

September 2025

WAKE UP! MONTHLY

PROCLAIMING THE REVELATION OF JESUS



Wake Up
America
Seminars

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Lost, While Believing You're Safe

Dear Wake Up Family:

On 22 March 1978, I watched Karl Wallenda, the tight-rope walker, lose his balance and fall ten stories to his death as he attempted to walk across a high wire strung between two towers in San Juan, Puerto Rico. I was fourteen then, but have never forgotten that television program or the visual of that man falling. I subsequently remember hearing that he had refused to wear a safety lanyard because he was sure he would be safe. How sad for his family.

Have you ever been confident that you were right but been wrong? I have. The Bible specifically speaks of a people who believe they're saved yet really aren't. It says about them, **"Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'"** (Matthew 7:21–23)

Isn't that pitiable? Lost, believing you're saved.

What does it mean to be lost or saved? Since Adam and Eve sinned, each generation has inherited the terrible tendency to sin. Sinning seems to be as easy as breathing. It comes so naturally that, many times, we don't even have to think about it. It's just our natural inclination. And since this carnal nature is bestowed upon us at birth, how can we ever live in heaven? If we are to live with Jesus, we need a different nature—a new, born-again one. Jesus said, **"I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."** (John 3:3) I take this to mean that there isn't any other way to live in heaven than by being a natural-born citizen. Birth tourism doesn't work there.

Now, how can we tell whether we're born again or not? The tell-tale sign is, if we've been born again, we'll have this new nature.

A nature that is noticeably different than the old one. The Bible says, **“Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”** (2 Corinthians 5:17) When we’re born again, our likes and dislikes change—drastically. But for me, that process happened in baby steps so gradual that I didn’t even realize it had happened. One morning I woke up and it dawned on me that I didn’t do, or want to do, things I used to anymore.

Now, understand, this rebirth is a matter of surrender. We can’t make ourselves born again. The conversion is the result of the desire to change and the faith that God will somehow make it happen. This is what it means to *believe*. This type of believing is far deeper than the words, *“I believe in Jesus Christ.”* Words are cheap. It’s the action of persistently following through that speaks louder than mere words could ever do.

Paul told the Ephesians, **“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”** (Ephesians 2:8–9) Many people miss the transforming principle of those verses, which is that the very faith through which we are saved is a gift, not something we can manufacture. Only God can do the transforming. Our role is to be willing. Paul assured the Romans that **“Faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.”** (Romans 10:17)

He also quizzed the Galatians, **“Does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ. In the same way, ‘Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.’ The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.”** (Galatians 3:5–7) Sensing, then following the Holy Spirit’s impress, builds faith. It’s something tangible we can experience in our everyday lives, just as Abraham did. And it’s this active willingness that becomes a permanent part of the *“going, being,*

and doing” walk of faith. At least that’s been my experience.

Earlier, I mentioned being saved or lost. Now I need to address what it means to believe. When you think of John 3:16, what does it really mean to believe? The reason I ask is, James brought that same question to bear on early Christians when he said, **“You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.”** (James 2:19) Yet, demons aren’t going to be saved. And the reason is, they believe but don’t obey. They chose not to submit. They refused to obey the Spirit’s nagging. The Bible says that **“He will come with his mighty angels...bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey.”** (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8) This is the difference between living by faith and rebellion. Now, for Lucifer’s angels, it’s too late. Their chance for salvation has passed.

When the harmony between believing and obeying is demonstrated in one’s life, then, and only then, do we qualify as real Christians. But, as already mentioned, some people rebel. They don’t want to consent to obeying God or keeping His commandments. The glaring question then is, how can God fill our minds and hearts if we won’t relinquish control?

2 Timothy 2:15 says, **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”** The Devil wants to keep us so absorbed with worldly things that we neglect study and prayer. The consequence is that God can’t reach our hearts or minds.

I mentioned earlier that knowing whether we’re saved or not is an intriguing question. And some of the most fertile ground for being deceived on this matter lies in the no-man’s-land between feeling and faith. Many people rely on excitement or emotional exuberance as the meter for measuring their state of salvation. Truly, this can’t be a good measure, because if one’s feelings aren’t stimulated enough, the experience is disregarded. Furthermore, salvation is a matter of decision, not enthusiasm. Being revved up isn’t living by faith, it’s merely being excited about religion. True

Christianity is a long walk. And sometimes it's hard. But when we love Jesus, we yearn to be like Him and anxiously await His return. And the hope of His return affects our entire life.

So, once we make the life-changing decision to follow Jesus, how long does it take to be saved? Well how long did it take for Zacchaeus to climb down from the sycamore tree in Luke 19? Here was a dishonest and despised tax collector who helped himself to other people's money. But after meeting Jesus while sitting in that fig tree, by the time Zacchaeus climbed down, he was a changed man. The Bible says that as soon as his feet touched the ground, he offered to give half his property to the poor and restore fourfold what he had stolen. This is what true conversion looks and feels like. It is what a changed life does in real life. And if a tax collector can be changed and saved, anybody on this planet has a chance. Even politicians.

How do I know Zacchaeus' conversion was real? Because Jesus confirmed it when he said, **"Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham."** (Luke 19:9) Anyone can be changed in a moment by yielding wholeheartedly to Christ. And it's as simple as falling out of a tree!

Now, there is a hard part to this process. When we are born again, we need to grow up. We must grow up or we'll die. That's true for this life and the next. There must be growth or there will be death. It only takes a moment to be born again, but as long as we live, we must continue to grow more like Jesus. This is the original *Mission Impossible*. We can't do this on our own. It can only be done with Jesus by our side.

Many people have been born again, but they haven't grown in their Christian walk. They are dead. The pity of it is, some of them are dead and don't realize it. One symptom of this dead condition is to bask in some past experience. Some people who claim to be saved, see it as a onetime event—something that happened in the past. But it isn't what we did in the past that is going to get us to heaven. Notice what the Lord said through Ezekiel.

“When righteous people turn from their righteous behavior and start doing sinful things, they will die for it. Yes, they will die because of their sinful deeds. And if wicked people turn from their wickedness, obey the law, and do what is just and right, they will save their lives. They will live because they thought it over and decided to turn from their sins. Such people will not die.” (Ezekiel 18:26–28)

In Jesus’ day, there was no cure for leprosy. So Jesus often used the dreaded disease to illustrate the effects of sin upon one’s soul. Mark 1 contains a vivid story of one such miraculous account. As you read the next paragraph, imagine the terrifying experience it must have been to be pronounced a leper, and to realize there was no cure for this monster of a disease.

“A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. ‘If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean,’ he said. Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be healed!’ Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. Then Jesus sent him on his way with a stern warning: ‘Don’t tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed.’ But the man went and spread the word, proclaiming to everyone what had happened.” (Mark 1:40–45)

Did you catch the part where as soon as Jesus spoke, the leprosy instantly vanished? Once the man made the decision to ask, he was immediately made whole again. That story is a demonstration of the saving power of Jesus. How long does it take to be saved? The answer is, no longer than it takes to ask. One moment we are lost, the next we have the assurance of being saved. That’s the way it worked for the thief on the cross. One moment he was a hopeless sinner, the next moment he was assured salvation. That can be our experience too.

I believe it was Morris Venden who once said that, *“When I look at myself, I don’t see how I can be saved. But when I look at what*

Christ has done, I don't see how I can be lost." Think about that for a moment. The offer has been made. His promise guarantees its realization. It's down to us to decide.

Rex

Quote of the Month

"A farmer who is too tender-hearted to tear up and harrow the land will never see a harvest. Here is the failing of certain divines, they are afraid of hurting anyone's feelings, and so they keep clear of all the truths which are likely to excite fear or grief. They have not a sharp ploughshare on their premises, and are never likely to have a stack in their rickyard. They angle without hooks for fear of hurting the fish, and fire without bullets out of respect to the feelings of the birds. This kind of love is real cruelty to men's souls. It is much the same as if a surgeon should permit a patient to die because he would not pain him with the lancet, or by the necessary removal of a limb. It is a terrible tenderness which leaves men to sink into hell rather than distress their minds. It is pleasant to prophesy smooth things, but woe unto the man who thus degrades himself. Is this the spirit of Christ? Did he conceal the sinner's peril? Did he cast doubts upon the unquenchable fire and the undying worm? Did he lull souls into slumber by smooth strains of flattery? Nay, but with honest love and anxious concern he warned men of the wrath to come, and bade them repent or perish. Let the servant of the Lord Jesus in this thing follow his Master, and plough deep with a sharp ploughshare, which will not be balked by the hardest clods. This we must school ourselves to do. If we really love the souls of men, let us prove it by honest speech. The hard heart must be broken, or it will still refuse the Saviour who was sent to bind up the broken-hearted. There are some things which men may or may not have, and yet may be saved; but those things which go with the ploughing of the heart are indispensable; there must be a holy fear and a humble trembling before God, there must be an acknowledgment of guilt and a penitent petition for mercy; there must, in a word, be a thorough ploughing of the soul before we can expect the seed to bring forth fruit.

— Charles Spurgeon



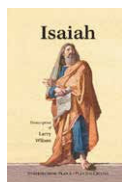
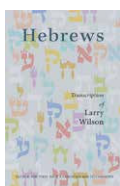
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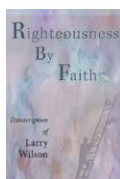
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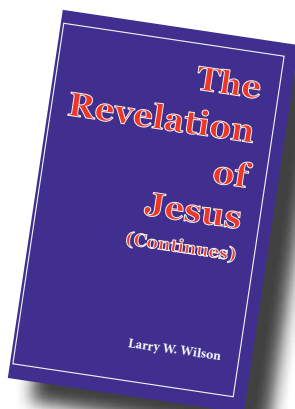
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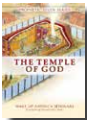
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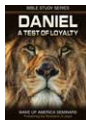
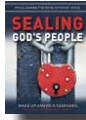
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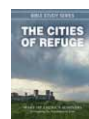
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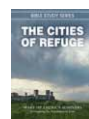
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