



Let us be ready...



# Faith Horizon

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it

John 1:5

Have you ever gazed up at the blackness of the midnight sky, and marveled at the vastness of outer space? So vast and expansive is the nighttime sky,—nested above the nuts and bolts of every day living, as we wonder at those sprinkles of light (“tiny” stars) dotting the darkness. Yet we know that light, itself, is very important to life. How different our lives would be without it. Why, even the surface of the moon, in some ways, seems sterile & lifeless (as we know it) because even if we step onto its surface its very horizon seems black—even when facing the sun! The surface may shine, but its horizon, above the ground, remains black! That’s because the moon has no atmosphere, as our beloved home on earth does. Here, the air about us, composed of gases that also support life, forms a horizon that causes the sun’s rays to disperse as it enters the atmosphere —lighting up the whole sky!

That’s why I think of our atmosphere as an example of what Christian faith is: you can’t “see” it, but it is there! Also, our atmosphere makes possible natural flight (by birds, for example). This, also, is an example of a living and active faith, for Scripture says that those who wait upon the Lord will be reinvigorated and “*mount up with wings, like eagles . . .*” (Isaiah 40:31)

So in what way does the air spanning our earth’s horizon add a special dimension to the experience of living that, to give a “shine” to the world about us?

It “fills our lungs with hope” (so to speak) as we inhale, and is much like Christian faith: often taken for granted, while offering life and vitality to those who don’t mind being “old fashioned.” (It’s like breathing, that should never “go out of style” :)) And when someone does go beyond the boundary of our atmosphere (like those venturing beyond faith?) – some extra protection is needed to support life. They need to wear a space suit to allow their bodies to function within that “unnatural” environment. Just as we might say that going beyond the horizon of faith is, in many ways unnatural, and even dangerous.

Thus, for Christians, we

( continued . . . )

begin to realize that living and thriving within our earth's atmosphere is a living example (metaphor) of what Scripture means when it says:

*The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:17)*

This UPLOOK we explore what happens when people start to take a life of faith (or flying by faith!) for granted, within an increasingly dangerous and unnatural environment. For life in a "space suit" can only be temporary, at best. And for those who still breathe the natural air, as God designed it? There is the danger of falling asleep at the wheel, as in our first article. [What of the *other* Virgins? ]. Then, we will consider adding something to the mix that some may not consider natural, at all: the simple flight into the *supernatural*—and, as we dare to apply this to Bible prophecy, we notice that the Bible projects this will become corrupted at the end of the age. So then, shall we give up on hoping to fly by faith? Whether you surrender this ability or not, however, there is one aspect of Christian faith that we must *never* surrender. We encounter this "one command" in the second article.

Be blessed in Jesus.



"I never knew you . . ."

**T**here are times when allowing the Bible to speak to us about the world we live in; our future, or the hereafter, leaves us at first feeling wonderfully energized and pleased with ourselves . . . and then, later, after considering what we are learning, amazed at the seriousness of our encounter. Its choice of words, and way of putting things, have a way of making us feel like children sitting around mom at bedtime, for storytelling—while leaving the doctors and clerics dumbfounded and ready to almost burn the Book.

Such is true about a parable that Jesus issued, after describing trends to go before His second coming, as He repeatedly warned about the prospect of deception

## WHAT OF THE OTHER VIRGINS

... without "extra oil"??

*"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*

Matthew 25:1-2

and delusion at the end of the age. There will be awe-struck wonder at His appearing as He sends angels to gather the elect (Matt. 24:20,21)—yet, any way you look at it, the underlying theme of deception does remain disturbing. Jesus is not one to dodge an issue when it comes to warning His own, and He homes in on this subject repeatedly. And then . . . He gives this interesting parable of ten virgins: five wise and five foolish, who are waiting for the bridegroom to appear. There also appears to be a problem as the long awaited appearing is delayed. For while the bridegroom delays the virgins fall off to sleep, until there is a cry at midnight. "Behold, the bridegroom is coming, go out to meet him!" (Matt. 25:6). And it is here that we will put

the story on pause, to allow ourselves to dig into other parts of the Bible in search of answers to questions that often leave Christians scratching their heads, when considering how this parable ends. For five of these virgins do not have a pretty future. To facilitate this search, we are going to pursue two normally sticky questions:

1. Can Christians who are truly God's people, ever place themselves in real spiritual jeopardy, within this world?
2. What is the underlying basis of (what many people refer to as) "eternal security"? Or, put another way, "Just who are the 'elect'?" \*

I know, just when you thought this little parable was getting a bit warm and fuzzy, you wonder if you're actually holding a porcupine! (Not to worry, you need not get "stuck"!)

These are really important questions, however, because we occasionally hear of Christians (and Evangelicals) going "off the deep end" by running off with their secretary (or, much worst). Is there any eternal consequence to such actions? Or, may we simply sweep all of this "under the rug" in the name of grace and civility?

Of course, from the New Testament's point of view, we know of the Lord as is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. The thief (the devil) is always seeking to destroy the sheep (to destroy us)—so the heart of the discussion shifts from sheep cotes and grassy fields to the hearts of women and men whom our Lord loves as He shepherds us from here to Eternity. Nor is the Good Shepherd in any way asleep at the wheel, but very diligent in protecting and guiding of His own. In fact, Jesus has confidently countered His adversaries by giving assurance that those He holds, for eternity, will never be lost. No one, Jesus assured them could . . . no, let us read the passage

for ourselves, shall we?

*<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and My Father are one."*

John 10:27-30

At the time of this pronouncement, you realize, Jesus was a "nobody" to the establishment about Him. His Church had not even been established. No one had heard of Him outside of the small communities in which He was then ministering. Miracle worker or not, the authorities were assuring themselves, Jesus would soon be forgotten as a mere question mark in ancient history. The Caesars, perhaps, would be remembered and the Roman Empire would be touted and wondered over for ages to come, but this simple carpenter's son would soon be forgotten—and His followers?

We would soon be less than nobodies in the pages of antiquity.

Not so, said Jesus, *NOBODY* can pluck His sheep out of His hand. All who believed (and yet today believe) in Him, will be saved and "go in and out" and be taken care of (Jn. 10:9). In another place He would say that the one who came to drink at His well would find an artesian stream springing up from within their very souls: discovering the true "fountain of life" (John 4:14). In fact, in another place Jesus even affirms that those who truly believe in Him "will never die. . . do you believe this?" (John 11:25,26).

This was the context and purpose of Christ's statement that *no one* whom the Father calls into His faithful Service will be lost for eternity. Even within the Great Tribulation, Jesus affirms, these who are the

called ("the elect") would never be deceived by the very Antichrist, himself. Said Jesus to his "sheep:"

*"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. <sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*

Matthew 24:23-24

**S**o of course . . . it is *not possible* to waylay the elect (the chosen ones) because the Father has so decreed it, has He not? For "*My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.*" (Jn. 10:29). But not to be a killjoy; might I ask, who are the elect? (Stay with me, now, DO NOT go to sleep!)

So now let us go back to our virgins. What allowed them to go to sleep at the wheel, pray tell? Was it a bit of overconfidence? Please, this is not a game. I am quite serious. Here, let us take a look at another *sure thing*; a man we are certain was among the elect—and note his attitude towards this issue. Please, cast all bias aside, and stay with me, and the very Word of God, itself. This is the apostle Paul, the man called by Christ Himself, as he was literally knocked from his high-horse to the ground and pressed into gospel service. This man, the apostle Paul, wrote:

*<sup>26</sup> Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.*

*<sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

1 Corinthians 9:26-27

Oh, come on, Paul. It doesn't take all that! Lighten up, brother! Beware, lest you become like a clois-

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\*The "elect" are those whom God knows to be saved (1 Pet. 1:2, Romans 8:29,30).



## HIS NEW COMMANDMENT

When knowing Jesus is “super”

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

John 13:34-35

**B**efore we consider this new commandment unleashed in the New Testament, there is an almost off handed comment made by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians that I find most insightful into revealing the true nature of the Christian faith. It is found in the third chapter, within a context that Martin Luther might have found comforting, Charismatics challenging (and all of us instructive). The comment we are now considering effects how this “new commandment” is to be unleashed within our world for, in truth, Christ’s new command is a very old one\* . . . on steroids.

Paul’s comment comes in the form of a question, and it is this: “Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you **and works miracles among you, does He do it** by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”—oops! That second phrase is the one that would comfort Charismatics: the part bringing comfort to Martin Luther might be found in the very next verse: “just as Abraham *‘believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’*” (Gal. 3:5,6-emphasis added).

It just seems that every time we think we have this Christian life pegged—this issue of God’s su-

pernatural intervention starts to “get in the way.” Why couldn’t Paul have simply said that by “believing” (with our minds) we are made righteous? Why did he also call our attention these brethren who could “work miracles” among them?

Worst, if this assembly that was being mentored by none other than Paul, himself, were so “super”—why speak to them as if they were operating like those of our 20 & 21<sup>st</sup> century, who now act as if the day of miracles has passed, and believe that mere diligence and sweat (& works of the law –vs. 2) are enough?

**Put another way, why did the apostle Paul not simply raise the bar straight into the supernatural,** as a proof of “believing” completely—instead of also couching the whole thing within the context of holy living (and **being made righteous**)? For, within an assembly where the gifts of the Spirit are in evidence (faith, healings, and miracles –1 Cor. 12:9-11) is it not true that the pinnacle of success and of true holiness is made evident by someone experiencing God’s Presence through the supernatural? Not necessarily, and this is a marvel of the Christian experience, if you will: that although God is a supernatural God, and is willing to work in signs and wonders (even today, if we are honest about the matter)—the real pinnacle and goal of the Christian experience is God’s love. For if I have faith to move mountains, but do not have His love, my faith will ring very hollow (1 Cor. 13:1-4).

And I am a failure.

\*The “first commandment” in the Law (Matt.. 22:36-38).

For our success is not found in eating and drinking (or even in simply feeding the hungry) but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 13:2,3, Romans 14:16).

Remember the first day you (re) turned to Jesus? I do, and the joy of simply knowing that He had accepted me so energized my soul that I closed the door to my past (said goodbye to my girlfriend, at the time) and was like a human cannon ball shot out across the horizon. Just to realize that He had accepted me into the fellowship of His saints was so amazing (Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:2)! Miracles? Of course, those would follow, but the chief miracle is having Jesus, Himself!

Yet there is coming a day, much sooner than many are willing to accept, when signs and wonders will become quite “commonplace,” as noted in my new book, and yet . . . such miracles will not necessarily (or in some instances most definitely *not*) indicate that the one working those miracles is in the perfect will of God. Here, let us read this for ourselves, for Paul notes that:

<sup>9</sup> *The coming of the [Antichrist] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,<sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

In other words, just as Egyptian magicians could sometimes mimic (and even duplicate) the miracles of Moses when demanding that Pharaoh let God’s people go free—so too, on the flip side, within the very near future we will soon witness miraculous events that will be used to couch and support *unholy* living, in a manner that will confuse many of those seeking to please God. In fact, towards the close of the New Testament we are warned of this specific challenge in no uncertain terms:

*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.*

2 Timothy 3:8 kjv

Jannes and Jambres were two magicians, within Pharaoh’s court who were able (at first) to compete with Moses and duplicate his miracles (Ex. 7:10-12, 8:16-19). —A reality most disturbing, for Paul here notes that these miracles will be with power (*dunamis*, in the Greek, the same term used to describe what believers are to seek from the *Holy Spirit* – Acts 1:8). **YET THIS IN NO WAY SIGNALS THAT WE SHOULD SHUN, OR CEASE OPERATING in the supernatural, as believers.**

WE are to ever walk  
before God with a  
simple, and child like  
faith ...

THAT WOULD BE  
THROWING OUT THE BABY  
WITH THE BATHWATER!

However. . . neither should we wallow in that (dirty) bathwater (!). Instead, let us continue to pursue **the washing of pure water** by the Word of God (Eph. 5:26). This is true, all the more so today, when reaching into the innermost recesses of our hearts to bring forth a true and honest confession of our dependence upon God.

For while self righteous look to their own efforts, a true child of God admits an utter dependence upon Him—not only for the “miraculous” but for our basic personal worth, and wholeness, as well. As Jesus illustrated:

*“ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God,*

*I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. . . ’*

Such is the activity of the self righteous, no matter their religious affiliation. All of those who would truly get right with God, however, are of a different mind:

*“And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”*

Luke 18:11-13

This man, Jesus said, went home justified (made right with God: vs. 14).

In practice, the apostle Paul admonishes us to, in a real way, continue in this life of personal introspection, humility, and contrition before God—no matter how “mature” we may consider ourselves to be. Thus the disciplines (with fasting, for example) are not to “get God to do something” –but rather to bring our own wills into conformity with His (Ps. 35:13) –allowing the goodness of God to simply lavish His blessings upon us (Lk. 11:9-13). For as Paul enjoins the Colossian church:

*As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

Colossians 2:6-7 [emphasis added]

We are to ever walk before God with a simple, and child like faith, in other words: ever amazed at the wonder of salvation and of the forgiveness God has provided for us at so great a price by giving His own Son to die upon a Cross to pay for our sins. This is the essence of what Christ *commands* us, when saying that we are to love one another, as He has loved us: sacrificially, even at the cost of exalt-

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ing others above ourselves (being willing to die to our own desires, to assist our brethren – Phil. 2:1-4).

This is truly the “super” part of Christian community, and of what once made America, if you will, such a wonderful place to live in: where a righteous love of God and neighbor, prevailed, enveloping new members (immigrants) within its “melting pot. (and why racial segregation was so anathema to the American experience. Please note, however, that sexual orientation is not a “race”! Nor is mere “sex” true love.) Thus, this love of God, self, and neighbor fulfilled Christ’s core benefits of Christian community: abundant living.

*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

John 10:10

Just one point more, for this is a prophetic ministry concerned with the practical side of Bible prophecy. (I am well aware that what you are about to read is most controversial, and that formal groundwork for this following statement has not been laid, however . . .) I do believe that in the series of overlaps\*\* presented within *the Revelation*, the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet (directly before the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet & WW III) presents us with a description of *massive amounts of emotional depression* such as are now being experienced throughout the civilized world.

In defense of this statement I call the reader’s attention to the fact that the “scorpions” from the black cloud erupting from the spirit world, described in Rev. 9:1-3, are given an ability such that:

*In [these] days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.*

Revelation 9:6

Given the fact that these creatures are not allowed to harm the grass, trees, or any green thing (vs. 4) –how can these

scorpions (or devouring locusts that *act* like scorpions) be an ancient description of modern “attack helicopters”? What weapons do our helicopters have, today, that are able to damage persons’ bodies, **but leave both foliage and trees fully in tact?** No, these are spirit beings; producing extreme levels of stress, distress, and anguish: they are demonic, in other words. Nor are the persons being tormented described as being immortal, in any sense of the word; so that it soon becomes obvious that if such persons *seek death* long enough, and that even if death *flees from them* (vs.

these are spirit beings;  
producing extreme  
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anguish (...demonic...)

6) . . . they will eventually catch up with their unsavory prey, and die. (A phenomenon commonly referred to as “suicide.”)

Perhaps we might also call to our attention, an unpleasant truth (to some): that the above Scripture also prefaces this devastation with a statement limiting such activity to only “. . . those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” (Rev. 9:4) –so that, just as some Christians would also question other scriptural promises (such as Isaiah 26:3, for example, where they may question whether God will keep them in “perfect peace” when keeping their focus on Him)—I, for one, prefer to believe God, over theological conjectures that decry these promises!

What has this to do with our discussion, thus far? Only this: that the “super” part of a supernatural life in the Spirit, is not only to be applied towards overt healing of what some would consider “normal” sickness (heart attacks, cancer, HIV Aids, etc.

etc.) but also to “psychological” illness as well. Further, by following our discussion thus far, we may already begin to suspect that the whole of our life experience and true biblical faith, can be surreptitiously (or “secretly”) undermined by simply slurping the “eye candy” and subtle perversions of spirit, soul and body, made so readily available through our media, today.

*For they eat the bread of wickedness, And drink the wine of violence.*

Proverbs 4:17

And as also Jonah confessed, in the belly of the great fish that had devoured him (temporarily):

*They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.*

Jonah 2:8 kjv

In closing, may I propose to you that the King James English, found in the above verses, is quite appropriate for our day? For its “old English” most definitely pegs our flirtation and dalliance with what is perverse among us: polluting our minds and precious imaginations with perverse lies & ideas that may pass by the eye and ear (and be invited into our hearts?) within society today.

—Thus opening us up to those “scorpions” that would sting us, from the *Revelation*: emerging from the vast regions of the dark now circling about us. And this is where we must end our discussion with that discovery found within the very simple but profound teachings of Jesus. For as noted earlier; Christ came to give us life that is *more abundant* (John 10:10)!

It is from this perspective that He issued His one command: to love one another, and it was for this reason that, as He so loved us, He demonstrated His love for us by going to the Cross to pay for our sin.

And then conquered death for us, as He arose from the grave.

\*\* Please see “Endnotes” on the final page.

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## =& the other virgins?=-

tered monk (Jn. 17:15), or repeat the errors that Martin Luther engaged in, before discovering your soul liberating words in the first section of your letter to the Romans, “*the just shall live by faith*” (Romans 1:17). We are

saved by grace through faith, my brother, *not by our works!!*

Yet, it really does appear that the Apostle Paul was ever pressing in, and ever fully focused on the prize before Him. Here, consider another quote. Said Paul of the privilege of enduring persecution; It was his desire to:

*... know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Phil.3:10-11 [emphasis added]

Obviously, since *all* are eventually raised from the dead (Rev. 20:11,12) Paul is here referring to the first resurrection of the redeemed (Rev. 20:4,5). It is with these thoughts in the background, that we now return to our opening text and parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-10). Remember, these are virgins; who represent true believers in Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). Yet, here Jesus firmly warns that as the Bridegroom tarrys (Jesus appears to delay His returning in the clouds —2 Pet. 3:9) . . . all of these virgins doze off to sleep.

Then, Jesus lets us in on a secret: some of the virgins have been exceptionally vigilant, and have extra oil within their supplies (vss. 7&8). In spite of the gathering darkness, and the carelessness of the hour —these were exceptionally diligent in

the daylight hours.

The point that is yet disturbing, however, is this: “sleeping at the wheel” does take its toll. In the end, Jesus warns his hearers, the Bridegroom will return to reward the faithful . . . but the lazy virgins (the ones described as “foolish” – vs. 2 )—miss out. To their credit, they do awaken enough to discover their danger, and head out into the night to try and obtain more oil, so that they might (somehow) again shine for Jesus.

**But acquiring extra oil takes time and diligence;** olive oil requires time and effort in the pressing of the olive, as does the patient endurance needed to persevere through personal trials and tribulation—so that the mature believer somehow glories in tribulation, “*knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us,*” (Romans 5:3-5). —Not very popular stuff, in our microwave generation of instant everything (even human character?).

So now it is too late for these virgins who must discover the truth that purity grows more precious under trial. Later, evidently having learned their lesson, they seek to reapply for admittance.

But, alas, they are too late.

*And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.*

Matthew 25:10

Even so, the foolish virgins still attempt to enter.

*“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to*

*us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”*

Matthew 25:11-12

And here it is that the answer is found for those theologians among us, wishing to unravel the question of how virgins (presumed the “elect”) could not make it in. —They never really were the elect. They only presumed it. Thus, the apostle’s warning to make certain of our calling and election (1 Peter 1:4)!

**B**etter yet, consider the apostle Paul’s advice, made within the exact same context as the parable of the ten virgins (after describing the rapture of the saints, in the prior chapter). Paul enjoins us to *stay awake* in the midnight hour, and do whatever it takes to remain alert and attentive to the Lord’s business when the time of testing arrives. Paul cautions:

*<sup>4</sup> But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. <sup>6</sup> Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup> For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

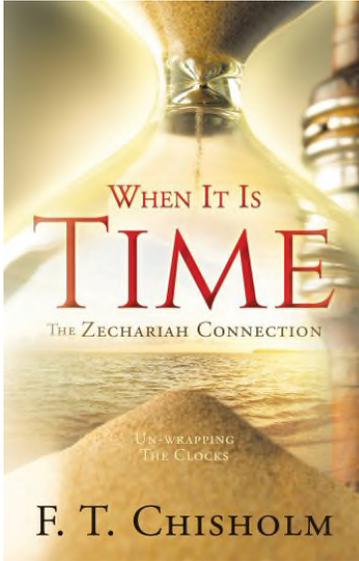
1 Thessalonians 5:4-9

Let us not be like those other virgins. Stay awake!

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## What Must I Do?

*“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”*

Acts 16:31

## How?

*... If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Romans 10:9,10

## In Other Words

**Acknowledge:** your need

—as a sinner (Romans 3:23, II Cor. 5:14-15)

**Accept:** His work on the Cross —to be your Savior

**Confess:** your acceptance of His lordship over you.

**Live for Him:** with your new life.

*For the scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be ashamed.”*

Romans 10:11

### ENDNOTES;

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\*\* “Overlaps” are overlapping visions in which different events take place within the same time frame. So that, for example, while the Antichrist is seen arising in the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation, the demons earlier mentioned as preparing for the sixth trumpet war (Rev. 9:13-18 – which include WWII) are also at work in the background as the Antichrist is perfecting his deception of humankind (Rev. 13:4). Both events “overlap” and take place at the same time.