

Upcoming Events

Meet Up Open Bible Study:
For study subject and location: see church website

**Welcome and Thank You brother
Joe Griffin from Huntington Beach**

In Times of Uncertainty

“God is our refuge and strength, a very ready help in trouble.”
Psalms 46:1

“Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you.”
1 Peter 5:7

December Birthdays

17 Bill Brown 27 Sue Tanner
30 Richard Karns 31 Bob Pescador

December Anniversaries

12 Ron & Peggy Woodruff 18 Jim & Marie Burruss

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Moving Ahead into the Unknown

By Edd Sterchi

When the children of God were about to cross the Jordan river and take possession of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, they were heading into the unknown. So, God gave Joshua these words of assurance: *“Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”* (Josh. 1:9). We are always headed into the unknown. These words can be an inspiration and comfort to us, as well.

As we forge ahead into the uncertain future, let us remember:

- We need to rely on our abilities (*“Be strong”*)
- We need to be brave (*“and of good courage”*)
- We need to step in faith (*“do not be afraid”*)
- We need to be optimistic (*“nor be dismayed”*)
- We need to remember that God is with us (*“for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go”*)

What lies ahead for each of our lives? Who knows? God knows! And He will help and guide us if we trust in Him. Knowing that, we should step into tomorrow with much confidence, hope, faith, and courage.

Whose Kingdom is Still Here?

By Joe Chesser

What a glorious morning it must have been for the Jewish leaders. Early that morning, after an all-night “trial,” they led Jesus to the palace of Pilate, the Roman governor. They must have felt confident as they stood outside of the palace having convicted Jesus by their “laws”. These pious leaders would not enter the palace to speak with Pilate because they would then not be able to eat the Passover (John 18:28). But they had a plan. In order to get

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
(Vacant)

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the Roman governor's attention, they accused Jesus of "subverting our nation," of opposing paying taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be a king (Luke 23:2). But the fact that they were lying in order to have the guiltless Jesus executed didn't seem to bother them at all. Their inconsistency is glaring to anyone on the side of truth and integrity. Even Pilate eventually saw through it and declared Jesus innocent of their charges (John 18:38).

But before that, Pilate took Jesus inside the palace to question him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" At this point Jesus answered indirectly. He spoke to Pilate about his kingdom. Jesus explained that his kingdom was not of this world, but was, in fact, from another place. Of course, Pilate was thinking of one kind of kingdom and Jesus spoke of a different kind.

The kind of kingdoms Pilate thought of had risen and fallen for millenniums. The Bible speaks of many of these kingdoms: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Syria, and Greek. Major world powers that all rose and fell over the course of history. Pilate himself was a part of such a kingdom, the Roman Empire, one of the greatest of all time. But Jesus was speaking of a kingdom based on truth not power, a spiritual kingdom not a political one.

It was prophesied by Daniel (Daniel 2:44) that in the days of the Roman kingdom the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. Even though Rome was described as "strong as iron" that would crush all the others, it too would one day fall (Daniel 2:40-43). Pilate had to feel even more confident than the Jews were feeling that Jesus could not threaten the Roman Empire. He had no idea that God's spiritual kingdom could and would crush the mighty Romans, especially if this guy standing before was its king.

But, as Mike Ireland asked in his devotional book, *From Morning to Evening*, "Well, whose kingdom is still here?" Though it took almost four centuries from the time of Jesus for the Roman Empire to fall, fall it did. During those years, while the Rome was crumbling, the kingdom of God kept growing and expanding into nation after nation, city after city. And it's still growing as men and women all over the globe are learning about Jesus the King and are surrendering their hearts and lives to him.

Are we sometimes tempted to think more like Pilate than like Jesus? Are we tempted to trust in governments and authorities of this world more than in the rule of Jesus? For which kingdom are we giving our time, money and effort? Hopefully, we will listen to the truth Jesus brought and hold it in higher regard than anything else. Yes, we are to honor the king (1 Peter 2:14). But Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16)!

Christ: Our Fountain of Youth

By Joe Slater

Almost nothing in history supports the legend that Spanish conquistador Ponce de Leon searched for the "Fountain of Youth." (Don't tell the tourists in Florida, though!) It's definitely true, however, that various people all over the world have sought (and even claimed to have found) water that restores youth. We human beings just don't like the idea of aging and dying. We're downright desperate for some way to avoid it!

Jesus told Martha, the sister of Lazarus, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*" (John 11:25-26). What? Believers don't die? Wait a minute – we've seen any number of believers die. How can Jesus say this?

Look at the entire passage! The Lord wasn't saying believers won't die physically. He said even if they do, they will live (because He is the resurrection and the life). But faithful believers won't die eternally (the "second death" as in Revelation 20:14).

But in the meanwhile, Christ blesses us with perpetual youth! No, not in the bodily sense – once again, think beyond the physical. The aged Paul knew full well that death awaited him, yet he wrote, "*We do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day*" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

No, God hasn't given us physical water that will restore our youth. He has given us something infinitely better: spiritual life in Christ here and now, and the confident hope of living with Him and all the redeemed of all ages in Heaven forever.

Are we drinking from the fountain of youth?