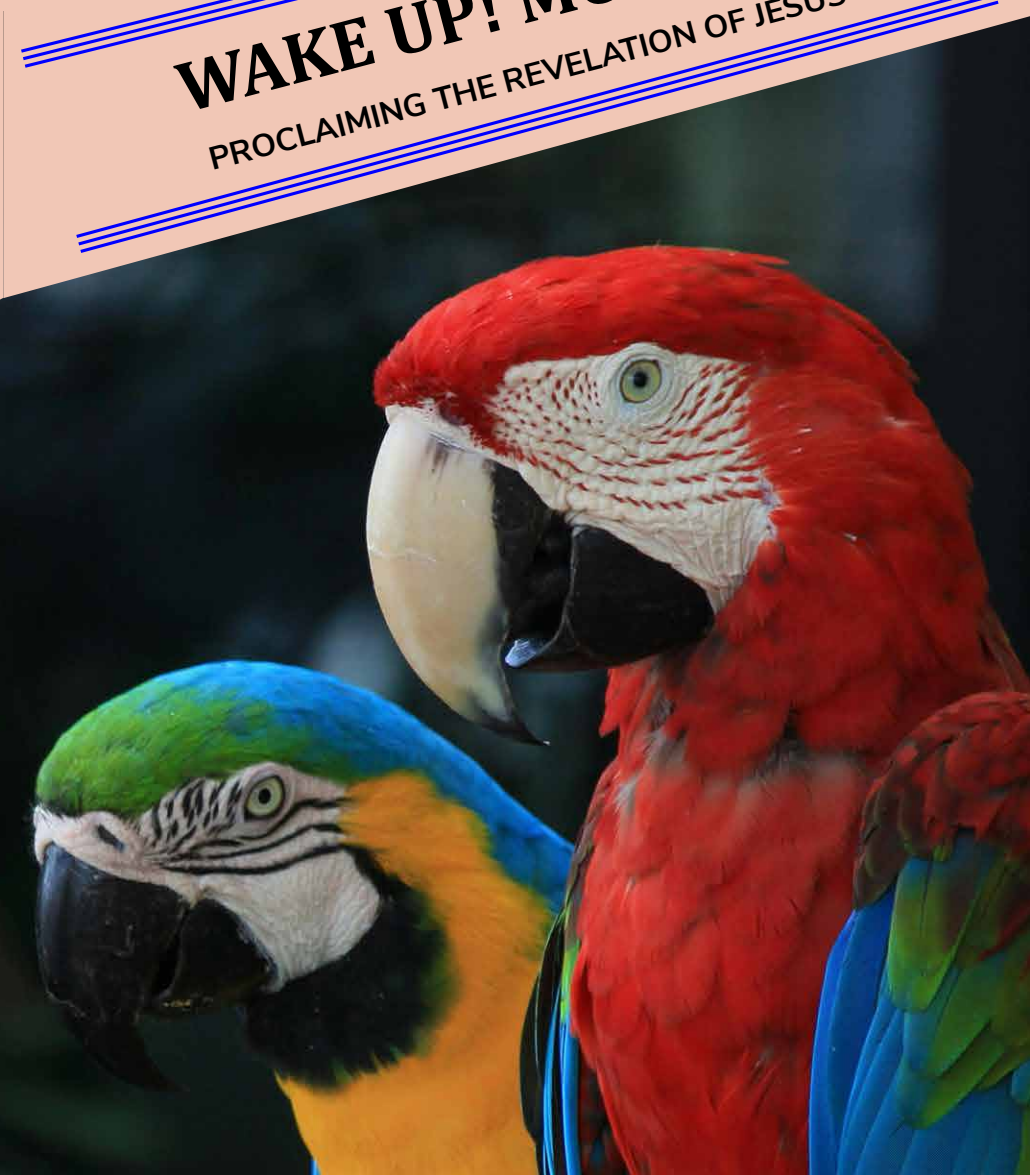


May 2024

WAKE UP! MONTHLY

PROCLAIMING THE REVELATION OF JESUS



Wake Up
America
Seminars

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Fishing for Souls

Dear Wake Up Family,

This month, we are reprinting an article that Larry wrote over two decades ago, which is just as relevant today as when he wrote it. I made some modifications to the article which are identified by a different font.

- Marty

Ancient Proverb —

“As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.” (Ecclesiastes 9:12)

All living creatures experience hunger. This fact is important to fishermen because they know that fish can be caught through their need for food. Those who fish for the sport of it, use devices called *lures* that smell and look like food to attract hungry fish. Of course, trouble begins for the fish when driven by hunger, it swallows the lure. It is too late when the fish discovers the lure is not edible. Even worse, the nasty barbed hook hidden within the lure won't let go. It's the ultimate sting operation. The fish is tempted to swallow something that ultimately terminates its life.

Fishermen want to know *when and where* fish like to feed. They spend hours discussing this topic because they can save a lot of time and increase their joy by going where fish are known to thrive. When a fisherman hooks a fish, he is inspired to keep fishing even if the fish is too little to eat.

Of course, the bigger the catch, the greater the pleasure. When a fish resists the hook, fishermen love that, too. They enjoy wearing the fish down through fatigue and after a while, the fish gives up the struggle and submits to its captor. Such is the sport of fishing, and it has a very painful parallel.

Human beings share some similarities with fish. We, too, are driven by hunger. People have appetites for money, pleasure, sex, food, knowledge, fame, and position. Our adversary, the devil, and his demons are expert fishermen. They have carefully studied our appetites and ways, and they know where and when to prey on our basic needs to *lure* us into sin.

The devil's demons have a beautiful lure for every hunger, and each lure has a nasty barbed hook hidden within it. Unlike the fishing sportsman, demons do not throw the small "fries" back in the water to mature. The devil and his demons play for keeps. They intend to cause permanent injury whenever possible.

The devil wants to trash our self-respect. He loves to humiliate and diminish us through guilt and make us feel like garbage. He wants us to loathe ourselves as he loathes himself. The devil hooks his victims with the painful consequences of sin *just for the fun of it* and he enjoys wearing his victims down with their addictions to sin. A *big fish* now and then really makes the devil happy. When a notorious person falls into a scandal, the devil and his demons jump for joy! Demons are dispatched throughout the world with a tackle box full of lures to catch the unsuspecting, and they rarely return without a catch. They are good, very good fishermen.

Jesus also fishes for souls, but in a different way. He uses lures *without hooks* to catch people for the Kingdom of God. His most beautiful lure is love. That is what He used to call His first disciples. **"As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him."** (Matthew 4:18–22) Think about the love Jesus must have exhibited to cause four fishermen to drop everything—their nets, boats, livelihoods, and families—to follow someone whom they had just met. To love and be loved is a basic need within the human being. This is why the gospel of Christ is encased in a story of God's great love for man.

If God's love and the sacrifice of Jesus do not touch your heart, your heart is too full of self to respond to love. Another lure Jesus uses is the *lure of truth and integrity*. People who love truth and integrity find the gospel of Jesus deeply interesting and attractive. Truth sets us free from the darkness of ignorance, and

integrity brings joy to our lives. Many people do not love truth and integrity. This was the case when Jesus was on earth. Jesus explained the ways of God to His listeners, but His explanations were so different and so odd that few people could accept them.

Those who loved truth and integrity saw awesome beauty in His words, while the others heard awful blasphemy. Jesus also uses the *lure of rescue* to reach people who are hurting. Some people are not attracted to Jesus until their lives are in such a hopeless mess that they need to be saved from their present circumstances.

In short, the Kingdom of God will one day be filled with an odd group of people – people who were lured by God’s love, people who were lured by truth, people who were lured by God’s integrity and righteousness, and people who will be filled with gratitude for all that God has done for them. Jesus, the Fisherman of Galilee, will show His catch to the Father with a great big smile!

Jesus said, **“The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”** (Matthew 13:47-50)

Jesus said, **“And do not call anyone on earth “father”, for you have one Father, and he is in Heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah.”** (Matthew 23:9–10)

Between AD 538 and 1798, the clergy of the Catholic Church lorded “divine authority” over the nations of Europe with three false doctrines. First, the pope claimed to be the appointed successor of Peter and, as such, had the highest position on Earth. The church claimed that God spoke through the pope (this is how the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope came about).

Second, the clergy claimed that Christ had given Peter and his successors “keys of the kingdom.” This meant that in matters of salvation, the eternal destiny of each person was determined by

the pope or a duly appointed priest. Third, the Church taught that if a person did not receive the sacraments, there was no hope of salvation. The Church aggressively defended these doctrines with distortions of Scripture, especially the words of Jesus.

Consider this text: **“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’**

“They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’

“ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’

“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’

“Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’” (Matthew 16:13–19)

Jesus queried the disciples about His identity to teach the disciples two lessons. When Peter said, **“You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God,”** Jesus blessed the young man by saying, **“Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah.”**

Jesus used Peter’s formal name because He was about to use Simon’s surname to make a profound point. While Peter’s words were still reverberating in their ears, *Jesus contrasted Peter’s humanity with His divinity.* Jesus said, “I tell you that you are *petros*.” (The Greek word *petros* is transliterated “Peter,” but it means rock or pebble.) Then, I believe, as Jesus paused until every disciple was looking at Him, He pointed to Himself and said, “and on this *Petra* [Greek: *petra*, a huge rock] I will build my church.” The disciples understood the contrast.

Jesus was the vine, and they were the branches. (John 15:5) The Son of the living God who stood in their presence was the “*Petra*” of the Old Testament. (Genesis 49:24; Deuteronomy 32:4, 15; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 18:31; 1 Corinthians 10:4) The disciples were inspired by this truth.

The church of Christ would succeed because it would be founded on Jesus and sustained by His eternal power. The distinction between the pebble, *petros*, and The Rock of Ages, *petra*, was unmistakably clear. (Contrary to Catholic doctrine, there is no evidence in the New Testament indicating the disciples considered the church to be built upon Peter or his successors.)

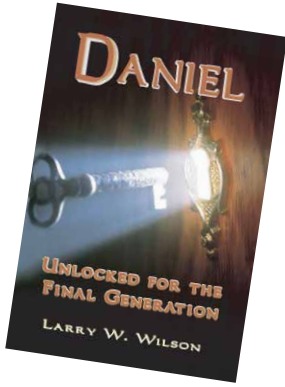
Jesus continued by teaching His disciples a second lesson. Jesus would give His disciples the keys of the kingdom. Jesus said, whatever you “loose” or “bind” on Earth will be loosed or bound in Heaven. What did Jesus mean? The *keys of the kingdom* is a phrase that means *responsibility*.

If you give the keys your car keys to someone, they receive the benefit of using your car, but they also receive a serious responsibility. The message is simple. Jesus promised the disciples they would have the privilege of making the day-to-day decisions that would be necessary to advance the gospel throughout the Earth.

He also assured them that He would honor their decisions in Heaven. Of course, there is an implied responsibility. Jesus would go along with their decisions if they followed the leading of the Holy Spirit and built upon the “Rock.” The terms to “bind” or to “loose” mean to “approve or disapprove.” (Isaiah 22:20–23, Revelation 3:7) Jesus did not give the disciples authority to determine the eternal destiny of anyone. The responsibility of judgment is not transferable. It belongs to the Lamb who redeemed us. **“The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.”** (John 5:22–23) Christ alone will judge all of us. **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”** (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Jesus calls us to follow Him, continually search for truth, and recognize that He provides the foundation for His church. Ultimately, Jesus is our lure for salvation, the savior from our destruction, the rock of His church, and the judge of our destiny. Isn't it wonderful that His lure of love draws us to Him and, if we allow Him to live within us, provides the keys of His kingdom?

Daniel – Unlocked for the Final Generation



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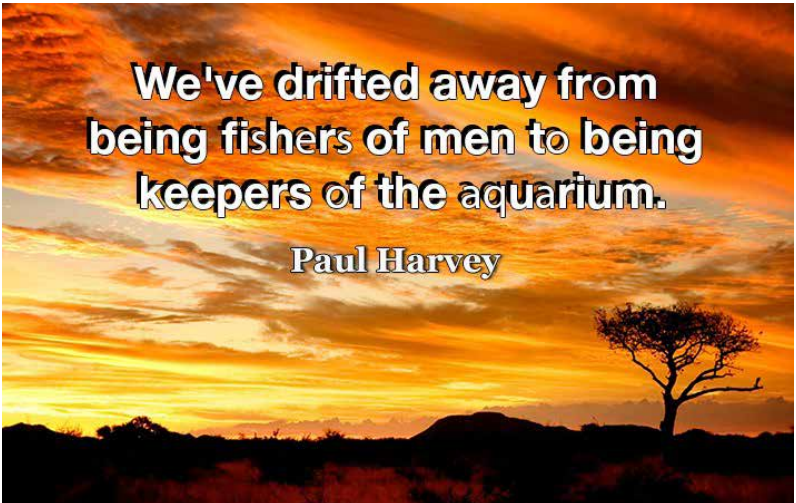
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Quote of the Month

**We've drifted away from
being fishers of men to being
keepers of the aquarium.**

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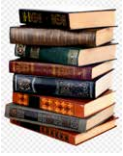
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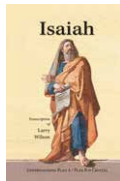
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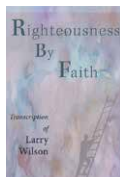
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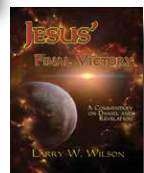
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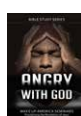
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- #24 – *Daniel – A Test of Loyalty* (30)





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- #27 – *Gideon – Reluctant Warrior* (35)





#34 – *Predestination vs. Free Will* (40)


- #28 – *Elijah the Tishbite* (30)





#35 – *Once Saved – Always Saved* (40)


- #29 – *Saul – Good Heart Wrong Head* (28)

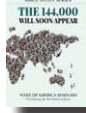



#36 – *The Properties of Faith* (35)


- #30 – *John the Baptizer* (35)

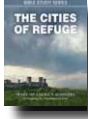



#37 – *The 144,000 Will Soon Appear* (38)


- #31 – *Pilate's Judgment* (45)





#38 – *The Cities of Refuge* (38)


- #32 – *Noah and the Pig Pen* (45)





#39 – *Protestant Protests* (35)


- #33 – *Moses and the Mark* (40)





#40 – *When God Breaks His Silence* (35)


- #34 – *Predestination vs. Free Will* (40)





#41 – *What Must I Do to be Saved* (30)


- #35 – *Once Saved – Always Saved* (40)




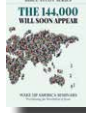
#42 – *Is Sin Forgiven?* (30)


- #36 – *The Properties of Faith* (35)

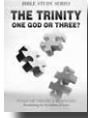


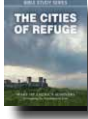
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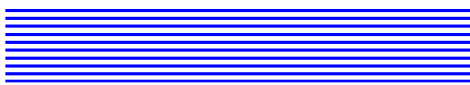


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