

Bible study for this week 2/23/09~3/01/09

***February 23 (Monday), 2009** { [Ephesians 4:7~16](#) } Key: You also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22) “**Built To Last**” Bible In One Year: [Numbers 7~8; Mark 4:21~41](#)

When explorers entered Peru, they found huge, impressive buildings that may have been standing for 2,000 years. These ancient Inca structures were built of hand-hewn rocks of different sizes and shapes. Some were 3-sided, some 4-sided, and some 7-sided. Without the use of mortar, they were fitted together so perfectly that they stood for many centuries, even through earthquakes.

God builds His church in much the same way. The Bible pictures the church of Jesus Christ as a building, and each believer is a block in that building. Peter said that we, “as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). And Paul said that we are “being joined together” (Ephesians 2:21) and “are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (v.22).

People with a variety of backgrounds, abilities, interests, and needs make up Christ’s church, so uniting in a common purpose is not an easy process. Yet when we let the Lord do His work among us, shaping us and assigning our place in the structure, we become part of a strong, solid edifice.

Yes, we are all different. But God is building an enduring church. The magnificent Inca buildings will eventually crumble, but the church is built to last.

Meditate: Christ builds His church with different stones And makes each one secure; All shapes and sizes fit in place To make His church endure.

Aphorism: The permanence of the church is based on the character of the Builder.

***February 24 (Tuesday), 2009** { [Matthew 7:1~12](#) } Key: God will bring every work into judgment . . . whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:14) “**When To Judge**” Bible In One Year: [Numbers 9~11; Mark 5:1~20](#)

Many people believe that Christians are told never to judge others. As “proof,” they quote Jesus’ words in Matthew 7: “Judge not, that you be not judged” (v.1). But a closer look at what Jesus said shows that there are times when we must make judgments.

In verses 1 to 5, Jesus warned us how easy it is to be blind to our own faults while we pick at the faults of others. In verse 6, however, He showed us the necessity of judging. He told us, “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”

To follow Jesus’ teaching, we must learn the difference between judging people and evaluating situations. But who among us is wise enough to consider any situation without condemning or judging the persons involved? That is why, in verses 7 to 11, we are told to earnestly ask, seek, and implore help from our heavenly Father. “Your Father who is in heaven [will] give good things to those who ask Him” (v.11).

Whenever we must make judgments, we must prayerfully bear in mind that our God is the one who “will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Meditate: If you are called upon to judge— A situation to discern, Don’t shy away when duty calls, But to God’s Word for wisdom turn.

Aphorism: The righteous Judge gives discernment to those who ask Him.

***February 25 (Wednesday), 2009** { [Hebrews 3](#) } Key: We have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. (Hebrews 3:14) “**Look**

Back”Bible In One Year: [Numbers 12~14; Mark 5:21~43](#)

What was wrong with the ancient Israelites? Why did they have such trouble trusting God? In Hebrews 3, we’re reminded that they heard God’s promise yet refused to believe. I think I know why—we have the same problem today.

God provided for the people on their desert march. They would be satisfied and happy for a while, but then a new crisis would arise. They would stare ahead at their wall of trouble, become frightened, and lose faith.

Before Moses went up the mountain to get instructions from God, the Israelites had recently defeated the Amalekites. Things were going fine. But when Moses stayed on the mountain too long, the people panicked.

Instead of looking back and recalling that God could be trusted, they looked ahead and saw nothing but the possibility of a leaderless future. So they sought to create “gods that shall go before us” (Exodus 32:1). Their trust was blocked by a fear of the future when it could’ve been solidified with a simple look back at God’s deliverance.

Likewise, our obstacles appear huge. We need to look back and reassure ourselves by recalling what God has already done on our behalf. That backward look can give us forward confidence.

Meditate: I have learned to love my Savior, And I trust Him more each day; For no matter what the trial, He will always be my stay.

Aphorism: Fear hinders faith, but trust kindles confidence.

***February 26 (Thursday), 2009** { [Daniel 1:1~6](#) } Key: Let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up. (Daniel 3:18) “**Shine On!**” Bible In One Year: [Numbers 15~16; Mark 6:1~29](#)

Ashpenaz, a high court official in ancient Babylon, was committed to banishing any testimony of Israel’s God from his kingdom. His strategy focused on young leadership from the captive Hebrews. Ashpenaz gave the captives new names to honor the pagan gods of Babylon. This made sense to him, because their original Hebrew names honored their God (Daniel 1:6).

But the life choices of those captives were a far more powerful witness than any label put on them. When faced with a literal trial by fire, the young men would not bow down and worship the golden idol. Instead, they accepted the punishment of being cast into the fiery furnace—confident in God’s sovereignty and care (ch.3).

Do you know unbelievers who try to pressure you to fit in with their lifestyle? If you don’t party with them, follow a questionable business practice, or laugh at an offensive joke, do you get the cold shoulder? People may even call you names because you won’t run with their crowd. But when you’re rejected because of your loyalty to God, you can live in a way that honors the Father.

It doesn’t matter what others call us. How we live our lives before God does. What’s important is that we always let our light shine.

Meditate: Never mind what others call you—God alone knows every heart; Character is all that matters— Lord, to us this grace impart.

Aphorism: A small light can dispel great darkness.

***February 27 (Friday), 2009** { [Deuteronomy 33:26~29](#) } Key: The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. (Deuteronomy 33:27) “**Everlasting Arms**” Bible In One Year: [Numbers 17~19; Mark 6:30~56](#)

After a pre-concert rehearsal in New York City's Carnegie Hall, Randall Atcheson sat on stage alone. He had successfully navigated the intricate piano compositions of Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt for the evening program, and with only minutes remaining before the doors opened, he wanted to play one more piece for himself. What came from his heart and his hands was an old hymn by Elisha Hoffman: *What have I to dread, what have I to fear, Leaning on the everlasting arms? I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, Leaning on the everlasting arms.* Those words echo the truth in the final blessing of Moses: "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:26~27).

What a gift we have in our own arms and hands—they can swing a hammer, hold a child, or help a friend. But while our strength is limited, God's boundless power on our behalf is expressed in might and gentle care. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save" (Isaiah 59:1). "He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isaiah 40:11).

Whatever challenge or opportunity we face, there is security and peace in His everlasting arms.

Meditate: What deep friendship, what joyful, lean on the main Jesus' arm forever, how safe, what good fortune, lean on the main Jesus' arm forever.

Aphorism: The heavenly Father's arms never tire of holding His children.

***February 28 (Saturday), 2009** { [Psalm 145:14~21](#) } Key: Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16) "**Equal Access**" Bible In One Year: [Numbers 20~22; Mark 7:1~13](#)

Pastor Stuart Silvester told me of a conversation he had with an acquaintance who frequently flew his small private plane in and out of Toronto International Airport. He asked the pilot if he ever encountered problems taking off and landing a small craft at an airport that was dominated by so many large jets. His friend responded, "My plane may be small, but I have the same rights, the same privileges, and the same access to that airport as anyone else—even the jumbo jets!"

Pastor Silvester then made this spiritual application: "It's the same with prayer, with the believer's approach to the throne of grace. No matter who we are or how small we are in comparison with others or how low our station in life, we take a back seat to no one. No one is given priority treatment."

In a world that offers preferential treatment to the wealthy, the famous, and the influential, it's encouraging to know that every child of God has equal access to the Father in heaven. The psalmist said, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145:18).

With that assurance, we can "come boldly to the throne of grace" in prayer, knowing that our loving God will never turn us away.

Meditate: There never is a night or day When God can't hear us as we pray; There is no time, there is no place That we're beyond His love and grace.

Aphorism: Prayer is an open line to heaven.

***March 01 (Sunday), 2009** { [Psalm 31:19-24](#) } Key: You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence. (Psalm 31:20) "**Security**" Bible In One Year: [Numbers 23-25; Mark 7:14-37](#)

A primary school in Japan is testing a system to improve the security of students and also give their parents peace of mind. A radio frequency identification tag carried by each student sends a signal to receivers at school gates, and a computer shows when each student enters or leaves. The system can automatically send an e-mail to notify parents that their children have arrived at school or left for home. In cities where children often commute long distances to school, the system has received high marks from parents, and the kids think it's cool.

In a dangerous world, it's good to remember that our ultimate safety and protection lie in God's hands. David recalled a time when he felt completely cut off from the Lord's help. But he learned that even in desperate situations, God would hide those who fear Him "in the secret place of [His] presence; . . . [He] shall keep them secretly in a pavilion" (Psalm 31:20).

God always knows where we are. There is no place where He does not see our need and hear our cry. "You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried out to You" (v.22).

"Be of good courage," the psalmist concluded, "and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (v.24).

Meditate: Our strength and hope is in the Lord—We rest secure in His sure Word; And though we're tempted to despair, We know we're kept within His care.

Aphorism: No one is more secure than the one who is held in God's hands.