THOUGHTS OF JULY, 2016

1. God has set it up this way: For humans, true science has endless hidden truths. Those truths require endless quests to find those truths. Scientific truth is designed to be found by both believers and unbelievers. God designed it that way so we will continue seeking and finding the Super-Creator’s answers, each of which are designed to lead to many more questions and answers – Prov. 25:2. In those quests, the nature of nature’s Creator is openly revealed – Rom. 1:18-23. The most rank [but honest] unbeliever would see that there was a Designer-Creator of all this creation and that He is powerful, intelligent, and purposeful.

On the other hand, true religion’s quests soon end because each search for truth ends quickly and logically at the Creator, revealing Him as the Door, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Answer, and the Omega.

Even when science goes off on a tangent from the truth, it always [eventually] leads back to the truth. It must, because it is the truth and truth will not be changed. It stands still and tall, beckoning investigators of all types and motivations, making itself an easy target. It will be standing there again tomorrow, and will be the same in every laboratory of the world. It stands there alone if necessary and, in itself, unchallenged, because error eventually comes back and bows down. Routes and signposts of truth direct and eventually carry us to next truths.

Although science gets off track, it keeps moving and gets back on track because not only does truth lead to truth but scientific error [eventually] leads to truth. That’s a manifestation of the spiritual truth that the Lord turns all things to good for those who have entered the Door, are on the Way, are seeking the Truth, and who have the Life – Rom. 8:28. They will receive the Omega Answer in their quest.

One of the biggest ongoing tangents in science is the search for “how something always was,” which keeps being answered with “no, nothing became something” – Heb. 11:3. It was unseen reality that made our material substance, makes it work, and keeps it working. The corporate body of science is getting closer and closer to that unavoidable truth.

1. When we talk to God, it’s called prayer. When God talks to us, it’s called schizophrenia. Don’t worry; we win. Keep your peace. Stay comfortably aligned with the Lord. This apparent chaos actually has order and purpose to it.
2. In case you have not been tuned in; with increase of speed, time runs slower. That’s why it is understood that with intergalactic travel when the space travelers return to earth they will be younger than their twins who remained on earth. I’m reminded that Daniel had tremendous wisdom, faith, and righteousness [Dan. 2:20-23], but obviously the Lord left plenty for the rest of us to find in every field of consciousness – Dan. 12:4.
3. David’s experience, insights and revelations from the Lord measured up to Job’s [fiery trials due to righteousness] and Jonah’s [fiery trials due to unrighteousness]. In Psalm 139 David, whose many trials were due to both his righteousness and unrighteousness, said lots of good things. The one I am today blessed by is in verses 11 and 12. David was comforted because through faith he was assured of God’s hand on him in the dark of night as well as in the light of day.

David did not need to know about anything ahead beyond the tip of his nose. He usually knew lots about his situations, but he did not need to know that which he did not know – things that the Lord did not show him. He knew that he was in God’s hand – verse 10. David used his common sense, experience, brain, power, connections, and faith as one integrated weapon from his harmonious armory. When one weapon was not appropriate for the battle, he used another.

Likewise, we have lots of righteous weapons – unending patience, full confidence, righteous anger, the truth in love, knowledge of the end from the beginning, indivisible unity, etc. We also are loaded with unrighteous weapons, but they are rusty and unloaded by now, are they not? [Say “Yes.” If that’s the wrong answer, make it the right answer, now.] Some of our righteous weapons are appropriate for one occasion, and others for other occasions. You have noticed that in battle one common approach does not fit all occasions. Take some time to size up the situation, then use the right weapon.

For example, simply listening is an uncommon but powerful weapon. It reveals the enemy’s plan of attack or defense, his weaponry, and his strength. It works good when mixed with another uncommon weapon, humility. Listening puts 1,000 to flight and humility puts 1,000 to flight. When they are coordinated, the two put 10,000 to flight – Deut. 32:30, my version. Also, especially for our use when having a low-faith day, 5 put 100 to flight and 100 put 10,000 to flight – Lev. 26:8. That’s an application of God’s logarithmic power when any two cross-bearing believers unite. In this, I have presumed that the same principle applies to any two of their united righteous weapons.

5. There is a very consistent pairing of 1) power/authority/control and 2) peace. God’s mighty hand on a person or situation brings peace, and the keeping of one’s peace brings God’s mighty hand into the situation. Isaiah paired them in 9:7, saying: “There will be no end to the increase of His [the Prince of Peace’s] government or of peace.” The Lord is zealous to establish His authority through peace [that’s the last part of verse 7].

6. To be “fit” before the Lord there are requirements, like wearing proper wedding garments [Christ’s righteousness plus kept re-cleaned] when attending a wedding – Matt. 22:11-14. Some garments are made of forgiveness. Without wearing that garment we will not be forgiven – Matt. 6:14-15. There is also the garment of Christian fellowship, without which we are guilty [afresh] of shedding the Lord’s body and blood – 1 Cor. 11:23-32. It is good to be properly dressed in Christ’s kingdom. Like Joseph’s coat, our proper dress has many colors.

7. Let’s not try to simply forget difficult times, such as our and others’ sins. Yes, we may need to push those memories and their scars aside for a time, and from time to time, placing them out of our current emotional and spiritual activities into a back room holding place until it is the Lord’s time and occasion to deal with them [heal, forgive, gain understanding, use them correctly]. But suppressing them or simply trying to overlook them need be only a temporary step toward healing. The Lord has His schedule for us.

8. It is usually an earthly situation that gets our attention and moves us to pray. That’s fine. Jesus was also steered to talks with His Father by natural situations. Sometimes we already know our Father’s mind when a matter arises, and sometimes we have to approach Him for it. In either case what we find that He wants is what we then want; He gives us guidance according to our searching and yieldedness.

But sometimes we are alerted to a coming, as yet unannounced, situation by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual sensitivity requires an amount of up-to-date closeness to the Lord and internal separation from much of the best of our world in which we are duly involved. Spiritual sensitivity is costly, first of our self [the big ME], then of our reputation [the big THEM], because it is not based on good, sound, explainable logic. But if we are sensitive spiritually we can expect spiritual nudges, pats, and alarms. If we are thoroughly naturally focused we may not notice the Lord’s alerts.

We have a way to go, don’t we. But He can do it, and is doing it. I have a sense for how pleased the Lord is as His children grow in faith, learn to hear His voice, and obey Him from their hearts.

9. Don’t you think, as I do, that we ignore The Law and Moses too much? Joyfully we focus on freedom from “law” to instead walk in the Spirit. Yet, The Law is basic to Christianity – not “was” basic but “is” basic. Jesus said that if we believe The Law, we believe Him, but if we do not believe The Law we do not believe Him – John 5:39-47. Moses was the greatest Law-giver and yet he speaks life as we read his words. Jesus came to satisfy Moses’ words, every last little dot – Matt. 5:17-18. He has not yet done that. Paul picks up on this when he wrote in Romans 15:4 that whatever was written before [meaning all of the Old Testament Scriptures] was written for our learning so that we would have hope [confidence in our future in God].

10. Several times in the New Testament we are told to raise up others “in the Lord.” It seems that more is meant than to raise them to believe in the Lord and to be good according to His standards. It seems to mean that while raising them up we keep them aware that the Lord is present, is with us, watching, working in and around us, speaking to us, guiding us, and is fulfilling His purposes in and through us. Part of the raising up is that we, the teacher/parent, are not capable of doing all of that, that we are not with them always, not always watching, not able to work in them, not perfectly guiding them, and that we don’t have our higher purposes for them. It is the Lord who has and will be doing all of that. They should listen to us as tutors while we are in that limited position, but the Lord is actively participating. Our job is to keep them aware of Him and that they are “in His presence.” He is brooding over His word in which we have raised them, to bring it into blossoms and fruit.

11. Wisdom, which comes from the Lord, does not need to be associated with the duration of our lives on this earth [our age]. Meaning, it is not necessary to have grey hair before becoming wise. In our experience, it certainly does seem to be related to age but I suggest that age relationship to wisdom is a result of spiritual laziness. Perhaps that’s only my testimony. Whatever wisdom we receive is appreciated, even if received in later years, but time is wasted if we drag our feet.

But, it is uncommon for a young person to have wisdom. We refer to it as having wisdom beyond his/her years. It need not be that way. Wisdom is bestowed as it is sought. In that way it is like knowledge and understanding, although those two do not necessarily lead to wisdom. Wisdom comes from having a special view of yesterday, today and tomorrow – of the natural and spiritual, called biblical. That view is seen from the throne of God. It scans things natural into our biblically transformed minds so that we understand God’s plan, grand or small. It rises above the search for practical applications of Scripture. It simply recognizes the flow of God’s will, without the interference of self-will, fear, obstructers, and other good or bad factors.

Daniel and his three wise friends sought to obey the Lord even in the worst of their situations. They were probably mid or late teenagers, had been taken captive by heathens, had been castrated, and yet served those earthly masters while holding to high levels of personal righteousness and faith in Jehovah. They stood with their God. They accepted their condition as from His hand. Unfortunately, they stood alone among their fellow Israelites. They were able to stand because they had a firm grip on God’s purposes for them. Because they dared to let their stand be known, their society was eventually given a good view of their righteousness and wisdom. The four young Israelites’ were so remarkably different from the rest of the crowd that they were promptly elevated into high positions where their godly talents could be exercised.

12. In regards to wealth, I can see things lurking about in my soul that would leap upon and tear Jesus Christ’s work there and destroy it, if given sufficient opportunity. 1) When I had less, I was not as occupied or preoccupied with gaining more – at least not as much as I am now since I have gained more. As I have gained more, I have thought more often of wanting more, and have had to deal with the righteousness and unrighteousness involved in that sort of thinking. 2) When I had less I had less regard for not losing what I had, but now having gained more I have more concern for not losing what I have. Again, I have to deal with the righteousness and unrighteousness involved therein.

3) In this one, I think that a measure of wisdom has helped a great deal, in that I don’t think that I have acquired different kinds of friends based on wealth I have or don’t have. Some of my closest friends are recently ex-street people, druggies and felons. Others are ex-reprobates in high places. This third point will have to be watched closely. As a confessed sinner I love repentant sinners and even active sinners; as an ex-reprobate I love reprobates and ex-reprobates; as still an occasional Pharisee I find Pharisees barely tolerable.

13. You have noticed that in the Book of the Revelation the world gets blasted. A majority of humanity dies during the seven years immediately prior to Christ’s return. That’s God’s judgment in action; it expresses Him in regards to sinners’ unrepentant sin and rejection of His Son.

As a Christian, what do you think about when you read The Revelation? One of the things I think about is what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:17, that God’s judgment starts in the church -- with me, us, and our worldwide family of God. Why would the Lord do that? Why wouldn’t He get on with judging those unbelievers? They deserve His judgement! But there Jesus is, walking among the churches in 1:10-20, starting the process by informing us that our judgment comes first, then comes the world’s judgment.

There is no escape from the truth, or from Jesus who is the Truth. Let’s not spend too much time just thinking and talking about repenting. Instead, let’s do it. None of my subscribers are minors, so if any read THOUGHTS they read it secondarily with their parents. But we adults have to become minors, significantly minorly, in order to come under God’s authority and submit to Him as a kingdom lifestyle [meaning not only occasionally]. Yes, we adults can believe in Jesus, but our belief must be childlike – submitted, humble, simple, trusting what is told us, which is behavior often seen by others as “childish.” Whoever does not function that way toward the King is not under His kingship.

I’ll say that again: Whoever does not relate as a child to the Lord is not under His rulership. We can be a card-carrying citizen without being obedient to the King. As long as we pick and choose what, when, where, and how we submit, we are not under His rulership. Being members of His family, but not under His rulership, brings His judgment upon us, and brings it upon us first. My earthly father first dealt with me when a group of us neighborhood kids had been bad, then dealt with the others as was appropriate. Our heavenly Father is abundant in love and wisdom, so He also starts with His kids.

This is the time to get things straight, through true repentance that springs from Holy Spirit-granted insight and contrite hearts. Then, changed courses follow. Such is the action of a loved and loving child, sometimes only after its chastisement. Despite our weaknesses we choose to suffer with Him. We know how to accept our weaknesses and seek His way around them if not through them. By doing so, we become prepared to rule with Him. That’s the direction and it leads to Life.

14. Let’s step over despairing thoughts like “This country is going to the dogs,” and get a greatly separate view of what is going on, one that is not tainted with our culture [including there in the U. K.]. Let’s detach from all political views, for a moment . . . . (moment) . . . . O. K., have you done it? Are you clean of tainted political thoughts? [If you are, you are a better man than I am.] Ready; go! THE LORD, IN HIS UNENDING GRACE, HAS ALWAYS CHOSEN BROKEN PEOPLE TO CHANGE POWERFUL COUNTER-SITUATIONS. SHALL HE NOT DO THE SAME WITH US? BROTHERS [INCLUDING U. S. AND U. K. NATION-BROTHERS], REMAIN FAITHFUL, KEEP YOUR PEACE, AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER. THE LORD REIGNS IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH.

Now back to having to deal with end times insanity – politically, militarily, economically, religiously, financially, and socially. But, oh Lord, let our views not get tainted again.

15. Here is a teacher’s outline for what can be titled, “Getting Ready for the Wedding Feast.” It’s about believers in Jesus Christ being actively involved in our own spiritual growth.

Who are you? In your eyes? In other’s eyes? In God’s eyes? In Satan’s eyes? In co-workers’ eyes? In the checkout clerk’s eyes? Do others define you, or does the Lord do that for you?

Are you a grasshopper? See Numbers 13:33 (30-33). Are you:

1) A slave in your Egypt?

2) A freed ex-slave still having a slave mentality in your wilderness?

3) A freed ex-slave occupying your Promised Land?

What happens where you “cast your shadow?” See Acts 5:15 (12-16) and Ps. 23:6 (a). Do you leave a residue where you have been? Both naturally and eternally? If not, what to do?

Answer: “Put on” the Lord Jesus. Get dressed, properly:

Rom. 13:14 (8-14) These dressing instructions were written to Christians, not to unbelievers.

Eph. 4:17-32 And these dressing instructions were written to Christians, not to unbelievers.

Col. 3:1-17 And even more dressing instructions were written to Christians, not to unbelievers.

So, after all of that “putting on,” how well-dressed am I, are you, are we? See Matt. 22:1-14.

The process: Be invited – it’s entirely God’s call.

Accept the invitation – we have the responsibility to believe in Jesus Christ.

Get properly dressed – we put on those wedding garments [our righteous acts ].

Rev. 19:7-10 – Our time is near, at the door, even at hand. As His chosen bride we are to make ourselves ready by clothing ourselves in righteous actions (righteousnesses).

16. Jesus’ bride is beautiful, but not yet perfectly beautiful. Already we can see her potential beauty. After looking at a photograph of the finished work, it takes only a glance at her to see her present resemblance to the finished product. That is encouraging. His love for her will complete what He has started. Just look at her from various angles – Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Catholic, etc. All of that is coming together to complete her beauty.

Being unfinished, she still has warts and freckles and pimples, and some unhealed scars. The work goes slowly because she is not a completely cooperative patient, even in the hands of her loving Physician. She picks at her scabs and will not apply the offered healing medications that are designed to perfect her beauty. But what else would be expected of a teenager? She has yet to grow up. She still wants to do what she wants to do. She wants to fix her own hair her own way. She is determined to adorn herself with her choices of jewels and clothing. Like any juvenile, she has decided how she should look.

Jesus’ bride is one beautiful work in progress.

17. In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 Paul urged us to thank the Lord “on behalf of all men.” Then, as if to make sure that we understood the broadness of the term “all men” he said, “for kings and all who are in authority.” He said that we are to be genuinely thankful to the Lord for our civil authorities, even for our Caesars, because being thankful for them in our situations is good and acceptable and leads to salvation(s). God seems to accept those sorts of prayers in advance, while composing His detailed action plans according to our prayers.

Paul’s words, having been written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, should be given due place in our prayers. Our problem may be that it is hard to give thanks for someone we are not willing to honor. That calls for a change of thinking and a softening of heart. When we Christians get serious about living according to the Manufacturer’s Handbook, there will be a major spiritual shift in the kingdom, then in the world. Let’s make ourselves ready, having noticed our present juvenility. I, for one, have difficulty “a veses” honoring those who are dishonorable, even though they sit in “Moses’ seat” – Matt. 23:2-3.

18. Over the years it has become easier to appreciate simple faith in brothers and sisters, even when their faith was factually misplaced. Simple, honest faith pleases the Lord, for which He rewards us now and in the future, like He did and is still doing with Abraham. Even though faith is not worked up by us, once received it must be tended to by us. It stirs in uncomplicated souls who trust the Lord because of Him, not because of what we want or need. Even though we are often mistaken in our faithful prayers, or trust Him too much or too often, we still do not lose. Faith stands and is rewarded, even when we have our facts and expectations wrong. See Hebrews 11:39-40.

19. A dream is a vision while you are asleep; a vision is a dream while you are awake. Dreams and visions that the recipient thinks are important, are important. The Lord is communicating through that means.

If the recipient thinks they are not important, they are not important. We can call those “pickle and ice cream” dreams and visions.

If you know the Bible, God-given dreams and visions will make sense. Unbelievers and Bible-illiterate recipients can also know the meaning of their important dreams and visions, but their dreams and visions must be straight forward and understandable, not requiring interpretation, such as was Abimelech’s dream in Genesis 20.

Don’t be reluctant to ask for help interpreting your important dreams and visions. They are important. Write them out and preserve them for later reference. As they come to pass, reference to them will help you understand your situations and give you guidance. That’s encouraging and directive.

20. This is another Thought based on “you are just like I am, so I understand you and you understand me.” We all long for good government at all levels, and support certain people who run for office. We trust most of those who win elections. Few would think we should do otherwise. But, the Lord is the only one who can set up and personally occupy the seat of government that we long for. His government will not rise up from this world. It will come down from above onto the world. None of our political saviors will save us, even politically.

From the time of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, this world’s political systems have been getting cheaper, more perverse, more hapless, and more crude – with few exceptions. Even the exceptions did not endure long before crumbling into the dust. They were made from this world, for this world, by this world, with this world, and with a totally “this world” focus. The currently invisible kingdom of God among and within us is in no way of or for this world. It is entirely of God. In these short earthen years it is invisible, but is present and functional by faith and obedience. It’s King will soon establish it openly. It will endure forever, and we will be here in it, with Him forever. There is much more to the story, mainly how those present forever with Him will have various differences of situation in His kingdom. That last sentence should stir our interest.

21. It is good to know what God has promised. There are hundreds of His promises in Scripture. As far as I am concerned, those promises are there to reveal something much better than His promises -- wonderful words that we can depend on. They are there to reveal things about Him -- His nature. So I find that I do not dwell long on His promises, or resort to them when in need, but go directly to Him, the All-Mighty, who sits on the throne of grace.

Also, a promise-focused or promise-reliant saint can slip into “holding God to His promises,” which seems a bit haughty and manipulative. It also tends to blind us to those requirements which He says we must fulfill before He may respond; requirements like “If you will, then I will,” or “If you abide in me then I will,” or “after you have done all, ..”

22. How do you know when you have forgiven someone? Do you know it when you are filled with the thrill of being cleansed of your unforgiveness? Is it when you no longer feel the hurt that had been inflicted on you? Is it when you no longer remember the sinful act? Is it when you can think of the person and no longer feel pain or alienation? Is it when we have evened the score in some way such as having withheld grace from the offender? We may have other answers, but the big answer is “when I decide that I forgive.” That is when the offender is forgiven. It is done before God and [as opportunity provides] before man. From that time forward we are committed to taking no retribution but to restoring the offender. So, we know we have forgiven someone when we decide we have forgiven them. At that point our personal strength or weakness is revealed as we apply our already-given forgiveness.

23. Here is another high standard, almost comparable to Matthew 5:48. When we want good results, do all that we should do. That goes for cooking, working in the yard [garden], raising people and animals, work performance, etc. Perfect obedience produces perfect results – although the perfect results may not be shown in this life. Let’s not sweat over “no one can be perfectly obedient” or “there are no perfect results.” Of course that is true, but we can see that Jesus had perfect obedience without perfect earth-life results. He had lots of great results but there were times when He could heal no one or only a few, when He was not obeyed, and when He was absolutely rejected. But the Lord gets the results He wants from us when we do what we should do. It worked for Noah – Gen. 6:22.

24. Who we are in the Lord gives us lots of privileges and make lots of blessings available to us, but it also has its disadvantages to the normal “good life.” We are held to a higher standard of performance. Jesus gradually began to know who He was during His youth. The treasures, power, and wisdom of God were open to Him to receive. He was a child of privilege. So what were His disadvantages? He had requirements, like complete obedience immersed in total freedom yet without conflict, human frailty with His finger on the trigger of the universe, and faithfulness beyond perfect righteousness. He overcame the built-in, necessary frailties of His flesh and now lives to enable us to do the same. We are privileged as we walk with the Lord, allowing Him to establish the callings and norms for our lives beyond excellent, generic righteousness. We have been brought into His presence, and our particular obediences will mark creation with road signs for others to follow.

25. Israel’s examples of righteousness and victory, and of unrighteousness and defeat, are important to us. They had temporal battles and we have spiritual battles. In this case, it is the size of the enemy that I want to emphasize. There were physical giants in their land of promise. We have spiritual giants facing us in our land of promise. In a way, I am glad that my giants are not their physical giants. For example, David’s Goliath was about 9 ½ feet tall – 1 Sam. 17:4. David and his fellow Israelites were not much over 5 feet tall. That makes Goliath and his family twice as tall as David. And there were more giants than Goliath, which is probably why David had selected 5 stones for fighting Goliath, who had 4 sons – 2 Sam. 21:22. That is a significant height and reach difference, very important when engaging in man-to-man combat. It was not only David’s faith that enabled him to kill Goliath, but his choice of weapons, a slingshot that kept him out of Goliath’s reach.

But look at what Moses and his band of ex-slaves had to deal with a bit over 400 years earlier. The giant, Og, was 13 ½ feet tall, and was not the only one of his kind in the neighborhood – Deut. 3:1-11. As said, it makes me glad that my giants are invisible.

26. “Means to our ends” are helpful getting us to our ends. Sometimes our means sidetrack us as we allow them to become adequate for our desires, instead of continuing to pursue our greater ends. In those cases, we stop along the way and settle for those means. That can be disappointing, especially to those who have a vision of or have had a taste of the end. For an Old Testament example, when the Israelites returned to the Promised Land after 70 years in Babylonian captivity, they rebuilt their temple. The one they built was not as glorious as the one that had been destroyed. Those who were old enough to remember the previous temple wept, while those who did not remember the previous temple cheered in joy for the new temple.

For a New Testament example, liturgies and other rituals for worship are a means to lead us to worship the Lord. It can happen that the ritual becomes the object of our worship, distracting us from worship of the Lord. It becomes a substitute satisfaction, a religious trap. Another example is the Lord’s Supper. It can be made into a ritual with an end in itself, whereas the Lord Jesus said it is a memorial-proclamation of His unilaterally established covenant with us.

27. There are no pockets in a shroud. Sounds like James 5:1-6, doesn’t it.

28. The word mammon has long been used to describe money, wealth, or possessions for which one has an inordinate desire. But, the word was first used to describe material possessions that we were responsible for as stewards – such as possessions entrusted to another when the owner was going away for a while. The point was that the mammon did not belong to the steward but should be cared for properly according to the owner’s wishes. Over centuries, the word began to be used for that in which people put their trust, instead of that of which they were entrusted. Mammon became a god that keeps us, instead of goods that stewards keep for another. See Matthew 6:24.

Haven’t you noticed that wealth is a big and righteous responsibility? All possessions, including people, belong to the Lord, and people are always more important than things.

24. You world history buffs; have you noticed that economic freedom goes hand in hand with religious freedom? They seem to come up together, thrive together, and die together. It seems to be a matter of the form of government, or of the righteousness of government, no matter its form. When we gain one freedom, we gain the other; when we surrender one we surrender the other. When we become irreligious and surrender our religious freedom, we soon lose our economic freedom. When a government tightens down our economic freedom, we soon lose our religious freedom. There is a pattern. Our unalienable rights [life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness] are inseparable, combined and bound together by the invisible hand that controls the affairs of all mankind.

The duty we have to God in religion is also due to our fellow humans, and must be expressed through economy in all of its forms. That duty is vertical and horizontal [universal] and is self-evident. American laws do not consider economic freedom to be fundamental.

Other freedoms also appear to be conjoined – free speech and freedom of association. If all segments were to see the problem at the same time, and work together for more freedom, we might make more progress, but only if we understood righteousness and if it prevailed. For example, righteousness requires all who can work, must work, or they not get public assistance. Those who will then work, but for whom inadequate wages are available, should still be helped with charity. Burdensome regulations for small business start-ups would be removed so that the job market could flourish. Freedom, righteousness, and ideas [not money and government] enrich society.

25. I have never been able to put my full weight down permanently on a definition of what is required to be saved. Yes, we know what the Scriptures say, but it is what those words meant when they came forth from God’s mouth that I want to know. I keep modifying their definitions a bit from time to time on what it is to most simply believe in Jesus. I believed in Him for years before He really meant anything or much to me, especially personally for life style, righteousness, and discipleship.

Belief can be defined as an agreement in knowledge, in this case that Jesus is the Christ spoken of in the Old Testament. It appears that the devil and his evil ones agree with that. Or, belief can be defined as putting your trust in Him for keeping us out of hell and sending us to heaven, plus some other benefits and perhaps some obediences while here on earth. Or, belief can be defined as casting all of our life into His service, living coram Deo.

I know what we need to believe, but it is the how or depth to believe that continues to puzzle me – and many of the world’s Christians. We know that the overcomers [those who never quit until complete victory in achieved] will reign with Him and will have many other rewards, but many Christians are not and will not be overcomers when they leave this earth-life.

The big question is whether that very large group of church people, who live like their ambient society lives, have anything going for them eternally and, if yes, what? If that is a majority of the church it makes no difference. In the kingdom of God our majority votes don’t influence the King.

26. It is remarkable that in the Revelation 17:15-18 we are shown that the beast [anti-christ] and his ten nations will destroy the harlot [worldwide false religion]. That is remarkable because the harlot was the beast’s supporter, and had helped him get established by promoting false religion and martyring many Christians. Then he destroys her! As always, behind it all was that the Lord put it in the beast’s heart to do it, but what was the beast’s and his nations’ reasons? My answer: When the harlot had served his purposes, he did away with her because he wanted to be the only one worshipped.

Tares, beware – Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43. Selah.

27. Most of our biggest worries have been those that never happened. What a waste of life! That’s not only a Thought, but also a testimony.

28. The rabbis laid down six great works which, they said, would bring credit to the person in this life and in the life to come. Those were study, visiting the sick, hospitality, devotion in prayer, the education of children in the Law, and thinking the best of other people. They also warned heavily against judging others unfavorably. The Lord gave us good stock, did He not?

29. Wonders abound. The Dutch have done it again. By manipulating single atoms, they have created the world’s smallest hard drive capable of storing one kilobyte of data [8,000 bits] in a space under 100 nanometers across. That means that all the books in the world could be stored on a device the size of a postage stamp. Just what I need.

30. There is something to be admired in the soul of the person who published the following: “No working during drinking hours.” It shows the strength and determination of a confident, debased mind, an unwillingness to go along with reason and righteousness [or perhaps that reason and righteousness are beyond his grasp], a baptism [immersion] in an alien culture without knowing of the existence of another culture “just outside these woods,” all the while strolling blindly [almost innocently] among us similar creatures whom he simply ignores. I know some members of that tribe. They are lovable, loose, and uncontentious. They prefer to be left alone so they can seemingly exist in their own species.

31. Truth is indeed truth, but we often cannot handle it without something happening in us. It needs to fit in with our previously accepted truths, meaning truth is progressive, like laying bricks one on another. If not that, truth must devastate our previously accepted untruths until it finds bedrock truth upon which it can stand. Pilate had lots of those untruths so could not even imagine the Truth before him – John 18:38. An attitude of repentance or of known error prepares us for the truth, and creates truth-seekers. On the road to Damascus Saul had a large part of soul devastated. It took the Lord years to rebuild him. So much untruth was removed and truth placed that he was thought to be insane by the more insane minds of his day. Resisting the truth while accepting part of it results in our denying the unaccepted truth and stunting our spiritual growth.

32. While reading Colossians 3:1-11 I had a dangerous and blessed thought. I thanked the Lord that I was not like that. He has brought me out of a bunch of the slop mentioned in those verses. I carefully rejoiced – Luke 18:9-14.

33. Our closing thought: Those internationally honored king-making wise men from the East made a long journey, probably with a small army, seeking the child Jesus, whom they knew was born to be King of the Jews. How were those Gentiles able to come to such a tremendous conclusion, and why did they make such a big commitment based on their available information? They were drawn to worship Him probably because they knew He would become King of all. They had acquired the writings of Moses and the prophets, likely from the time of Israel’s captivity in Babylon.

Also, as specialists in religions, astronomy, astrology, and natural science they excelled in the revelation of God in His creation – Rom. 1:18-20. The stars and all of creation displayed God to them and prophesied the greater story of Christ. They lacked the abundance that we have of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the New Testament, and 2,000 years of experience and revelation, but they made full use of that which they had.

Et tu, saints.