THOUGHTS OF SEPTEMBER, 2012

1. I had a private lunch this week with a leader of the church in Corpus Christi. After I had spent some time telling him about that which the Lord has been doing and will yet do in Corpus Christi, he said some of the most blessed words I could have ever hoped to hear from him: “What can I do to help?” I almost did a meltdown. That was the most open, cooperative and “giving” response I have received, among many good ones, in the 4 years of this assignment. In fact, I hope to use those words [heartfelt] the next time I want to give myself as a response. They are simple and without measure.

2. It has taken me much of my 82 years to accept the observation that a great deal of sin is due to ignorance. What held me back from being willing to acknowledge that? Partial answer: Not being willing to alibi for my sins by pleading any degree of ignorance, and not being willing to allow the same excuse for others. Finally Luke 23:34 and the Holy Spirit convinced me that there is a close relationship between the two. Ignorance is not the root of sins, but it has its part.

3. Slow. And. Steady. Wins. The. Race. So. Stay. On. Course. Keep. Moving. And. Don’t. Despair. Accept. The. Quick. And. Easy. Things. As. Special. Blessings. But. Not. The. Norm.

4. Here is the answer to last month’s question of, “Why did Pharaoh chase after Moses and the Israelites?” He chased them because they had told him they would be gone only 3 days, and they now had been gone weeks. The people of Egypt had loaned the Israelites “all” of their jewels and gold so they could have [only] a “3-day church picnic” grand time in the countryside.

The Lord had told Moses that He was going to remove the Israelites from slavery and take them to another land, the land He had promised to their forefathers. Moses was to tell all Israel of their coming full deliverance, but was to tell Pharaoh that they were going to be away only 3 days. After 3 plus days, Pharaoh knew he had been deceived so he and his army went after their “rightful” property -- slaves and jewelry.

You can follow this part of the exodus story in these verses, all in Exodus: All of chapter 3, especially verse 18, where God told Moses what to say to the elders of Israel and to Pharaoh; 5:3 where “3 days” was instructed; 6:8 where He told them they were going to another land; 8:25-28 where Moses was told to tell Pharaoh they would be gone only 3 days; 10:8-10 when the reason for their brief departure was to be a feast; 10:24-28 when “a time for sacrifice” was added as a reason for their little trip [Pharaoh was getting suspicious so they needed a reason for taking their animals]; 11:1-3 and 35-36 when the Egyptians’ wealth was instructed; and in 14:5 where Pharaoh discovered that they were fleeing the land, not simply picnicking and worshipping their God. That’s when he gathered his army and went after them, apparently to bring back Egypt’s slaves and wealth.

That opens up questions about God and His ways, such as, “Does God lie?” No; He is God – Rom. 9. I’ll let you ask and answer the others.

5. Scientists have successfully stored 5.5 petabits of data – around 700 terabytes – in a single gram of DNA. They report that nothing made by humans can approach that level. Who would have thought that DNA can store data more efficiently than anything humans created? <[:=) But DNA was not designed, right? ☺

6. Let me tell you of a deception, of a misdirection of precious, kingdom material. It is so deceptive that “even we” must watch carefully. The deception is that Christians should be church-centered. Scripture can be used to justify it, just like the church used Scripture to [mistakenly] justify its belief that the universe revolves around the earth. God does not revolve around the church, and neither should we.

The truth is that everything revolves around the Lord Jesus, not the church. The church was created to be a Christ-centered group of people showing a new way of living among other people who had not entered into that covenant with God and one another. The new way of living shows that we value, believe, teach, practice, and experience Christ among us.

Our lives are to show that the whole of our lives are centered about our relationship with that one Person -- Jesus. Our theologies are important, but are not what the church is to gather around. The traditions of our worship style are enjoyable, but they are not what the church is to gather around. Our skin colors attract us to others of the same color, but are not what the church is to gather around. Our socio-economic levels often provide us with our peerage, but are not what the church is to gather around. Yet, those factors are commonly the forces that gather us together into congregations and other social groups. There are even cheaper reasons for gathering together – politics, selected perversities, education levels, worship music styles, etc.

I’ll say this, also. Because of our human frailty [called “sin”] we have enough difficulty staying united while focusing on Jesus, that we definitely do not need the sure-fail glue of those other “non-unifiers.” The Man who lived and died and came back to life is seated at the right hand of God our Father and seeks all of our attention. His and our Father has established that everything is going to revolve around Jesus. The church should be the first to display and proclaim that life-giving truth.

7. I have a particularly faithful brother who recently displayed a weakness that I have been slowly growing out of for years. I needed to reflect upon it, again. It’s the tendency to snatch/appropriate God’s redemptive grace for my sins/mistakes before He has had adequate time to work in me a genuine conviction and remorse for that sin, especially those against others.

The seriousness and perhaps permanent effects of my sins against others may linger in them, even for the remainder of their lives. When I had quickly repented, confessed, and received forgiveness, it was a great relief for me to remember that the Lord is the redeemer of the situation that I had perpetrated. I thank God that that is absolutely true, but too quick of a reaching out in remembrance of His redemption often reduced the adequacy of my conviction. Shallow or a too-brief conviction can be improved upon. “Everything is going to be o.k.” is the truth, but applying it too soon in order to ease my conviction reduces my and the Lord’s preparation of my soul for the next temptation.

8. In my experience, to the best of my evaluation, the prophetic movement has a lot of well-meant flesh in it. However, there is truth in it, also. It seems that the saints in that movement are tuned in to world events on a channel most Christians can’t seem to find on our dials. I like to sift through their writings so I won’t be ignorant of the things that I consider are from the Holy Spirit.

9. When being freed from a bondage there are multiple and tremendous rendings and possible insecurities in our souls. Surely, it is the Lord who delivers us, but commonly He involves saints in the deliverance, initially and on follow-up. Certainly, one of those saints is the person who is being delivered – the formerly helpless, bound, sinking-into-the-pit one.

It appears to me that after being delivered the formerly helpless one is faced immediately or at some other God-scheduled time with responsible fellowship with others who have been set free. He must become involved in Life if his deliverance is to be maintained. It is similar to having your prison door opened and being set free to walk out into freedom, then having to choose ongoing freedom through righteous behavior [faith, etc.]. If not, the freed one can end up in the same or worse condition than he was before. See Matt. 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26.

That is a very practical principle. I have seen the delivered ones’ surprise when, after being freed, they begin to experience temptations. Although they need prayer, counsel, fellowship and whatever the body of believers has, they need to actively participate in the maintenance of their deliverance. As with all other believers, no matter their maturity level, if Life is not pursued there will be a drying or dying spiritually.

Our most abundant example in Scripture is Moses and the Israelites. They were delivered from bondage in Egypt, put in a place where they were together with Jehovah and, among tremendous rendings in their souls, required to be participant in maintaining their deliverance. Some maintained their freedom and some did not. The result for those who did not walk in their freedom was that they died among those who did walk in freedom, in the presence of God.

That example happened to them and was recorded for our sakes – Rom. 4:23; 1 Cor. 10:11. Therefore, we should be prepared, not surprised, when the inevitable fiery trials come – 1 Pet. 4:12. Stay close to the faithful ones and to the Faithful One. We are usually faithful but He is always faithful.

10. Love is the only force that can make us one, without requiring any change of anything but our hearts. No wonder the Lord Jesus made that the first and second commandments – Matt. 22:36-40.

11. Do you remember how old you were when you reached the use of reason? You long-time friends and family know it was age 33 for me, and that it took an outright act of God. I have a grandson [who receives these THOUGHTS] who is trying to break my record. The Lord will be faithful to him, also.

12. Does the Lord think and act like a human? Of course not! See Isaiah 55:8-9, for example. But we think He is like we are. We think that when we sin He no longer loves us. What an attitude! It’s worse than the sin! He has established the unbreakable covenant of love with us. If we were required to love Him in order for Him to love us, what a mess we would be in. His commandment for us to love Him and others [Matt. 22:36-40] is not for Him to continue loving us, but for us to develop into the kind of kids He wants. We are His beloveds even though we are fragile, faint hearted, evil minded, etc., etc. But we lose a lot of Life here on this earth now and in the coming millennium by not abiding in Him now.

13. Jesus told us that at the resurrection we are beyond marriage. I use the word “beyond” instead of going in the opposite direction by using “below,” because even the best marriage here on earth is less than our relationships that lay ahead for us. Some “see” that now in this life, as did Paul, so do not marry. Notice that Paul gave a reason to marry and a reason to not marry – 1 Cor. 7:all.

14. The Lord God Almighty defines Himself in many places in Scripture. I am currently struck by His definition of Himself as being the I AM God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when those men had already been long dead. He did not say He was the God of those men when they were alive, but that He is their God because they are still alive. He defined Himself by their God-created ALWAYS-LIVINGNESS , not by some aspect of their/our earthen humanity. Check it out in Matt. 22:32; Mark 12:26; and Luke 20:37. When we receive life in Him, it never ends.

15. This has been said many different ways: “Falling down doesn’t make you a failure, but staying down does.” I have done my share of “falling and staying down,” such as by retreating, giving up or being silent. But I have seen one of God’s ways that takes advantage of my falls and delayed getting’s up. When I begin to depend too much on someone other than the Lord, and they fail me, I have gone down almost for the full count, and then by grace realized what was happening and got back up.

It is hard to get knocked down and stay down when we realize that we are His handiwork and that His process is to refocus us more clearly on Him. Failure is not fatal [just like success is never final] in God’s classroom. In fact, we can learn more about the Lord when we occasionally fall – but don’t fall intentionally – Rom. 3:7-9.

16. Nemo dat quod non habet. If you can’t find the translation, write and I’ll give it to you.

17. Nearly everyone wants to find happiness, but not everyone knows where it is. I mean real happiness, experiential happiness, happiness that shows on the face and through our mouths, happiness that does not dry up, happiness that is contagious. Where did you get your happiness? Is it enduring?

18. “He who has come through the fire will not fade in the sun.” Would you believe that that is an ancient Hindu proverb? Non-Judeo-Christians often get things straight. The rain [and insights] fall on the just and the unjust” – Matt. 5:44-47.

19. Missions of the church are not often successful unless the church goes beyond its own life, meaning into the neighborhood, city, nation and world. I think that is the reason revival appears to be doing so well in the workplace here in Corpus Christi, but appears to be dragging along in the churches. Yet, at times, much of the Lord’s work is invisible to the natural eye.

20. “Life is mostly froth and bubble, Two things stand like stone; Kindness in another’s trouble; Courage in your own.” – Adam L. Gordon No comment necessary when truth is spoken.

21. “When things go wrong, don’t get in step.” – Anon and Adapted Righteous is meant to spread like the measles. Unrighteousness is meant to fail against a Christian because we have been immunized. “…greater is He Who is within us than he who is in the world.” – 1 John 4:4

22. The Lord leads us into and uses our dry times/deserts/wilderness experiences to develop our righteousness, to mature us, and to prepare us for our earthly and millennial tomorrows. Those times are tests, for us to find that He is trustworthy and that He is directly involved in our lives.

If you are in a wilderness time right now, be patient. You don’t have to understand anything except that He is in charge and, in fact, brought you to where you are. If abiding in Him that way, you are developing a good root system so that you may draw on the living water that is there but out of sight. Our root system is our faith.

The dryer the experience, the deeper our roots go. Any gardener will tell you that if you water your lawn too often it will not develop roots deep enough to sustain itself during water rationing or during your vacations away. When our roots are deep we do not need continual care like babes. That pleases any parent; especially does it please our Father.

Also, it is remarkable how a little or brief rain will make the desert blossom. The soul that is hungering for and waiting on the Holy Spirit will blossom with even the slightest rain. A few drops of God’s grace motivate us to press ahead in the Lord’s life and service.

To close; our deserts are not pleasurable, but they are productive.

23. Is the Lord too kind and loving to punish the ungodly? Do we think and live along the line of that sort of thinking, yet have a different theology? Do we see Him doing Hebrews 12:3-13 and understand His love in that expression of His presence? When were you last chastised by your Father?

I think that the Lord chastises us first by a word/thought. If we receive it and respond appropriately, that’s the end of it. If not, He will make things more and more clear until He gets our attention adequately. We are in agreement that we are thankful He has other means for expressing His love.

I think [thinking this puts me on dangerous ground; saying it openly is even more precarious] that my heart and mind and habits are sufficiently exercised so that He does not need to grab me by the scruff of my neck and shake me to get my attention about my sin and sins. [See what I meant by dangerous ground!] That means I have made plenty of mistakes, and enough big ones, to know the feeling in my soul when my loving Father is dissatisfied with my behavior or motivations.

Stand by for further reports on this Thought.

24. “The unceasing activity of the Creator, whereby in overflowing bounty and goodwill, He upholds His creatures in ordered existence, guides and governs all events, circumstances, and free acts of angels and men, and directs everything to its appointed goal, for His own glory.” – J. I. Packer Brother Packer is still alive and spreading the gospel from an Evangelical, Reformed, Calvinistic understanding. His is a good explanation of God’s all-mightiness.

He holds to the view that a husband should lovingly lead, protect and provide for his wife and that a wife should joyfully affirm and submit to her husband’s leadership. That makes him what is called a Complementarian.

I read an article about this brother, in which the interviewer said, “He is very clear minded at age 82 and he remains incredibly conversant, insightful and witty.” That could be taken as an insult to us 82-year olds. What is to be expected of octogenarians? Inability to chew our own food? Wheelchair bound? On full-time oxygen? >[:=)

25. Have you noticed that submission to the Lord brings in a fresh dose of peace and “forward movement” because our vision of life is elevated? And, on the contrary, resistance leaves us unsettled and looking over our shoulders, especially at our defeats?

Part of the good news is that, just like the Lord sought us when we were lost, He still seeks His children of light when we wander into darkness. He sought us and He still seeks us. Otherwise we would have never found Him and now on our own would wobble aimlessly and purposelessly in and out of darkness and light.

According to our experience and Colossians 1:21-22, He is a good Guide.

26. A single mom with 5 children ran so short of money that she could not pay her electric bill. The electricity was cut off for a while. When those children grew up, one of their fondest memories was of the time they spent with candles as their only light between dusk and bedtime. Happiness is not always related to money and how much of it we have or don’t have.

A study showed that people are more happy with more money, but only up to an annual income of around $75,000. As the income goes up beyond that, the percent of happy ones declines.

The richer one is, the unhappier. But we can be rich in earthly things and yet be happy if our focus is on the Lord.

27. Possibly one of the biggest wrestlings of the church has to do with giving preeminence in all things to Jesus Christ. God’s purpose as stated in Colossians 1:18 is: “That in all things He should have the preeminence.” When we put ourselves forward, try to have our own way, or become contentious we are actually working to have some sort of preeminence. I see that in its simple, day-to-day form, or at least the temptation to climb upward on someone else’s back and at their expense. I notice that others wrestle with this temptation, also, whether free or in prison, rich or poor, black or brown or white. I also notice that the Lord’s people tend to win their wrestling matches against their own flesh.

28. When the Lord is leading you to a “new” place, remember that He will first lead you to and through a “hard” place. The first 3 verses of Exodus 14 show His way with His people, which happened to them and were recorded for our sake – Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 9:10-11.

Those things were not written simply to make us a knowledgeable people, but so that we will live accordingly. So, when we have a flat tire on the way to a meeting, or when our best offers of restoration of a relationship are failing, or when our prayerful and perfectly made plans threaten to fall through – look up, for the new place is drawing near – Luke 21:28. You noticed that that principle also applies to the times before the end of things as they now exist.

29. How much do words affect your peace, and your righteous behavior? My answer is “MUCH!” Words come from two outside persons/directions – God and Satan. Mankind is the common utterer of that which we hear, although the Good and bad spiritualities may place them in our minds without human mediation.

When it is the Lord speaking to us, we usually are blessed. I say “usually,” because He may be telling us to leave our family and go on the missionary field, or to take along our family. When that happens, we can hear it as from the Lord or consider it from the devil, thinking, “God would never have me do that!” If so, we missed part of the gospel message – Mark 10:28-31.

When it is the devil speaking to us, we are usually disturbed. I say “usually” again because our flesh may be hankering for any sort of leading, from any source that would allow us to stay home with its usual modern comforts and safety. That doesn’t disturb our flesh.

A SORT OF ASIDE NOTE: A dedicated brother in the Lord was asked how he thought he might respond if he was given the choice of being shot or denying Christ, or of his family being shot if he did not deny Christ. That sort of decision is being made almost daily by Christian brothers around the world. His answer was that he would choose Christ, but that he hopes this is the only time he would be forced into that decision. I join him in that answer and hope. My answer to him was, “it is easy to make such decisions beforehand, is it not?” Otherwise the press or agitation of the moment may cause us to lose a great reward. Jesus made His decision months/years beforehand, so that when the crunch time came it would be less difficult. We must have an eternal-focused daily walk through this natural life, or we will come to those occasional situations – holding onto this earth-life for the sake of the earth-life and its cheap blessings, as opposed to knowing that an earlier and direct promotion into glory is the Lord’s choice for us [when actually faced with that situation]. Those times, and even thinking about them, show us how faithful or carnal we might be. Of course, that brother made God’s choice. I would hope to do the same if given the opportunity.

Back to the topic of allowing words to change us, for better and for worse. Elijah had called for a 3 year drought, and then ended the drought by a prayer for rain. He had raised the dead. He called fire down from heaven and began cleansing Israel of idol worship. But then bad Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. When he heard her words, he ran scared for his life, hiding in a cave in the desert.

Moses bore up under the rebellious words and actions of his people, the Israelites. But, there came a time near their long-awaited entrance into the Promised Land when some of the people again raised their voices against him. Moses blew up. He neglected to take the Lord’s problem to the Lord. As a result of his listening to the people and reacting unrighteously, and taking the Lord’s problem upon himself, he did not get to go into the Land.

Those were “just” words from humans. Both Elijah and Moses had God on their sides, and He had proved it. He was still with them, but they let those sound waves that traveled through the air, which alighted upon their ear drums and were transmitted to their brains by electrical impulses in the acoustical nerves, to change their lives for the worst.

Think about it. Read Psalms 1 & 2 for help in taking the right stance when we hear/read little and big unrighteous things.

30. It has been said that in extraordinary times there are no ordinary people. I can see truth in that. Those ordinary fishermen, etc. became extraordinary because of “the time.” It was their time to be extraordinary -- but the masses remained ordinary. Gideon was a sub-ordinary guy but became extraordinary. Ruth was an ordinary gal but became extraordinary.

How does that change come about? I think it is not enough to simply say, “It’s God’s decision,” or “It’s all by grace.” Those are the over-arching and foundational answers to anything and everything, but they do not explain the involvement the Lord has [perhaps] given us in His scheme of things. Let’s think along the line of our human contribution.

For some of us, we were utterly fed up with ourselves so we abandoned ourselves to the Lord when the offer was made. The occasion was like a drowning person finally getting his head above water and inhaling deeply of that wonderful air.

For others it was the result of a long search for something that made sense of creation and life. When we saw God’s wonderful self and plan everything became clear and settled into place, like finding the picture on the box that came with the jigsaw puzzle and then moving toward completion.

There are those whose lives were breezing along, no problems, no questions, and no seeking. Then the Truth appeared and became everything to us. He became our life. There was no other way.

No matter the situation for our change from being only human to being a spiritual human being, we left our ordinary lives and became extraordinary. Life was never the same. Fellowship with others who had been similarly changed created a depth of “family” that went beyond our “only human” fellowship. It was obvious to others that something extraordinary had happened to us and had created family and community. Our corporateness created power [rather, God granted power through our unity].

Life has never been the same, not even nearly the same, since I ran from my sub-ordinary self and joined with others who were going in the same direction, no matter their initial motivations.

31. The Lord created worship for two reasons: one is to keep us aware that He and only He is God, and that we are His creatids. The other is to elevate us above our common humanity so we may enjoy the awareness of His and our sonship. That’s balance.

32. Saints, we are the Lord’s treasured possession. He pours out His grace upon us -- not out of obligation and not because He is persuaded by us. He is absolutely the Master of all creation. All things and persons were created to get things done that He has planned and is orchestrating. All of creation is being herded toward the home corral for the final event. Be informed about world and local events, but do not fret or fear. DO NOT FEAR! If you want that in the KJV, “FEAR NOT!” If you are “allowing” the Lord to be the Lord of yourself and all that can possibly touch you, you will not fear. Yet, I certainly do understand fear.

33. With Jesus representing me before the Father, and the Holy Spirit working for me here on Earth, I can relax from trying to be perfect, and trust Him – Heb. 4:14-16. As St. Frances said, “Love God and sin freely.” He was not advocating for sin, but a son with a great attitude but falls into sin is better than a spiritual wimp who is afraid to live because sin is around every corner.

34. Why did our heavenly Father make His Son Jesus our judge? Two reasons: 1) Because He was His Son – John 5:27. 2) So we would honor Him – John 5:22-23. Only a fool does not honor his judge.

35. Florence Chadwick was the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways [not in one effort]. I remember when she did that. It seems that it was in the 1950s?? Later, she endeavored to swim from Catalina Island to the California coast. She had to give up only half a mile from the shore. The swim was a tough one – cold water, sharks and fog. The fog was her worst enemy that day because she could not see the coast. She said she might have made it if she had been able to see her goal.

Our question today is not, “How dangerous are the sharks in your water?” or, “How far away is your shoreline?” or, “How cold is your environment?” but, “What/who are the fogs impeding your vision?” Most of our fogs can be dispelled, or circumvented, or outwitted. If there is fog in your spiritual journey between you and God’s purpose, don’t settle for something easier or lesser. Don’t end with a self-review of your life such as was Jacob’s: “Life has gone by so quickly, and my days have been filled with sadness” – Gen. 47:9. That’s my paraphrase of that which Jacob said of his life.

36. O. K., parents; listen up! This is fresh off my learning. When last did your child hear you say: “I’m proud to be your father/mother?” Too long, if you are like me [and you are]. Say it. And say it in regards to the person, not about his/her success at something. Make it only personal.

37. There is a Jewish non-Bible teaching that says we are to constantly consider 3 things in order to not fall into sin. They are, “Know from where you come, to where you are finally going, and before whom you are destined to give a final accounting.” For a Jew, they know they have come from Abraham and they understand their individual birth history. For a Christian we have come from our Heavenly Father through Jesus by being born again of the Spirit. Our bodies are going to a grave of one sort or another. Our souls will stand before our Creator.

It is serious stuff, meant to help us keep our attitude serious and righteous. The Jew is working on accomplishing his own righteousness. Many Christians know that they cannot accomplish righteousness in that way, but learn to trust the Lord for growth in His righteousness. Our working on our behavior is acceptable for social betterment, but in itself it accomplishes no personal righteousness, no soul changes. Those can be made only by the Lord.

38. The funeral was over, but the new widower would not leave the graveside. His friend said, “Let’s go, Bill.” Bill said, “You don’t understand. I loved my wife.” “Yes, Bill, I know you loved her, but you must leave.” “You still don’t understand. I loved my wife.” “I certainly do understand that you loved her, but we must leave.” “No, you don’t understand. I loved my wife – and once I almost told her!”

O.K., guys. You can rise to the occasion.

39. I read an article this week about China having moved big-time into many nations, building bridges, large buildings, dams, etc. They are making money all over the world, then they buy national bonds, property and companies. But, the report included information on the shoddiness of their work. The buildings they constructed are cracking, dams are breaking, bridges are falling – that sort of engineering failure, and usually by about 10 years after construction. I asked one of my readers and consultants on things Chinese what he thought about all of that. I’ll quote B.E.

“.. Sure, I’ll make some comments for what they’re worth.

“A lot of the worry about China buying up the world using their savings from export income reminds me of the same hysteria about Japan decades ago. Underlying demographic trends kept Japan from being able to maintain their perceived course, and those underlying trends are even more severe in China (declining birth rate and an aging population, the need to import energy, raw material and food). As alluded to in the article, China also lacks the tradition of excellence which has been characteristic of the Japanese for centuries. As long as it doesn’t become more advantageous to key Party officials for the nation to become involved in a war – to distract from corruption and to siphon off a glut of young unemployed men – then by the time they ‘beat’ us they’ll ‘be’ us .. except without the standards and innovation that come from a tradition of competition and a rule of law. Cheap labor can only get you so far. They’re fully aware of this of course and are trying to improve education and steal as much technology as possible from us, but even that will only help for so long. The best thing China could do would be to continue learning from the Chinese (and their descendants) who left the PRC when the Communists took over. [Those are the Chinese on Formosa, known as Taiwanese. – ed.]

“As long as we don’t follow in Europe’s footsteps (increasingly weak culturally, financially and militarily) we shouldn’t be worried. But just in case I’m wrong … we should be especially nice to India.”

40. Here are some Thoughts on 1 Corinthians 11, having to do with God’s order of certain aspects of personhood. There are many aspects of orderliness, in mankind, in the church, in marriage, in family, in civil society, etc. The order in 1 Corinthians 11 is basic. I was asked: “Do you have any general comments about Paul’s admonition that women cover their head and men not grow long hair?”

My reply: “Our choices there seem to be: 1) God spoke an eternal and everlasting word there and, it being His unchangeable word, it meant and means something to Him, should be obeyed by us, and the Moslems have the edge on us. 2) It was only a religious thing for that culture, making it forever variable and anyone who pushes it is a legalist. It addressed Corinthian social customs, using creation principles. 3) Being a human being, and entering into marriage, is a serious thing now and forever. There is meaning and there are requirements.

The relationship between God and His Son is like that of a husband (or whichever man is in the husband’s place) and a wife (or widow/single), in that both are equal (God the Father and His Son are equal, and man and woman are equal), one is head, and the other is submissive. There is mutual love, there are different roles, they live in unity, they highly regard one another, and they share life and ministry. The head covering or non-covering shows forth to others the truth and active function of that picture. That makes it important to God and man.

Largely, the practice of men wearing short hair and women praying with their heads covered has fallen into disuse. I don’t think that a renewal of that practice/obedience is the place to start re: renewal of righteousness in the church. It may well become an evidence of the renewal of biblical faith in our (at least your) lifetime, as it has been at times in the past.”

An observation and a prediction: Thinking/talking seriously about the simple practice of men not having long hair and women praying with their heads covered brings out that thing called rebellion. It calls itself “freedom from the Law” [although it is a New Testament instruction], “times have changed” [although God’s word and people have not], and “that was a cultural thing” [yes, culture had something to do with it]. Yet, when Holy Spirit revivals come, these two practices are also renewed. Also, among Christians who are noted for maintaining and honoring religious traditions, women often wear head coverings in prayer.

41. Authority and obedience are necessary because of our many necessary differences, but those differences are among those with equal personal value and equal personages.

42. In order for us to sin, we first have to accept at least one lie. It may be a general lie like, “It won’t make any difference” or, “No one will know.” It may be a specific lie like, “My wife doesn’t love me, so why not?” or, “It should be my money, anyway!” Whatever the lie, it will be based on something that we want to do or believe – James 1:14.

Being receptive to the lie and committing the sin makes the believer more susceptible to that or another lie at the next temptation. Jesus countered Satan’s lies by quoting the truth, and He was tempted big-time – Luke 4. The acceptance of lies develops a wall against the truth and creates an “alternative truth system.” That’s big-time bad!

Everyone who has an “alternative truth system” is not locked up in prison.

I can look back and see major times when I was tempted, took the lie, did as tempted, and was in danger of being imprisoned spiritually. Praise the Lord that He is a deliverer and redeemer. Even when we have been imprisoned, He delivers the penitent ones who call to Him.

43. Don’t replace something that works with something that sounds or looks good. That applies to things spiritual, financial, matrimonial, political, etc.