placement in the Temple is stated where David gave his son, Solomon, the pattern concerning “...the place of the mercy seat,....” This information had been received “...by the spirit,....”

The Hebrew word used for “mercy seat” is *kapporeth*. This word is used only concerning the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. It derives from the Hebrew root *kaphar*, which is a verb that means “to cover”. *Kapporeth*, a noun, simply means a cover or, literally, a lid. There is also a figurative usage of this noun in which it refers to the repayment of a debt. This is similar to a figurative expression we use in America today. When speaking of a person paying for a group’s meal at a restaurant, we say that he is “covering” the check. This meaning is important because it relates to the significance of the blood of the sacrifices of atonement sprinkled upon the mercy seat by Israel’s high priests.

In Exodus 30:10, God commanded, “And Aaron [Israel’s first high priest] shall make an

atonement...once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.” In Leviticus 16, we are told the manner in which this atonement was to be performed. A young bullock (a castrated bull or ox) was to be used for the sin offering for the high priest, and a goat was then used for the sin offering for the people.

### **Leviticus 16:14 and 15**

*And he [the high priest] shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.*

*Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:*

This shows us that the mercy seat was the *place* where the act of atonement occurred. This is verified in the Greek Old Testament, as well, where the word *hilasterion*, “place of atonement”, is translated “mercy seat”. In the New Testament, this Greek word is used only twice. It is rendered “mercyseat” (a single word in the King James Version) in Hebrews 9:5, where it forms part of a description of what was inside the Holy of Holies. The second use is in Romans 3:25, where *hilasterion* is translated “propitiation”. “Whom [Jesus Christ] God hath set forth”, it reads, “to be a propitiation [*hilasterion*] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;....” This verse in Romans is the only place *hilasterion*, which is equivalent to the Hebrew word *kapporeth* (mercy seat), is translated “propitiation”. To be in harmony with the rest of the Scriptures, the word in Romans 3:25 should be rendered “mercy seat”, the *place* where the blood of the sacrifice was offered to, and accepted by, the Almighty. Another form of this Greek word, *hilasmos*, is used in I John 2:2 and 4:10, where it is translated “propitiation”, meaning “an

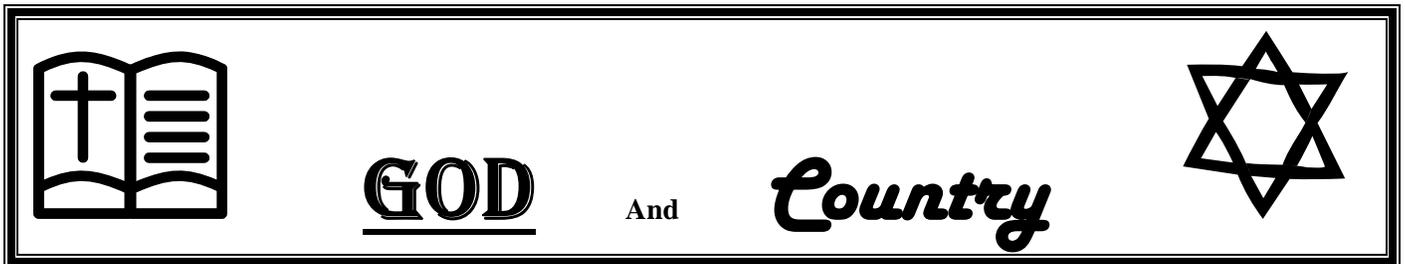
atonement sacrifice". Not only was the Lord Jesus Christ the "propitiation", or atoning sacrifice for our sins, according to the verses in I John, but Romans, the foundational epistle for the Church Age, declares Him to be a "mercy seat", the actual *place* where the shed blood was presented before the Lord God.

Regarding Jesus Christ as the actual *place* where the sprinkled blood was offered up to God, the Bible contains other insights that will enlighten our understanding. For example, Ephesians 2:15 states that Christ "...abolished in his flesh [IN HIS FLESH] the enmity...", the hostile separation between God and men. Because His sinless, shed blood was worthy of acceptance, the chasm between God and humanity no longer exists for those who acknowledge the finished work. I Peter 2:24 adds to Ephesians' message when it declares, "Who [Jesus Christ] his own self bare our sins in his own body [IN HIS OWN BODY] on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." We see from these and other similar verses that the Lord Jesus was not only the sacrifice, but He was physically, and actually, the *place* of atonement, that which "covered" the holy testimonies, thus He paid the debt in full.

There is more to the relationship between Jesus Christ and the mercy seat than the sacrifice of atonement. Exodus 25:22, regarding the mercy seat, states, "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat,...of all things which I will give thee in commandment..." God made Himself known and communed with man in the place made for the blood of atonement. Likewise, God reveals Himself to us today (Where?) in Jesus Christ, our mercy seat. God openly communes with His people through Christ Who lives within us (Col. 1:27), through the ascended Lord, Who is even now beyond the veil, in the true Holy of Holies in Heaven. How invigorating it is to see the detail and depth of God's Word, and to walk in its greatness.\*

*(Mr. Keith Jamison has been a student of the Scriptures for many years. For the last two years, he has served as the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department. He is also a regular contributor to the Clarion, developing material for the "From The Research Department" and "Investigating Creation Science" columns.)*

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*(Continuing in this installment of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, and appearing in every summer and winter issue, "GOD And Country", featuring our editor-in-chief, Rick Heeter, will explore the Judeo-Christian heritage of America and her social and political institutions. Through this running commentary, we will discover where we came from as a people, and how we can preserve our unique cultural identity and the liberties it fosters.)*

## “America’s ‘Christ-bearer’ ”

*by Rick Heeter*

**N**O MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, European society in the mid-1400s was a steaming caldron of well-set traditions roughly colliding with alarming, new ideas and concepts. Indeed, it was an era of recalcitrant stagnation on the one hand, and new, invigorating possibilities on the other. There were those who sincerely believed that holding fast to traditional ways would prevent social fragmentation, and others who held that emerging,

new ideas would propel mankind toward some greater purpose.

In the very midst of these cultural extremes, Christopher (which actually means “Christ-bearer”) Columbus was born. Although most of us living today hold certain ideas about historical characters, ideas bred into us by our schooling and upbringing, these notions often tend to mask the reality behind the name. When it comes to Columbus, we probably

know him as well as we understand George Washington, which isn't saying much.

Born in 1451 in Genoa, a city-state in what is now Italy, Christopher Columbus (or Christophoro Colon in Italian) grew up on the cusp of the developing Renaissance. The printing press was invented while he was a child, and as he grew older, reading material on a host of subjects, both scientific and spiritual, began to spark in him a desire for greater things than the weavers' trade of his father and grandfather. It seems that a blending from both the secular and religious realms was responsible for his two major ambitions: that of finding a more profitable route to the Spice Islands (what we now call the East Indies), and a passion to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to these lands.

Columbus went to sea at an early age, learning the sailors' skills that would serve both his ambitions, however, most of what is taught in our public schools nowadays regarding his motives for making his extraordinary voyages, focuses on a desire for prestige or financial reward. While we acknowledge Columbus' desire to be a success in business, we insist that the suppressed aspects of the historical records be examined.

Contemporaries of Columbus, as well as the man himself, have written in their own words of his obvious Christian beliefs and motives. His own son, Ferdinand, concerning his father, wrote, "...he was a member of Christ, by Whom [Christ] he was sent for the salvation of those people [the Indians]."<sup>1</sup> Columbus, himself, leaves no doubt as to his motives, for they were recorded in the journal he made during his first voyage to the New World. Here are some excerpts from the journal's opening entry that give us a glimpse into this man's soul.

**"In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ...in this present year 1492,...Your Highnesses [King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella], as...Christians and Princes devoted to the Holy Christian Faith and the propagators thereof,...resolved to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the said regions of India, to see the said princes and peoples..., and the manner in which may be undertaken their conversion to our Holy Faith,...."**<sup>2</sup>

This entry alone should be enough to shut the mouths of the revisionist historians, for Columbus' missionary intentions, and those of the Spanish Crown, are unmistakable. In spite of what some modern historians think, many of whom take the separation of church and state doctrine to the

extreme, there is much documentation concerning the Christian convictions of Columbus and others like him, whose beliefs helped form the developing New World cultures.

On the very day he first made landfall in the Americas, Columbus wrote in his journal regarding the native inhabitants he had just met, saying, "...I knew that they were a people who could be better freed and converted to our Holy Faith by love than by force,...."<sup>3</sup> Despite evidence like this, our modern society seems to blame Columbus for every ill that subsequently befell Native Americans.

Part of Columbus' entry for November 6, 1492 reads, "...I hope in Our Lord that Your Highnesses [Ferdinand and Isabella] will do something..., in order to turn to the Church so numerous a folk, and to convert them...to...the holy Christian religion,...."<sup>4</sup> Entry after entry reads in this way, and though the manner of expression may seem to us to be formal and archaic, the meaning of the words is clear.

We will take a more detailed look at the expeditions of Christopher Columbus in order to further verify his beliefs and motivations, and we'll do so by examining his own words and those of people who knew him. His contributions to modern American society are so profound that his first voyage, at least, merits closer scrutiny. Please plan to join us in the next winter issue of the *Clarion* as we continue our investigation into the life of this "Christ-bearer", and our quest to uncover the Biblical roots of America.\*

#### **Endnotes:**

- 1) Columbus, Ferdinand; *The Life Of The Admiral Christopher Columbus*; translated by Keen, Benjamin; Rutgers University Press; New Brunswick, N. J. (1959); pp. 4 and 5.
- 2) Morison, Samuel Eliot; *Journals & Other Documents On The Life & Voyages Of Christopher Columbus*; Heritage Press; New York, N. Y. (1963); pp. 47 and 48.
- 3) *Ibid.*; Morison; p. 65.
- 4) *Ibid.*; Morison; p. 91.

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*(Mr. Rick Heeter is a long-time student of the Word of God, as well as American History. He is presently the editor-in-chief, book reviewer, and a columnist for The Ryburn Christian Clarion.)*

*\*Articles and columns submitted to The Ryburn Christian Clarion are edited to ensure correct spelling and punctuation, proper grammar, and clarity of expression.*

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