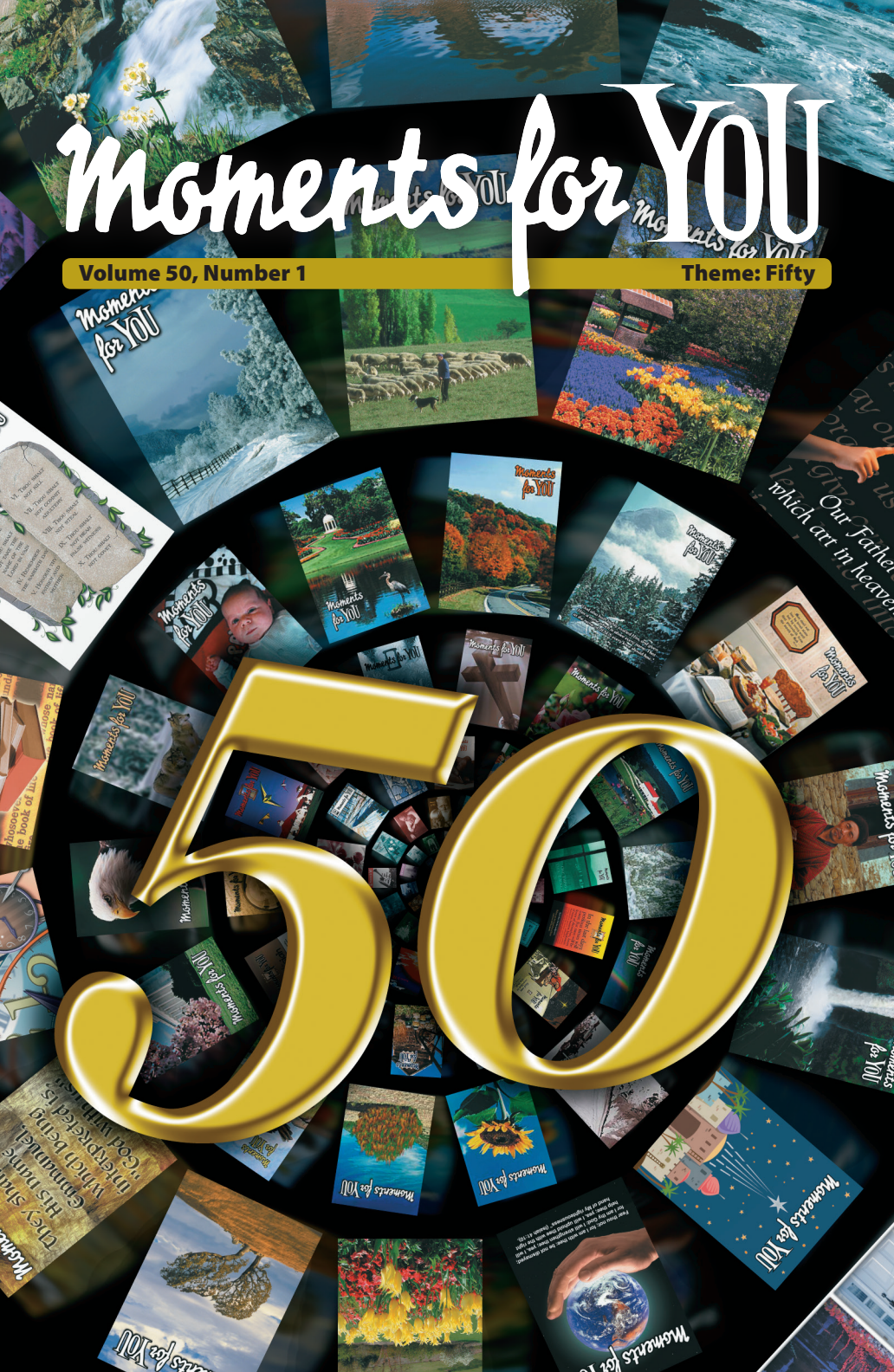


Moments for YOU

Volume 50, Number 1

Theme: Fifty

50



FIFTY YEARS

Fifty years! This issue of “Moments For You” marks the beginning of its 50th year of publication. During that time millions of copies have been distributed, and we trust that many souls have been blessed by the presentation of the Word of God found in each edition.

The number “50” appears many times throughout Scripture, from its prominent use in the building and service of the tabernacle (Exodus 26,27; Numbers 4), to the number of soldiers in a unit (2 Kings 1; Isaiah 3:3), and even the number of people who dined together during the feast of the 5,000 (Luke 9:14). However, the two instances of the number 50 in Scripture that stood out the most to us in preparing this issue are in relation to Jubilee and Pentecost. Each is a fascinating subject, and each has its importance for us today.

We heartily encourage you to read Leviticus chapters 23 and 25, as well as Acts chapter 2 before proceeding with the rest of the articles found here.

—T. Don Johnson

THE HOLY YEAR

(This article was written in Rome during the Catholic “Holy Year.”)

This year many pilgrims are arriving in Rome, from all parts of the world, after having travelled miles and miles, for the purpose of crossing the threshold of the “Holy Door” of St. Peter. It is the Holy Year! They are bringing with them their burden of sins, of hopes, of doubts, and of griefs. What are they seeking? Peace, grace, pardon, reconciliation to God, and certainty for the future.

THE JEWISH JUBILEE

The Jews of ancient times had a Jubilee—a holy year. It was to reoccur at the end of every seven weeks of years, that is, every fifty years. In the Jewish system it was the crowning of the feasts, consecrated to rest. In the law of Moses we find: **the weekly sabbaths**, which provided rest for the people (Exodus 20:9-11), **the septennial sabbaths**, which provided rest for the ground (Exodus 23:10,11), and **the Jubilee**, which not only brought rest every fifty years but restored the social order of the country to the condition established by God (Leviticus 25). It was based upon the following principle: “The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me” (v. 23). “And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbor, or buyest ought of thy neighbor’s hand ... according to the multitude of years [until Jubilee] thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of the years thou shalt diminish the price of it” (vv. 14-17). The Jubilee reminded both the seller and the buyer that the nation of Israel belonged unto the Lord and could not be sold.

The Jewish Jubilee was announced on the great day of atonement, with the sound of the trumpets. So when the blood of the victim was spilt and the expiation of sin was completed, the sound of the Jubilee vibrated and re-echoed in the hills and valleys of the land to announce the year of emancipation and redemption for all its inhabitants. Everybody and everything enjoyed the holy influence of this blessed institution: exiles returned to their country, the chains

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of slaves were let loose, debtors were freed from their debts, many families rejoiced at the returning of dear ones considered lost, and alienated properties returned to their rightful owners. When the melodious sound of the Jubilee trumpet reverberated in the ear of the vigilant Israelite, he knew that at last the time of blessing had come.

THE ROMAN JUBILEE

The Roman Catholic Jubilee dates from the 13th century and was instituted by Bonifacio VIII. According to an ancient “bolla,” (papal letter authenticated by the Pope’s seal) dated the year 1300, the faithful, at the end of every century, were to have their Jubilee as the Jews had observed centuries before. Later the interval between one Jubilee and another was changed to 50 years, then to 40, and then again to 33 years (the number of the years of our Lord), and finally by Pope Nicholas V to 25 years.

But what is the precise object of the Holy Year and what are the conditions necessary to participate in the Catholic Jubilee? As part of a general call to renewed religious devotion, the following conditions are specified: confession and communion, a visit to the four Roman basilicas, St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul and St. Maria Maggiore, repeating in each of them the profession of the Catholic faith as found in the “creed,” four times the Lord’s prayer, and four times Ave Maria and gloria. By fulfilling these requirements, the pilgrims (as well as those in other parts of the world who perform extraordinary acts of devotion and charity) can receive a special “indulgence” that is said to remove the penalty of particular sins.

This, in substance, is the Roman Catholic Jubilee. But does all this that it requires and permits find a

justification in the Word of God? The Holy Doors that are opened in the basilicas, do they have any relation to the door that gives access to the Kingdom of Heaven, of which the Gospels speak?

THE CHRISTIAN JUBILEE

In the book of the prophet Isaiah, which announces with such clearness the work of the Saviour (though written 700 years *before* the birth of Christ), we find the following prediction: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1,2). Of whom was the prophet speaking in this passage? The answer is found in Luke 4:16-22, where we find Jesus in the synagogue reading these words and then proclaiming: “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

Here is the true Jubilee foretold by the prophets and announced by the Lord Jesus: the Jubilee that brings pardon, salvation, remission of sins and life eternal to all who believe. This was a Jubilee of love, of grace and mercy for all sinners.

The door of salvation was opened by the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ. The hammer that drove the cruel nails in His holy body was, symbolically, that which opened the Holy Door through which we may enter heaven. When Jesus, the Son of God, condemned in our place, died on the cross, the veil of the Temple of Israel—a symbol of the separation between God and men—was torn from top to bottom. The hindrance was removed; the door was opened; sin which had come in to break man’s

communion with God was expiated and conquered.

For this reason Jesus was enabled to say “I am the door of the sheep ... by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:7-9). The door that we have to enter is *not* the one that is only opened at intervals in Rome. It is *not* necessary to make long pilgrimages and to spend money in order to reach it. *The door of salvation is open to all*, but not all will find it, because it is a narrow way—too narrow for your friends or family or church to carry you through—*each person must personally enter by faith in Christ alone*.

How do you enter the door of salvation? Agree with God that you are a lost and helpless sinner: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Believe the good news that Jesus died for sinners: “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). By faith, bring your burden of sin and sorrow and grief to Jesus and leave it with Him. He promises to receive you on the basis of what He has already done for you: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Trust Him—and Him alone—for your salvation today, and experience true grace, pardon, reconciliation, and the peace of certainty for the future.

—Adapted from “The Holy Year Explained” by C.S. Davie.

FIFTY YEARS LOOKING DOWN

“A young man once found a five dollar bill on the street,” says William Feather, a well-known writer. “From that time on he never lifted his eyes when walking. In the course of years he accumulated 29,516 buttons, 54,172 pins, twelve cents, a bent back, and a miserly disposition.

“He lost the glory of the sunlight, the sheen of the stars, the smiles of friends, tree blossoms in spring, blue skies, and the entire joy of living.”

This man is not the only one, however, who has suffered loss because of looking down. How many have looked in vain to this earth for satisfaction, pleasure, wealth and happiness but have never looked up to God? How many have laid up treasure on earth but have neglected the salvation of their precious soul! How many have meant to be saved sometime but have gone into eternity without knowing the Saviour!

The Scripture says: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). The most important step one can make in life is looking to God by faith and trusting His Son as personal Saviour!

—Selected. Reprinted from an earlier edition of “Moments For You.”

THE GOSPEL OF THE JUBILEE

FEATURE	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Atonement	Leviticus 25:9	1 Peter 3:18
Liberty	Leviticus 25:10	John 8:32-36; Galatians 5:1
Rest	Leviticus 25:11	Matt. 11:28; Hebrews 4:9
Adjusted Values	Leviticus 25:15	Matt. 16:26; Philippians 3:7
Irrevocable Inheritance	Leviticus 25:23	1 Peter 1:3-5

REDUCING VALUES

Every fiftieth year in Israel's calendar was known as the year of Jubilee. The soil was supposed to lie fallow. Land reverted to its original owner. Slaves were set free. It was a joyous time of freedom, grace, redemption, and rest.

When someone bought a piece of property, he had to take into account the nearness of the year of Jubilee. For instance, the land would be more valuable if forty-five years remained before the next year of Jubilee. But if there was only one year left, the land would hardly be worth owning. The buyer would be able to raise only one crop.

There is a sense in which the Lord's coming will be the year of Jubilee for believers today. They will enter into the eternal rest of the Father's house. They will be set free from the shackles of mortality, and receive their glorified bodies. We should also take this into account in valuing our material possessions. We may have thousands of dollars worth of real estate, investments and bank deposits. But if the Lord should come today, they would be worth nothing to us. The closer we get to His coming, the less real value they have. This means, of course, that we should put them to work today in the advancement of the cause of Christ and in the alleviation of human need.

Just as the year of Jubilee was ushered in by the blowing of a trumpet, so the Lord's return will be announced by the sound of "the last trump." All this teaches us a fine lesson. If our hearts are cherishing the abiding hope of the Lord's return, we shall hold lightly all earthly things.

—From *One Day at a Time*, by William MacDonald. Used by permission.

THE MEANING OF PENTECOST

In Acts 2 we find the next great event following the marvelous things recorded for us in the Gospels. First, there was the incarnation of our Lord Jesus. God became Man for our redemption. Then Calvary, the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He gave Himself a ransom for all, to put away our sins. Next, the physical resurrection of the Saviour. Now we have Pentecost, the coming of another Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, to dwell in the Church on the earth and to empower believers to carry the message of grace everywhere.

Notice the opening words, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." But do not make a mistake. Pentecost did not come because they were of single unity and in one place; they were there expecting Pentecost, in obedience to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pentecost was a predetermined epoch in the mind of God and the Word of God. It had been settled from all past ages just when the Holy Spirit was to descend and take up His abode with the people of God on earth. The Lord Jesus had said that the Father would send the Comforter and "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:15). He also said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

The Holy Spirit was to introduce a new dispensation and God had definitely settled the time when that dispensation would begin—the day of Pentecost. If you turn back to Leviticus 23 you learn there of Israel's

ecclesiastical or sacred year, with the great festivals that belonged to it, among them the Passover in the spring, foreshadowing the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now when Passover came He died; that is, the appointed Passover. He observed Passover on the evening before His death. The Jewish day began with the evening of one day, as we would count, and went on to the evening of the following day; so on the first evening Jesus ate Passover with His disciples, and before the next evening He died, the spotless Lamb on Calvary. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Then if you follow on in Leviticus 23 you will see that on the morrow after the sabbath they were to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits. Now we are told that Christ has been raised from the dead and "become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). So just as Passover typified the death of Christ, the firstfruits typified His glorious resurrection.

Again, referring to Leviticus 23:15,16, we read of a "new meal offering" to be offered fifty days after firstfruits. Pentecost really means *the fiftieth day*, so God had ordained that this feast should be observed in Israel as the type of the beginning of a new dispensation when a new meal offering would be offered to the Lord: "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves ... baked with leaven." These typify those who through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ are presented to God a new creation, Jew and Gentile, sinners in themselves but their sins are judged in the light of the Cross of Christ. Therefore Pentecost was the beginning of a new age, that of the church, the Body of Christ.

The same Holy Spirit who came on Pentecost has been working in

power ever since, and it is He who enables servants of God to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, for we read, "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). It is the same "whosoever" that is in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So the Spirit of God has come, the Comforter is here and the saints of God have received the Spirit and have thus been baptized into one Body and in the power of the Spirit are called upon to go forth and proclaim the gospel message to the ends of the earth. Have you called upon the name of the Lord? Have you trusted Christ as your own Saviour? Then doubt not, but accept the words of the Holy Ghost Himself, "Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

—Condensed from "The Acts of the Apostles" by A.C. Gaebelien.

QUESTION & ANSWER

QUESTION: I have heard that certain numbers have significance when they appear in the Bible. Is this true?

ANSWER: Yes, I believe that this is true. A Bible scholar by the name of F.W. Grant wrote many years ago that "The Lord had led me into the discovery of a numerical structure everywhere pervading Scripture." He has written seven excellent commentaries comprehensively tracing this through many of the books in the Bible. These commentaries are called, "The Numerical Bible." I will only point out a few of the meanings of these numbers.

Seven is the number of perfection. “It often seems to merely indicate a complete view or accomplishment.” The seven parables of Matthew 13 give a complete view of the kingdom of heaven. The addresses to the seven churches give a complete history of the church from the day of Pentecost to the rapture (Revelation 2:1-3:22). The book that the Lord Jesus opens is sealed with seven seals. The Lamb, our Saviour, is seen in Revelation as having seven horns and seven eyes. There are seven trumpet judgments and seven bowl judgments.

Six seems to give the idea of weakness and of sin in its full development. It is the number of the Beast, or the Anti-Christ. It is that person who will play such a terrible part during the seven years of the tribulation period. As we read in Revelation 13:18: “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is [666].”

Forty seems to be the number of testing. Israel spent forty years in the wilderness on their journey to the promised land of Canaan. The Lord Himself was tested forty days in the wilderness (Luke 4:2).

Fifty was also a significant number for Israel. After they had waved their sheaf of firstfruits unto the Lord they counted fifty days and then they came with rejoicing bringing their free-will offerings unto the Lord (Leviticus 23:10-21). It was on that day, called Pentecost, that the Holy Spirit came down and baptized all believers into the Church, which is the body of Christ (Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 12:13). That chapter ends with believers “praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

Fifty also reminds me of the number of years (50) that Moments With The Book has been used of the Lord in the publishing and distribution of tracts, books, and other messengers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only eternity will reveal the results of this work. But it is to “God who giveth the increase” that all glory belongs. It is the Lord who has provided the funds and steadfast servants who have worked diligently to sow the Good Seed of the gospel. Precious is the promise that their “labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

—John D. McNeil

The Jubilee is the fiftieth year, following the seventh Sabbatical one, as Pentecost, the fiftieth day, followed the seventh Sabbatical day from the sheaf of resurrection. Pentecost is the day after the Sabbath—an eighth day—first of a new week, a type of new creation blessing. This Pentecost of years is similarly an eighth year, and the type of new covenant mercies. It is in the grace of the new covenant that the nation can and will be restored; and thus it is, as the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles has assured us, that the blessing runs on without break from time into eternity.

And then this fiftieth year, how beautiful an overflow of the Sabbatic is it in its meaning (5 x 10), man with Almighty God, and capacity in grace to walk before Him! On the day of atonement that trumpet of Jubilee sounds, after the scape-goat has carried away the people’s sins where they are never more found. “In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession” (Leviticus 25:13). True of Israel’s land, so that they shall certainly return to it; true also of our heavenly inheritance. Lord, keep us mindful of our Jubilee—Thy coming for us!

—Condensed from *The Numerical Bible*, Vol. 1, by F.W. Grant

FIFTY WAYS TO PLEASE GOD

- 1** Without faith it is impossible to please [God] (*Hebrews 11:6*).
- 2** Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (*Acts 16:31*).
- 3** He that believeth on the Son [Jesus Christ] hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (*John 3:36*).
- 4** Believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life (*1 John 5:13*).
- 5** Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve (*Matt. 4:10*).
- 6** Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness (*Matthew 6:33*).
- 7** Worship [God] ... in Spirit and in truth (*John 4:24*).
- 8** Obey God rather than men (*Acts 5:29*).
- 9** Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto unto God (*Romans 12:1*).
- 10** Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (*Mark 16:15*).
- 11** Desire spiritual gifts (*1 Corinthians 14:1*).
- 12** Stand fast in the faith (*1 Cor. 16:13*).
- 13** Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God (*Ephesians 4:30*).
- 14** Be filled with the Spirit (*Ephesians 5:18*).
- 15** Study to show thyself approved unto God ... rightly dividing the Word of truth (*2 Timothy 2:15*).
- 16** Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom (*Colossians 3:16*).
- 17** Seek those things which are above ... set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (*Colossians 3:1,2*).
- 18** Rejoice in the Lord always (*Phil. 4:4*).
- 19** Praying ... in the Spirit (*Ephesians 6:18*).
- 20** Pray without ceasing (*1 Thess. 5:17*).
- 21** Quench not the Spirit (*1 Thess. 5:19*).
- 22** Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him (*Colossians 3:17*).
- 23** In every thing give thanks (*1 Thess. 5:18*).
- 24** Offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually (*Hebrews 13:15*).
- 25** Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (*Philippians 3:14*).
- 26** Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me (*Matthew 11:29*).
- 27** Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour (*2 Peter 3:18*).
- 28** Sanctify the Lord God in your heart (*1 Peter 3:15*).
- 29** Prove all things; hold fast that which is good (*1 Thessalonians 5:21*).
- 30** Abstain from all appearance of evil (*1 Thessalonians 5:22*).
- 31** Submit yourselves to God (*James 4:7*).
- 32** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (*James 4:7*).
- 33** Reckon ... yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God (*Romans 6:11*).
- 34** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers (*2 Corinthians 6:14*).
- 35** Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (*2 Timothy 2:19*).
- 36** Hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (*Hebrews 10:23*).
- 37** Make straight paths for your feet (*Hebrews 12:13*).
- 38** Flee fornication (*1 Corinthians 6:18*).
- 39** Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (*1 Corinthians 6:20*).
- 40** Refuse not Him that speaketh (*Hebrews 12:25*).
- 41** Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord (*Hebrews 12:5*).
- 42** Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you (*1 Peter 5:7*).
- 43** Live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (*Titus 2:12*).
- 44** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine (*1 Timothy 4:16*).
- 45** Neglect not the gift that is in thee (*1 Timothy 4:14*).
- 46** Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another (*Ephesians 4:32*).
- 47** Keep yourselves in the love of God (*Jude 21*).
- 48** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world (*1 John 2:15*).
- 49** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (*Titus 2:13*).
- 50** Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God (*2 Peter 3:12*).