

New Website Offerings

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MONTH OF MAY

GOLDEN NUGGETS



GOOD MORNING SAINTS

Golden Nugget

VICTORY IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

The city was surrounded by the enemy and slowly but surely starving to death. Donkey heads were being sold on the streets for food. Humanity had sunk to its lowest possible level. It could not get much worse.

A local preacher confronted the city leadership with a message. "By this time tomorrow, there will be so much food that bushels of flour will be sold on the streets for pennies." One leader stood to question such a bold prophecy and the preacher pointed his finger in his direction and replies: "You'll see it with your own eyes, but you will never taste any of it!"

What a prediction: A city going from famine to feast in 24 hours? From donkey head soup to a chicken in every pot? Doesn't it sound like election year politics with too many empty promises? Who is this preacher trying to kid? There would have to be a military victory followed by an economic miracle and all occurring in one day! Who could possibly accomplish all of this?

Meanwhile, in another part of the city, near the outside wall were four men with leprosy, a gruesome disease believed at the time to be highly contagious. Anyone with leprosy was considered an outcast from society. These poor men could not even remain in the city to starve with the rest of the people. They were shunned, feared and abandoned.

One leper had an idea. "Why stay here to die? Let's go to the enemy's camp outside the gate and surrender? If they spare us, we might get some food and live. If they kill us . . . hey we're dying anyway!" They all agreed, so in the middle of the night, four starving lepers shuffled and hobbled their way down the hill to the enemy's camp to surrender and hopefully get a meal.

Here comes the miracle! The sound of their shuffling feet was somehow magnified to resemble the attack of a mighty army. The sleeping soldiers heard the noise, panicked and ran for their lives leaving their weapons, clothes and all of their food behind. What made these hardened soldiers run? The sound of four sick, starving lepers stumbling down the mountain to surrender.

As the lepers reached the camp they were greeted with silence and the inviting aroma of freshly cooked food. "It's party time!" one shouted (not really but you get the point). They ate and drank, carried away money, clothes and all the food they could eat. Then they said to each other: "We're not doing right. This is a day of Good News and we are keeping it to ourselves. We must report this to the city."

At first the city didn't believe the lepers shouting outside the gate, but they sent a scouting party and found everything to be true. The enemy had run away leaving the whole lot behind. The gates were opened and everyone rushed out to eat and take away whatever could be found. Food was so plentiful that a bushel of flour could now be sold for pennies as predicted. The leader who originally questioned the preacher was assigned the duty of counting everything that was brought back. In the confusion, he was trampled to death, all as the preacher predicted.

Wild? Yes, but it's true. (except the "It's party time" part) Read it in II Kings 6:24 - 7:20. But what can we learn?

- God is in the midst of all your circumstances and situations: God never abandons you.
- Ordinary Humans Beings are used by God to accomplish great miracles: Four Lepers?
- Our bold faith and willingness to take godly risks honors God: This means you.

Hearing this story and others like it, gave me the courage to retire early and plunge into fulltime ministry. Maybe, hearing this can inspire you to do something bold for God.

After all, if God can use four lepers to accomplish a great miracle, just think what can be done with you and me!



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NEW CLOTHES

Adam and Eve undid their beautiful relationship with God when they ate the forbidden fruit. Adam's story? The woman made me do it. Eve said it was the serpent's fault.

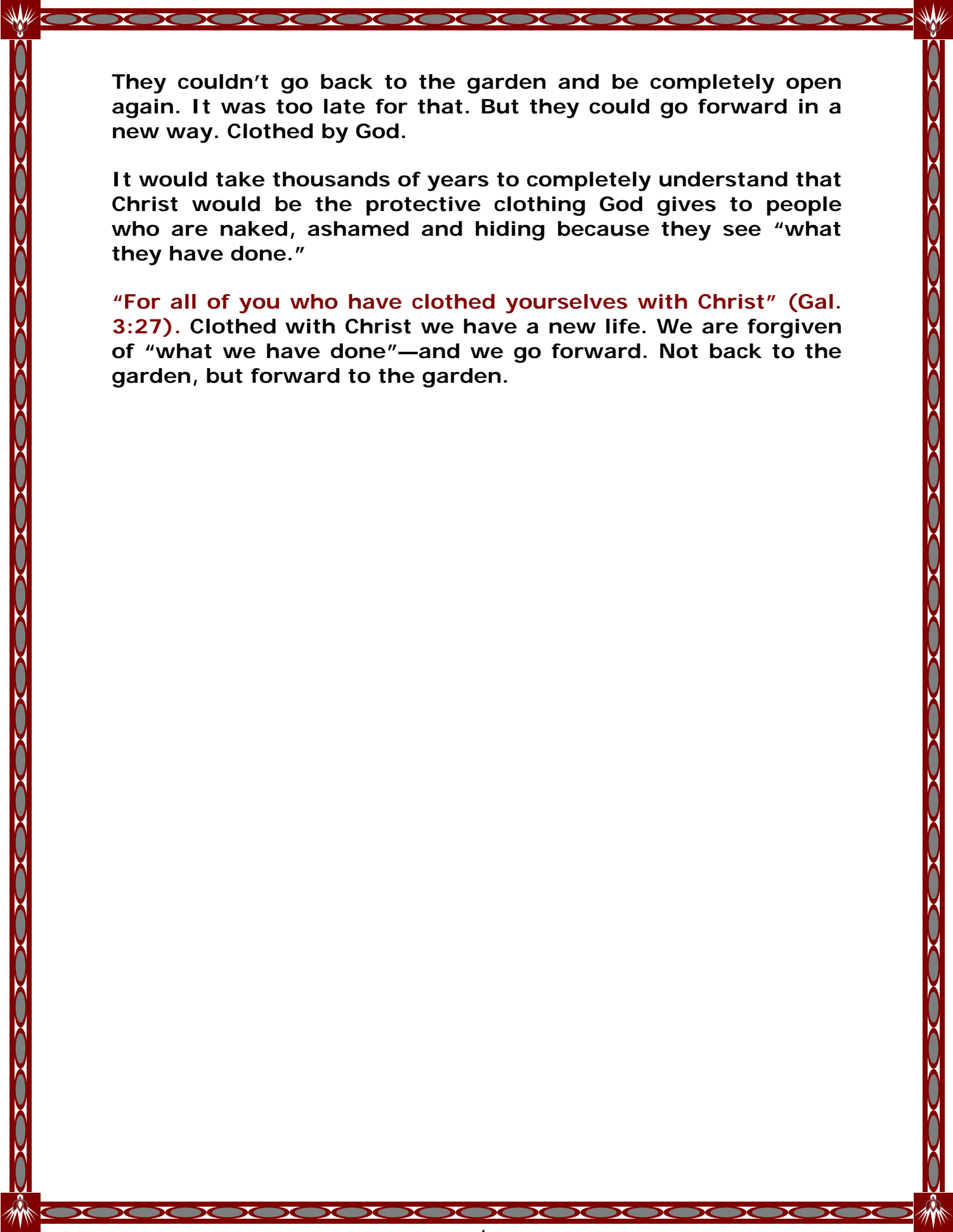
Let's not quibble and look for someone to take the rap. It happened and the effects on Adam and Eve were immediate. For the first time they felt stark naked before God and each other. And they hid. From themselves maybe? Maybe. But mostly they hid from God.

One of the questions God asked them was, "What have you done?" God didn't ask this question for His own benefit. He knew the answer. He asked it for Adam and Eve's benefit and for our benefit.

"What have you done?" Now that's a question that lays bare the past of everyone of us. Yes, what have we done that makes us the way we are? That makes us want to run and hide? What have we done that makes us fear the future? What have we done that makes us so ashamed . . . so naked?

The next part of the story isn't pleasant. God curses them. Man, woman, the serpent . . . the whole bunch. But maybe God isn't being hateful and vindictive. Maybe He is just describing the logical consequences of their behavior. "Because of what you have done, this is what must happen: You will no longer have a close relationship with me." It's a sad story.

But the last part of this sad story encourages us. God, with His own hands, makes clothing for them. No, they couldn't go back.



They couldn't go back to the garden and be completely open again. It was too late for that. But they could go forward in a new way. Clothed by God.

It would take thousands of years to completely understand that Christ would be the protective clothing God gives to people who are naked, ashamed and hiding because they see "what they have done."

"For all of you who have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Clothed with Christ we have a new life. We are forgiven of "what we have done"—and we go forward. Not back to the garden, but forward to the garden.