THOUGHTS OF OCTOBER, 2018

1. This is the story. Gods [the Pleural in One] existed before creation. When He began revealing Himself He did not reveal how many He was, but as it turned out, He is Three. The main ingredient of the God who revealed His name, “I Am Who I Say I Am,” is love, followed by power, neither of which we understood very well – but that was o.k. early on. He began revealing more about His essentials so we could get into and understand their conversations. He took total responsibility for revealing Their meaning and purpose, which was easy for Him because all He had to do was say something and His love exploded into existence. He did that for a few days as He readied the stage for mini-expressions of Himself. That’s us, mini-expressions of God.

Why us, you ask? Because love compels its fullest expression, until all His planned duplicates are finished and polished. They were, as He showed us eventually, three Persons in that One God, loving themselves perfectly and fully. Because of the abundance and quality of themselves, they simply had to duplicate themselves. Love must increase itself, and it has the power to do it. Their project was to put of themselves into their inferior duplicates with the intent of growing exact facsimiles. Producing the creatures was easy, but creating them free to be and do as they wanted was definitely a sure-fail project. That required super intelligence, a super plan, and super love. The project: Create good but weak stuff, leave them free to sin, put a proven tempter among them, let them all sin plenty, then do for them in their absolute helplessness that which would cost Him everything. The creatures could not perfect themselves, but He is.

1. Husbands, if you want your wives to think less of you and to disrespect you more than they already do, then do what they want instead of what God wants. Focus on pleasing them instead of the Lord because “doesn’t the Lord want you to love your wife?” Answer: Not that way. When the Lord says He doesn’t want us to be men-pleasers, He also included not being wife-pleasers. He wants us to be God-pleasers, and certainly to love one another, including our wives. Men, especially when the wife disagrees with you, work on it, love her, then do what the Lord wants, while loving her more. There will be times when she will think that you don’t love her, but she will be wrong. Her salvation [in this matter of perfecting your marriage] will be through your trusting and obeying the Lord. Does that mean that your obedience to the Lord will bring your wife alongside you as you serve the Lord? Probably yes, but only He knows the results ahead of time. As for us, we will serve the Lord.

Wives, if you want your husbands to love you less and to lay down his life for you less, don’t obey or submit to him. Pressure him and add a few threats from time to time. Draw lines in the sand and hold him to them. When things don’t go well, remind him that you knew better and had told him so. The Lord’s word is consistent, that wives are to submit to, honor, and obey their husbands [not into sin, because sin is an individual matter between each person and the Lord, so is not subject to human review]. When the Lord says that He does not want men or women to be people pleasers He is saying that He is the one to be keyed on, to be listened to and obeyed, and that a large part of a wife’s focus for that honor is her husband. God knows if the wife is smarter or wiser or better educated or has the right answer to today’s problem [and husbands should seek the wives’ giftings], but when your offering is laid out before your husband and he still decides to move in a direction contrary to yours, let him know that you will support him in this wrong-headed project. It’s one of those times when it is better to go through the month broke financially than to make a great financial decision that added to your marriage’s contentiousness.

Husbands, have you noticed why Jesus’ Father did not “leave Him,” “forsake Him,” or “not answer His prayers?” It was because Jesus always did the things that were pleasing to His Father – John 8:29. That’s one strong reason why we are on this topic of obeying God and loving our wives. Wives, notice that little verse also when learning to always behave properly toward your husband. Men, women, and children are equals but we have different roles, relationships, and functions. Life works like the Lord wants us to work when we abide in our routine and often-changing situations.

1. And something happens when, instead, we kick against the pricks [see Acts 26:14] which are the painful consequences of resisting the Lord. If the Lord is “on your case” it is a living hell every time we kick. Imagine kicking your bare foot against the point of a sharp nail in a board. If we have a soul that is sensitive to the Holy Spirit we don’t do that, or at least we stop after one kick. Paul kicked and kicked, and became more murderous with each kick. Once he got the picture, he stopped and began a life in the Spirit that was filled with that which he had lacked – peace. He had been happy persecuting Christians, but he had no peace. Then he left everything that had been so meaningful to him, which had yielded the fruit of hatred, and began a new life that produced the fruit of peace. His was not a unique life-experience; it has been and is being lived by millions of those who have been born again. Remaining and abiding in God’s alignment [family, work, driving, church, etc.] is essential to our peace.
2. In Proverb 13:22 the Lord encourages us to leave inheritances to our children. The first inheritance that comes to mind is usually finances and property. Mammon [material wealth] can be a part of a godly inheritance, but it is not the Lord’s or our focus. THE focus are those riches we have gathered from our walk in the Spirit, that which we pass on to our natural and spiritual children, like Jesus did to us. When He left, He gave His soul to His Father [Matt. 23:46; John 10:17-18], His body to Joseph of Arimathea [Matt. 23:50-53], His clothes to the soldiers [John 19:23], His mother to John [John 19:26-27], His peace to His disciples [John 20:26], and His giftedness to believers [Eph. 4:11]. Saints, let’s leave a rich inheritance.
3. Life and its activities have more than one “level” of reality. Using as an example the process and struggle for advancing Judge Cavanaugh to the Supreme Court, there were the levels of:
4. The personal – A man and his family advancing in his profession.
5. The political -- A battle between Republicans and Democrats, two political and cultural opponents.
6. The moral – The battle between souls using truth and lies.
7. The spiritual – As the forces of righteousness and evil continue the eternal contest using humanity, as in the Garden.

1. We have a faithful brother whose mother, at this writing, is only hours from death. The Lord is at her door and this dear lady is ready. Medically, she is in a non-responsive state, mouth breathing, vital signs low, etc. It is known that many people who are in this condition can still hear, so our brother has been spending hours at her bedside, speaking words of faith and love to her, and caressing and patting on her. Those produce sensations that often can be perceived until the very end. He was holding her hand, patting on it, when she put her hand on his and patted him. That was all. That was it. And that spoke enough! It was a summary; a sign-off, all that had been was accepted and blessed, nothing unspoken, all done.

Much of life seems to be a one-way flow of us to others, but is not. If we know and live by the truth, that God’s Spirit works in all directions when we make one righteous move, we will be blessed as we give ourselves to anyone in any situation, and not only blessed in the hereafter. Life is good, and our lives are life-giving to others, including when things are not going what we call “our way.” Life flowing in only one obvious direction is a shallow mis-label.

As Christians, we know the truth about a lot of things that, in the natural, may look the opposite. We have been raised up and been made to sit together [that’s me there with you, third row on the right] in the heavenly places – Eph. 2:6. Paul saw it, prayed that those in the Ephesian church would see it, and we still pray that others see it. “It” is the truth. Our feet are below the clouds, walking on the earth, but when we check on the totality of our existence we find that we are abiding in the heavenly realm. The ground level view is only temporarily and partially true. See Gen. 50:20; 2 Kings 6:17; Rom 8:28. Yes, we must deal with the natural, but from our God-given view and position in the heavenlies.

1. They cannot be faulted. They did the same thing that had brought good results many times. They fished all night, but caught nothing. Then they received a word from Jesus, acted upon it, and had great results – Luke 5:5. On that occasion they were trying to do what only the Lord’s word could do. Their trust and obedience paid off. God’s word comes to us in many ways, and each way is efficacious. We might say that their all-night labors were wasted, but it seems like those hours of fruitless labors were part of the process, the process of hard work leading to fruitlessness leading to discouragement leading to trusting the Lord leading to fruitfulness leading to commitment to the Life-giver. Failure is important.
2. The Crown of Life is given to those who are faithful until death -- Rev 2:10-11. Does that mean we have to be martyred before we can go to heaven? Nope, of course not. But it can be imagined that if that were the case for the church, we would be a powerful representation of Jesus on earth again and be the breeding ground for righteousness and commitment. As it is, the Crown of Life is given to those who lose their lives daily in order to gain the life of Christ daily. We cannot be hurt by trials and tribulations because we have already died [Well, the Lord is working that into us]. Time after time we experience our being dead to self as we follow the Lord. Being “faithful until death” is the secret of overcomers. As we await the Lord’s return, we see His subduing all things unto Himself [Not always easy to see with natural eyes] – Phil 3:20-21. He is restoring all things to its original condition. He is able, but it must be the darkest before the dawn. When labor becomes the most intense, birth is eminent.
3. There may be many different definitions of “a test,” meaning a test from the Lord, but we all know about them. It helps us when we realize that it is a test from the Lord no matter how it came into our lives. A friend, a stranger, an enemy, the weather, finances, health, etc. – no matter how it came to us, if we kick against the pricks we find ourselves resisting the Lord. Not that we should not resist evil, or not that we should not get good health care, or not that we should not be good stewards of who and what the Lord gives us, but we know who structured that event to come into our lives for His and our eternal good purposes, and that there is a right and faithful way to go through it. [You know a stack of scriptures for all of that commentary.]

So, I want to ask you how you do when a certain test comes upon you. The certain test is the test of “God’s delay.” Delay is a set-up for God’s glory and our eternal betterment. He knows what He is going to do and when He is going to do it. We know little or nothing about the event and its details. See John 6:5-6. Those disciples were being processed, like we are being processed. “The Lord knows” is a good comment if it is a statement of trust, but otherwise it is a statement of hopelessness and ignorance. Some think that at those times He is waiting to see if we will trust Him, but He already knows the end from the beginning! The past, present and future are all “now” to Him. He is processing us because this earth-life is the setting for eternal changes [hopefully meaning growth in righteousness] in we very temporally minded people. He wants us to know that He is the Lord of the delay, not only of the problem. Have you noticed that you are being stretched? The Lord’s classroom is here, between the problem and the answer.

For example, Moses was raised to be faithful to Jehovah. Where was he raised? In Pharaoh’s house, by his Jewish mother at least for the early years of his first 40 years in that situation, while refusing to be called Pharaoh’s son all those 40 years! It is not explained to us how he rather chose to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, but he did, as shown also by his protection of a fellow Israelite [but a slave] at Moses’ age of 40. He esteemed the reproach of the coming Jewish Messiah [Wow! What faith.] greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He had his eyes on the coming eventuality, and appropriated it for himself “now!” That’s faith. See Hebrews 11:23-26, Acts 7:17-29 and, of course, Exodus 2:all. Moses flunked the test at age 40 because he was too much of Moses. After another 40 years, but of herding sheep in the wilderness, there was less of Moses. His second waiting time was successful although Moses did not think so at the time.

We, too, don’t see much or any production for the Lord during our time-delay tests. We may have lost opportunities, lost talent, lost self-confidence, lost time, lost position, etc. and now know of nothing to offer the Lord. If so, trust the Lord and breeze on out of this life praising Him in the years remaining, or say “Yes” to the Lord when His “over your head” opportunity comes.

1. We long for the continuous answers to our prayers, or at least for more and quicker answers than we have been getting. That longing is a matter of our human condition and lots of other things righteous and unrighteous. It may sound like a catch-all answer to that problem, but “it is not yet God’s time for all things to be ‘seen’ in that way.” When we do not see [receive] the answers to our prayers, one of the reasons is that God’s time has not come for the “seeing” of some or all things being subject to Him. Yes, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him, but it is not yet the time for us to experience all things subjected to Him in our present naturalness.

In Hebrews 2:8-9 we are told that all things have been subjected to Jesus Christ, but that we do not yet see the full, natural reality of that truth that is in store for us. The “however” alternative answer is that we do see Jesus. Seeing Him as the answer to any and all of our unmet needs is a precious quality [rock-solid faith] that greatly pleases our Father. [Would you rather have had the answer of that prayer yesterday or be drawn closer to Jesus in its non-answer?] Jesus is our peek through the fog that encourages us to live freely in faith, to press forward in confidence that there is much to be brought into our temporal reality and that the answer is “in the mail.” Seeing Him is the continual payment for first seeking Him and His kingdom.

Delayed and “non-answers” to our needs and faithful prayers will be shown later as better than had they been answered immediately, and as we desired. All that were disasters on earth due to unanswered faithful prayers will be put in order when He returns. That sort of faithfulness develops spiritual muscles and pleases our Father very much. We will experience His pleasure over that sort of childish good behavior. Keep your peace and confidence until the end, which is the beginning of our experiencing His great pleasure.

1. What is God’s ultimate purpose for mankind? To answer that question, many start with “being godly people here on earth;” but that’s no ultimate answer. God’s purposes and our changes continue after we die this earth-death. I don’t know how long He has planned to continue His work on us until we are one with Him, but it likely continues during and beyond the millennium. In order to get into the subject, we will have to open our minds, be ready to have our English words [and the words of all other languages] re-defined, and follow scripture and the Spirit – not an easy thing for a confirmed Christian of any denomination.

To move toward understanding the answer, and showing the problem of getting there, God’s eternal purpose for us is to be one with Him. That’s it! But we define the vital words “one with Him” according to our brief and shallow humanity while He defines them according to His eternal and holy spirituality. I mean, when He defines being one with Him, He means like those Three individuals are one – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are distinct individuals while being one person. Our taste [but only a taste] of that unity is usually experienced in a righteous marriage, the two made one and enjoying whatever depth of unity each pays for in love money. So, are the Three also One? If and as they are, it seems that we are headed for the same. It’s a process and only He can do it.

1. Have you been appointed a watchman? Yes, to variable situations and people. That means we see things that others don’t. We see things on the horizon, things present, and things past that some others don’t. Being a watchman makes us a more responsible keeper of brothers and sisters. This is about seeing apostacy and anarchy, into which the world is in a season of immersion:
2. Apostacy is a turning away from established norms and standards, falling away from the truth. This happens big-time when believers become scarce, and will be a calamity after the rapture. The world’s moral compass will be removed and lawlessness will reign. Lies will have a bit of truth in them [bait on the hook] and will be accepted by the masses who will have no discernment.
3. Anarchy is chaos that results from a lack of order or authority. You probably have not given any thought to it but all of our ancestors once believed in no civil-type authority and lived that way unless something forced them to rally together, briefly. Somalia is now the only country in the world without a central controlling government. Who would have thought that now we have cities and states that live in open anarchy to a significant degree? I’m thinking of California, New York City, sanctuary cities, colleges, individuals. A leading national anarchist said a few days ago that her commitment to anarchy was greater than her commitment to the United States. She has been promoting rioting and worse, and promising more of the same until/unless her political party returns to power. That is the voice of the anti-Christ.

God created man to be like God. Man creates God [and gods] to be like man. Jesus fully displayed God. He was accused of being the worst possible man when He was actually at God’s and man’s best. Man was at his worst when he thought he was at his best. Man wants the right to be himself, wants self-realization, and no moral limits. He believes that he is the greatest gift to himself. That’s a high opinion for those who think they evolved from primordial soup, then amoebas, then frogs, then monkeys.

The nature and desire of sin is to be oneself, free of restrictions, “married with benefits but no restrictions.” [Consider here Jesus and the church, His bride.] Sin does not know that its desire is unobtainable, and that the closer one gets to having his own way, the more disastrous, empty, and lonely life becomes. But sin will still work to have its own way, and will devastate anything and everything [including self] in order to achieve its nothing. It even rejects the idea of God, sin, heaven and hell – because then everything is “o.k.”

You see them. Apostasy and anarchy are basic ingredients to the times and situations we are in, and to what remains of the church’s time on earth. Nothing is new, but there are more of both. They present themselves as: political civil disobedience and disorder; simple and choreographed resistance; open illegality and riots; divorce [husbands not loving wives, wives not obeying and submitting to husbands]; preachers and other believers of the gospel disobeying or ignoring the gospel; truth suppressed in church, home, schools, universities, and news media; all ages of society being dumbed down as a result of the media, technology, entertainment and the educational institutions; sexual confusion of all sorts; social dysfunction [family breakdown, depression, promiscuity, divorce, absent fathers, teenage pregnancy, and suicide] devastates our young; our heroes and advisers have become our uneducated sports figures and immoral entertainers; men refusing to rule over women, parents refusing to rule the family; law enforcement agencies refusing to enforce the law; free speech denied others in the name of free speech; and the list goes on. The answer – know and love the truth and the Lord who gave it to us, pay the price, and share our lives with others.

Watch, watchmen. Raise our voices, shout the alarm.

1. Now a Thought on endurance, or “What to do until things get better.”

According to each one’s perspective, things are getting better despite, or worse because of, the frequent bumps, detours, crashes and disasters of near and distant social changes. We have great communication, transportation, health systems and medical advances, politics, nutrition, and other major life helps, and we do better with each new innovation, but then evil turns them to our disadvantage. Fallen human nature and its champions at times seem to be in control of the rise, fall and function of righteousness!! We find ourselves in “How long, oh Lord?” situations that pop up without apparent reason. The old world and our little piece of it is so susceptible to what I will call teenage warp syndromes! And we are at least somewhat correct in our lightly informed observations! But, not to lose our way, our compass, our assurance of the truth.

What I have described is the world and all of creation in its birth pangs, meaning that these are things that the faithful must endure while expecting great outcomes, eventually. We endure because we know the truth, that sufferings of this earth-life cannot be compared to the wonderful things that are now being birthed. Those who are fearful, depressed, and anxious are looking for that which we have – peace, hope, love – and the Lord Jesus who provides them. The only way they can see Him is when we show Him in word, deed and character. I am thankful that it is the Lord who is controlling the process and schedule.

You have noticed that we must go through our own groanings, too, as the prophets did during Israel’s travails. We would prefer a feathery bed of ease, but this is our opportunity to show the Lord’s reality to the unsaved, and to many of the saved. So, we have been chosen, even with our own groanings. Being here with that assignment is no accident. We who are present are special. Relax, there is plenty of grace. Read Romans 8:18-25.

In the situation above-described, it does us, the world, and God no good for us to pray for the removal of God-planned painful circumstances, because they are His plans for us. He is pleased to share His plans with us when we ask and listen to Him, and then walk with Him through them. Remember this; All things have been put in subjection to the Lord Jesus – ALL THINGS!! He protects us from some and encourages us to work with Him to remove others, but this brief lesson is about those difficult things that are of Him and for everyone. That category of unavoidable evil and unrighteousness is increasing in our time and He is not going to stop it just because the righteous want to escape. He did not stop them for Job and He will not stop them for us, but He controls them and has eternal purpose in them. Because all things have been put in subjection to Him, there is nothing that is not in subjection to Him. We don’t see that with our natural eyes, and we won’t be able to see that in the promises of God in the Bible as long as we continue in our prayer-biases. Read Hebrews 2:8-9, which I have just paraphrased above for you.

So, endurance is a major and scheduled opportunity for the believer. Righteous endurance is a powerful testimony to the world and to the church. Enjoy some scripture on the subject of endurance:

a) Enduring chastisement – Ps. 30:4-5. As in sports, hard preparation gets believers in shape for something coming that is better.

b) Enduring persecution that is caused by family and other loved ones is perhaps our most difficult source of soul pain – Matt. 10:21-22.

c) Because of others sins even though we were not involved – Matt. 24:9-13.

d) For the gospel, which is our best source of trials, especially if martyred – Mark. 13:7, 9-13.

e) Godly motivational stuff will endure to the end – 1 Cor. 13:7.

All things of creation are deteriorating. That’s entropy, the inevitable and steady deterioration of all things created. That must happen to make way for a new heaven and new earth [and new expressions of us]. When that has been accomplished, it will be a glorious sight and life. That’s for us to grab hold of now during our endurances. All things are working together towards God’s purpose of diminishing us and increasing Christ.

Watchmen need to live by that truth, so pass it on.

1. What is a remnant? It’s what remains of something larger. The larger has ceased to exist or is not being used for further purposes. Throughout scripture, the Lord deals with remnants of His called-out people – in the Old Testament, New Testament and in Church history. It is not difficult to see Him doing the same today.

We have cloudy vision when we think that all that is called the church is the church. That which is generally called the church is composed of wheat and tares, the wheat being the remnant and the tares being the discarded larger garment. The remnant fulfills God’s purposes and plans of redemption, His second coming to establish His kingdom on earth, and supplies Him with candidates for martyrdom and becoming overcomers.

1. How did you decide that you are a Christian? I’m not challenging that you are a Christian, but asking how you know that you are. Is it because you believe what you have read in the Bible, or at least most of what you read? That’s good, but is that your proof to yourself that you are a Christian? Remember that the devil knows the Bible and believes much of it. Do you consider yourself a Christian because you follow the teachings of Jesus? That is good, but that may make you only a cultural Christian. Even a moderately Christianized culture has laws against things the Bible calls sin and for things the Bible calls righteous. Are you noted to be a good man or virtuous woman? Fortunately, good behavior is a plus, but it does not mean that you are a Christian.

So if you are looking for some great evidence that you are a Christian, ask yourself if Christ Jesus is your life. If He is, then you have noticed that your life is no longer your life, but it is Christ’s who lives in you. You live and move and have your being in Him – Acts 17:28. That means He leads you, instructs you, and energizes you. Because He lives, you live. You have also noticed that the way of the cross for you is life-producing. The cross is your tree of life -- Gen. 2 & 3; Rev. 2:7.

1. And more about the way of the cross. When we see that another encounter with our cross is straight ahead, our flesh slows down, turns to avoid contact, or goes in reverse. Then it becomes like slowly pulling your own tooth or taking a stuck bandage off of a wound; slow, prolonged and very painful. But that’s the flesh’s response to the cross. In the Spirit we size-up the situation, recognize it, acknowledge God’s will, and go straight ahead into it. That’s what Jesus did in Matthew 26:39. He wrestled with it, but once it was settled He gave no resistance and went straight ahead into it. It was quickly over. No kicking against the pricks, no complaints, just getting it over with.
2. Are you a member of a minority? Answer: Yes, each of us is a member of many minorities, such as we Eckerts are a minority among all other names, and I am a physician, I am retired, I drive a Toyota, my wife is named Nancy, and the list of my minority statuses could go on into the hundreds. The same goes for every person. Being or not being a member of certain minorities is important and even dangerous in certain areas of the world – Muslim or Christian, Catholic or Protestant, black or white or brown or yellow or red skin, gun owner or not, etc. Many minorities are leftover elements of former majorities, or at least of much larger groups than their present size or prominence. Those are called remnants, but God’s special remnant is hand-picked and has a high calling.

Definition – A remnant is the remainder of something, usually the smaller part of an original.

Advance Comments – A remnant may receive all of the eventual benefits or negative results of the efforts of the whole. Since we are talking about humans and our human nature, that can become a problem. Our present example is God’s remnant, Israel and the church.

Rom. 9:all – Paul expressed his extreme pain because not all Israelites who are descended from Jacob/Israel will be saved. All Israelites are descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob [renamed Israel] and have had all of God’s promises extended to them, but most have not accepted God’s promises that come only by faith in Jesus Messiah. Then Paul says that only those whom God selects can have that faith because “.. He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.” It is those on whom God has mercy who are the remnant of Israel, who are “called sons of the living God.” The Lord told Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as “the sand of the sea,” then had Isaiah add that it would be only the remnant of that sand “that will be saved.” That remnant is selected by the Lord and can be identified by their faith in Jesus Messiah – Rom. 11:5 [1-7].

Recall that Abraham had two sons, Ishmael the elder and Isaac the younger. The younger was God’s choice to receive and through whom He would pass God’s life and promises. The same applied to Isaac’s two sons, Esau the elder and Jacob [later named Israel] the younger. Again, the younger was God’s choice to receive and pass along God’s promises – Rom 9:13. In both cases, the elder brother was a highly qualified man’s man, the favorite of their earthly fathers, but not chosen by God to receive and pass along God’s promises.

One cannot but compare the parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32. Notice that the parable is preceded by the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin, and that all three show God’s delight and diligence in redeeming the weak and lost. The message: Those who have the least going for them [lost, weak, immature, insufficient] are prime material for being loved and selected by the Lord. [That’s an important part of my personal testimony.]

That is a partial picture of God’s remnant. If you are a born-again Christian, you are a member of the remnant. He has chosen you to receive His Holy Spirit, to know Him personally [not just about Him, because the devil certainly knows Him officially and knows much about Him], to be led by the Spirit, to live with Him forever, and to be made like Him. As we live abundantly as His remnant, we can expect a higher degree and amount of joy than otherwise, with customized persecution and chastisement as needed. He requires more of His remnant so His loving eyes are on us full-time. His gentle hands are on and over us because He is our Potter. We are His delight. His finished products will be something to behold!

1. The King and His kingdom are coming onto earth and will restore all things [as they were at the beginning]. What are we to do because of Jesus and His kingdom coming? It and He have been “with us,” “in us,” “at hand,” and “at the door,” but Jesus and His kingdom have not yet come in their fullness – which is His promise. We don’t know when He is coming; not even He and His angels know, so ..? We are to be about our usual Christian business bringing Light and Life to the world, but we are especially to be in watchful prayer for His coming. “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is … And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” – Mark 13:32, 33, 37.
2. A man had lost some valuable property; his slave had run away. What was he to do? He probably had someone out looking for the slave, and had spread the news to alert friends and authorities, but the slave could not be found. Eventually, the slave showed up in another nation and contacted a mutual friend with whom he had a born-again experience, then made his way back home. That’s the outline of Paul’s [the friend] letter to Philemon [the slave owner].

Look at verses 15 and 16. Paul went to the heart of that which should have been among Philemon’s first thoughts when he realized there was a problem [Onesimus, his slave, had run away] – God’s reason for the whole event. Our lesson is to do the same when anything happens. First find God’s purpose in bringing about the situation [some say, “allowing the situation”], get in step with Him, then move with Him.

1. Nations, states, cities, towns, communities, houses, cars, hospitals, hospital rooms and about everything else have been named after people by those people or by those who intended to honor them. The righteous usually use care to avoid doing such things. They do their giving in private, as much as is possible – Matt. 6:1-4. Our flesh wants us to receive credit beyond God for our givings, or others to receive their own due credit, or wants to “live forever” [enduring legacy] in their credits – Ps. 49:11 (10-12). See Gen. 4:17; 11:4; Deut. 3:14. Use care and self-discernment when promoting yourself or others. If you receive your reward for obedience, love, and righteous here on earth, you have had the totality of your reward. None is reserved for later in heaven. Take your choice. Delayed gratification is not a strong characteristic of the flesh.

Au revoir, hermanos und sisters.