

Christ is Victor

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“Building”

“Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands” (Proverbs 14:1).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10).

“Christ [is] . . . the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

God is engaged in building the homes of those who belong to Christ. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Psalm 127:1). “The pure in heart . . . shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). A woman who has Christ as the Lord of her heart will build her family by prayer and faith. She has to, however, first build herself into a holy temple of God where He may dwell. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

It is by no means an easy task to build a home acceptable to God where Christ can abide. To be able to do so is the foremost of all achievements on this earth. We have therefore three things to build during our lifetime.

1. Our lives in Christ,
2. A holy home to be the abode of Christ,
3. And the Kingdom of God on this earth.

—D. Daniel, A Wise Woman Buildeth her Home

“Life is full of new beginnings”

Life is full of new beginnings. There are some beginnings which are silently projected into the world scene. There are other beginnings which are greeted with fanfare, foundation stones, bunting and jubilation.

We celebrate the birth of a baby, a wedding day, the opening of a new factory, the launching of a new ship, the inauguration of a new government and so on.

What is new universally to everyone in the world is the birth of a new year. Many people celebrate it variously and no one can be unaware of it. But to nearly everyone the newness of the new year vanishes pretty fast. Though the old problems still exist, the old diseases still persist, the old tempers still range and the old heart-aches still cloud the life of many, yet we all like to celebrate the beginning of the new year. But the jubilation and rejoicing die out very fast indeed.

The bunting and the decorations are removed and life returns to its old grind. The guests are gone, the dishes are removed, but the tears remain.

The Lord Jesus Christ stands in the midst of these hollow celebrations and says, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” (Rev. 1:8). Yes, when we begin with the Lord Jesus Christ by repenting of our sins and becoming His disciples, life takes on a new and a great meaning.

During the first part of our life we all like to pretend that we are grown-ups and cannot wait to be eighteen; for the second part, we wish vainly that we can return to the days of youth. How many there are who actually say, “I cannot laugh.” Others say: “What is the point of existing cheerlessly?” So a new year only brings with it added new problems to many people, new tensions and fears.

It is hard to see how people manage to live without Christ. There is a greyness and a darkness and insecurity and fatalism in their lives which makes their life either a boring one or one with unseen terrors.

I do not know how many of you who are my regular readers have put the matter beyond all doubt— you have repented of your sins and have made the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord over your whole life. To you then life is truly beginning, a life free from greed, impurity and lust. A life of

love and unselfishness and service. That is the life into which the Lord Jesus is now leading you. HE will never leave you nor forsake you; that is His promised Word.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not a dogma, a theory, a thin wisp of air, a disproportionately blown-up figure of history, adulated more because of tradition than anything else. No, He is a glorious person. He not only died for our sins but He [also] rose again to make you and me forever free from the fear of death. When we believe in the Lord Jesus and bring our sins to His feet and are forgiven, the new life which He gives makes each new day a glorious adventure. There are so many things He wants to teach you and give you. Above everything, He wants to melt you and mould your character in order that you may live like Him. . . . [W]hen your life is hidden in Jesus, you can say, “The best is yet to be.”

The more I taste of the Lord, one thing is absolutely certain to me: I am just in the shallow waters of a mighty sea of matchless love and beauty. Every day as you study the Bible, you will discover new riches for yourself, new hopes and heart-cries come to you, fresh anticipations of greater joys, victories and soul-winning will burst on your heart. To the one who has given himself wholly to Jesus, there is no more existing, no more drifting, but only one abundant living. No, my dear reader, there can be no ending without the Lord Jesus being present with you. [If] it is the evening of life, when life appears to ebb away slowly or some sickness appears to threaten your well-being, know this, the ending is Jesus. He is there to lead you to the mansions above, to give you the place prepared for you in glory. You will very likely feel like you have left a dingy, putrid, polluted, pestilent hole, to enter a matchless dwelling of exquisite splendour. So while the world is full of apprehension and dread, we are full of hope and joy.

Let us ask the Lord for a mighty wave of revival blessing and He will give it to us. I want you, dear reader, to be a sharer in this great blessing of revival and in this advancing work given to us to do in many nations.

I send you all my greetings for a New Year, when all is really new with your heart, thoughts, attitudes and motives. May the Lord Jesus do this for you!

—Joshua Daniel

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“There is a redeemer”

The search

On New Year’s Eve 1972, a nineteen-year-old musician by the name of Keith Green penned the following:

Gotta find a home

My roots dangle. Unnourished, I refuse to root here! Gotta find a home and get it settled and peaceful. Gotta find a place inside where I can rest between crises. . . .

Please, Jesus! I know you more each day and recognize the signs you show me. The immaculate birth makes you special above all men and strengthens all the links to the Christian trip—keep the signs coming. I’d almost given myself up for lost. Bless you. Beloved clean brother on highest.

As the year drew to a close, this zealous young man—like a “big planet with a huge gravity field”—had already scratched so many options off his spiritual search list that he barely had one left. He’d grown up with Christian Science, invented a philosophy, dabbled with psychedelic drugs, walked down dark Eastern, mystical, occult paths, and sampled many books including the Bible. He’d been challenged by so-called “Jesus Freaks” and irritated by the Christian belief of a redemptive process for entering into a relationship with the Creator. And how could the whole Bible be the inspired Word of God?

Keith had an unquenchable thirst for the things of the spirit. Yet for all the ideals that he had held to, his life had been filled with contradictions. Shortly after his nineteenth birthday, he had written that he was “digging deep” and needed to find that “solid rock foundation”. “When I reach a solid self, if there is [one], then I’ll build a cabin of home in my heart. And maybe share it with another solid soul.”

As 1972 drew to a close, Keith recognised that the person of Jesus Christ had appeared as a common thread in the teachings he had recently studied. At the least, everybody seemed to say that He was a “good guy”. Jesus had even said good things about Himself, that He was the only way to God. He decided to deal with Jesus directly, one-on-one. He opened his heart to Jesus without really knowing who He was or what it might lead to. He only knew that he had a deep need and prayed a simple prayer.

December 16, 1972

Jesus, you are hereby officially welcomed into me. Now only action will reveal your effect on me.

Keith had taken a step toward Jesus in a small, definite way, and his heart was hopeful that he had stepped onto the right path, though he was uncertain about the future.

Soon after that, Keith decided to start wearing a cross. He found himself praying a rough, uneven prayer of desperation to a God he didn’t know. If Jesus didn’t come through he didn’t know what he would do. Tears spilled down his cheeks and an overwhelming urgency filled his heart. “Oh Jesus, Jesus . . . if you’re really real . . . if you are who you say you are, please prove it to me. I need you. I need something. . . . Show me the way. Prove that you’re real, and I’ll serve you forever . . .”

* * *

In early 1973, Keith met Melody, a Jewish twenty-six-year-old who had wandered into some dangerous places—drugs, Buddhism, astrology, yoga, an occult science, a mantra and meditation. From a young age she had hungered for something that she could not define. Melody had always known that she was living out of a sense of loss, a sense of wanting something that would last. The betrayal of a boyfriend only highlighted that feeling.

Keith came into Melody’s life with intensity and conviction, direct, vigorous, refreshingly open. On their first date, he played her a song that expressed his heart cry. He voiced some of the same questions that she’d been struggling with but in a lyrical way, like “Is death the answer, or just a door? Does anyone know?”

When Melody then saw him playing songs on the piano, it was obvious that Keith was in his element. He played easily, powerfully, throwing himself into each song with energy and emotion. Sweat started to show on his forehead. His voice was soul-stirring. Melody had never heard anyone like him. Not only was there the music, but there was also all of him—the energy, the sincerity, the sheer power of his performance.

Keith and Melody’s spiritual search continued together, and it included “looking into Jesus”. Keith even persuaded her to wear a cross too, a tangible symbol of the togetherness of their hearts in the search. After Keith became convicted about living together without the deeper commitment that accompanied love, they were married on Christmas Day 1973. The ceremony was quick and simple, and Keith made sure it was “in the name of Jesus”.

Throughout the following year, something seemed to tug at the newly married couple,

pulling them into uncharted waters, something that would change them forever. One question that they had not settled was the “God question”: was Jesus really God?

Once, Keith and Melody experienced a burst of inspiration. A friend had told Keith that Jesus could take away sins once and for all, unlike the eastern and occult religions he’d studied. Many eastern religions taught that your lot in the next life was determined by your level of holiness in a previous one. “Good karma” would mean a happy life, but “bad karma” meant you should expect hard times. Yet the friend had said that Jesus could wipe away your sins so you didn’t have to pay for them later. Keith decided he was more open now to the idea of Jesus being able to “cut your karma”. Having recently heard a Christian speak about a spiritual rebirth, Melody had to admit that the idea of getting a clean slate and being spiritually born again was starting to look possible.

The burst of inspiration was short-lived. Trials led them to fall back into sloppy habits. Keith and Melody soon realised that they couldn’t seem to make it in their own strength—but did they have to know God before He would help them?

The find

The “God question” confronted Keith and Melody a few times in 1975, both in church and from the Bible. There was Hebrews 1:8, for example: “But unto the Son He [God] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”

Then there was an argument between Keith and his friend as to whether the Scriptures were totally accurate and inspired word for word. His friend kept claiming that the Holy Spirit was the source of his translation and interpretation, and something clicked for Keith. He also soon discovered the knowledge of the existence of the Holy Ghost, the personal vehicle through which the Son comes into personal lives.

Reality Check!

“GRACE BE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD THE FATHER, AND FROM OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS, THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD” (GALATIANS 1:3-4A).

“There is a redeemer (cont.)”

One day, Keith and Melody attended a Bible study at which the Gospel was clearly presented. The speaker talked about God having sent His only Son down to earth to live among men and show them the way to the Father. But they needed cleansing from their sins to be in a relationship with the Father—and that’s where Jesus’ death on the cross came in. Only Jesus was pure enough to be a sacrifice for the wrong things that they’d done that hurt God and others. So God allowed Jesus to be that sacrifice one time for all of mankind. You only needed to receive it. When the speaker had finished, he asked if there was anyone who wanted to ask Jesus into their heart, to give their whole life to him. It would be a spiritual rebirth. Keith raised his hand high into the air.

Melody continued to wrestle with questions. She could never let go of being Jewish and just convert. But a few facts fell into place as she pondered what she had read in the Bible. First of all, Jesus was Jewish. So was the whole early church. She had also learned that Jesus fulfilled more than three hundred Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah. Moreover, the closer she got to Jesus, the more her spirit was coming alive. The more she opened her heart to Him, the more excitement and genuine peace she was experiencing.

Soon Melody had what her heart needed. She’d made “the Jewish connection”. She wouldn’t be betraying her Jewishness to follow Jesus. She just had to receive Him as the promised Jewish Messiah for all of mankind. All that being a “Christian” meant was “a follower of Christ”. It was stating a fact. On Friday night, when she and Keith returned to the Bible study, Melody faced an inner battle—and then raised her hand to receive the Lord and chose to be on His side. A rush of peace filled her heart that night, deeper than anything she had ever experienced.

Keith and Melody’s search had ended and a new life begun. Soon they came to understand and believe that Jesus was God. Expressing the pure truth that they had discovered, this song was written:

There is a redeemer,
Jesus, God’s own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.
Thank you oh my father,
For giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit,
‘Til the work on Earth is done.
Jesus my redeemer,
Name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Oh, for sinners slain.
When I stand in Glory,
I will see His face,
And there I’ll serve my King forever,
In that Holy Place.

—Melody Green (third verse by Keith Green)

In the aftermath of their discovery, Melody and Keith started an outreach to needy souls. They began to do whatever was in their hearts to do. Eventually Latter Day Ministries (LDM) was born, and Keith became a powerful, prophetic voice, challenging thousands of Christians in their walk with God through his preaching and music. In the seven years that Keith knew the Lord Jesus Christ, he “hit like a bomb-shell”. Then he left just as suddenly.

The grain

When 1977 drew to a close, Keith was playing at a club on a night that seemed strangely different to Melody. It was a New Year’s celebration and Melody was watching him minister. The night would burn in her memory.

The spotlight was flooding Keith’s face with light. His eyes ached as he sang, overflowing with feelings as he poured out his soul. He was looking up into the light, as though up to God. He seemed transfixed in time, as if there were something holy or significant about the moment. Melody had the strangest feeling watching him. A thought came, and returned: Keith Green—you’re not long for this earth . . . It would not be the last time that she had such feelings.

* * *

About four-and-a-half years later, Melody was standing at the front of a church for a memorial service. Three days earlier on 28 July 1982, Keith had died in a tragic plane crash with two of their children. “I know that Keith is where he wanted to be most,” Melody stated. “His heart was so with the Lord—he just had such a desire and burning to be close to Jesus, and he really didn’t care about this life!” The death of the children had been unexpected. “But I think maybe they needed to be with their dad, and God knew that,” she said. “He took them on an airplane ride—and they just kept going. I don’t understand, but I trust the Lord . . .”

The day before the memorial service, a phrase had come into Melody’s mind out of nowhere—a “grain of wheat”. She had looked it up in the Bible. It was from John 12:24: “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” Keith’s life had been a redeemed “grain of wheat”. As a result of his death, the Holy Spirit was able to say to people all over: “Are you living too much for time, and not enough for eternity?”

—Melody Green with David Hazard, No compromise: the life story of Keith Green

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This Fellowship is an inter-denominational missionary and prayer group working for revival in churches and amongst students in several countries. We invite every layperson to become God’s ally in changing his or her corner of the world. We train people in evangelistic work and to be self-supporting missionaries.

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“Please God, cross out the ‘I’”

Helen Roseveare, a missionary in Africa, had begun to feel spiritually dry and cold. Often she blew it in her personal relationships, and now she had to grapple with change. The pressure boiled up in her one day when the Holy Spirit seemed to use her teaching to bring others to renewal.

An African pastor saw Helen’s spiritual need and took her to his village. His wife prepared a room for her, and there she was left alone. Fasting and praying, Helen sought God’s face. Yet she found no peace.

Late on Sunday night, the pastor called her out to the fireside where he and his wife were sitting. There they prayed, and a great still silence wrapped around them. The pastor opened his Bible at Galatians 2:20. With his heel, he drew a straight line on the dirty ground. “I,” he said, “the capital ‘I’ in our lives, Self, is the great enemy. . . . [T]he trouble with you is that we can see so much of Helen that we cannot see Jesus.” “I notice that you drink much coffee,” he continued. “May I suggest that every time, as you stand and wait [for it to cool], you should just lift your heart to God and pray”—he drew another line across the first one to make a cross—“Please God, cross out the ‘I.’” There in the dirt was the lesson of the Cross, the crossed-out “I” life.

“What a redemption”

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:22-24).

What God has done for us on the Cross we do not know. You do not know His power. You may have love for a person, but you may not be able to ransom

him. You may not have the money or the capacity. God has died for you. He has suffered for you that your sins may be forgiven forever. That love died, it endured a hard suffering. He is able to deliver from any depth of sin, provided you are willing. What a Redemption He has brought. If you wait to widen your mind and make it a powerful mind to work spiritual miracles, fill it with the Word of God and not with empty trash.

Our wills are weak, vacillating and undependable. He will deliver you from it. He will make it like a rock. Your will will become powerful. Your affections are wild, uncontrollable, impure, ill-guided, ill-placed, fruitless and destructive, but your affection will be redeemed. Your imagination is vain, foolish and empty. You are whiling away your time and life in them. Those imaginations will never come to pass. Your imagination can be redeemed. Your thoughts are poisonous. The Bishop of your soul knows about it and has made provision for your deliverance from it. The thoughts that come in prayer will be powerful.

What a memory you have, how ill-guided; it remembers only evil about people and not the good that they do. A hundred good things we forget. But the one evil they may have done we remember. Terrible memories! What vain souls we are! The Bishop of your soul can deliver you from all these. Do you put yourself under His guidance, care and teaching? He has reconciled you to God. Have you come to the place where the power of God can work with you? Christ has restored us to God, where we can share His power, love and glory. If you come to this place, great love and power will come through you to deliver those that are destroying themselves and are lost. You do not know the power of God or the Scriptures. Those who go to God in Bible study and prayer will one day share His almightiness, all graciousness, and all

holiness. The beauty of Heaven will be seen through your life and example and many will be saved.

—N. Daniel

THANKSGIVING RETREAT

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