

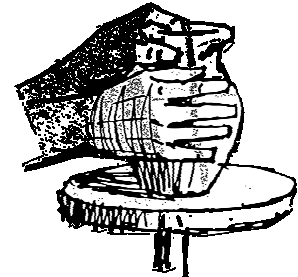
His Workmanship at Westside

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus for good works.”*
—Ephesians 2:10

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Isaiah 64:8

Christus Victor: “The Empire Strikes Back,” part 3, by Shane Scott

As the opening chapters of Luke recount the reaction to the birth of Jesus by Zechariah and Mary, or by Simeon and Anna, there is only one conclusion the reader could draw: Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Messiah, the One Who would deliver Israel from the hands of its enemies and redeem the nation. The Lord has come to save His people!

The next set of stories in Luke focuses on Jesus’s baptism and temptation. What connects those two events? It is His identity as “the Son of God.” Jesus was pronounced “the Son of God” at His baptism, and the devil’s temptation began, “If you are the Son of God.”

Rich in its nuances, the title “Son of God” has three important Old Testament connections. First, it immediately brings to mind David and the kings who would come after him, those to whom God promised, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son,” 2 Sam.7:14; see also Ps 2. Second, it brings to mind “Adam, the son of God,” as Luke described him at the conclusion of Jesus’s genealogy in Lk 3:38. But probably the most important connection to draw is with the nation of Israel itself. Remember how God described Israel in His commission to Moses? “Thus says the

LORD, ‘Israel is my firstborn son,’” Ex 4:22.

Can you think of any connection between Israel as God’s “son,” and Jesus as God’s Son? Consider the events of Luke 3 and Luke 4. Jesus was baptized, and God declared, “You are my beloved Son,” 3:22. Then Jesus went “into the wilderness” where He was tempted for 40 days, 4:1-2. Just as Israel, God’s son, came through the waters of the Red Sea and then went into the wilderness of testing for 40 years, Jesus—God’s begotten son—came through the waters of baptism and then went into the wilderness to be tested for 40 days. Jesus was re-enacting the story of Israel itself, taking the place of the very nation He came to deliver (and incidentally, the same point could be made regarding His baptism—He was identifying with the very sinners He came to save).

This also sheds light on why Jesus responded to the temptations as He did. In the case of all three temptations, Jesus cited passages from the same book—Deuteronomy. Think about the circumstances of that second giving of the Law. Deuteronomy consists of Moses’s farewell speeches to the people of Israel at the end of the 40 years in the wilderness. As Israel stood

poised on the Plains of Moab, preparing to begin its work of conquest, Moses reminded the nation of its need to be tested so that it would learn to rely on God and not on its own strength. And in Luke 4 (as in Matthew 4), as Jesus, the Son of God, was preparing to begin His work of conquest, He experienced the same test—but unlike Israel, He prevailed! Indeed, we could expand this same point to draw a sharp contrast with the first “son of God,” Adam, who was also tested—but not in a wilderness. He was tested in a lush garden surrounded by trees with all sorts of food to eat, except one. Yet he failed.

This brings to mind another character we need to add into the mix: “the devil,” Lk 4:2. The same sinister force that ultimately precipitated Adam’s downfall was once again at work, once more trying to drive a wedge between God and His son. “If you are the son of God, command this stone to become bread,” Lk 4:3. What do you think the devil was trying to accomplish with this question? May I suggest that the devil was conceding Jesus’s identity as the son of God, with the goal of exploiting it. “You are the son of God! Since that is
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the case, you deserve better than going hungry. Use your powers to make bread for yourself and eat!" In other circumstances, miraculously making bread or eating would not have been wrong for Jesus. But if His calling was to take Israel's place, to learn the lesson of humble reliance on God through going hungry, then indeed it would have been wrong to use His own powers to feed Himself (see Deut 8:1-3).

Each of the temptations was in some way an attempt to turn Jesus against God. Any *Star Wars* fan will remember the scene in which Darth Vader tries to turn Luke Skywalker to the "dark side." That is exactly what the devil was doing in the temptation of Christ—he was trying to thwart the Lord's Anointed by undermining His humble trust in doing His Father's business.

But this suggests something vitally important in connection with Israel's failures. The same adversary that faced Jesus (and Adam) must have also been at work against the corporate "son of God." When Israel turned away from God in the wilderness, and indeed all throughout its history, lurking in the shadows behind Israel's rebellion was Satan. After all, why did Israel go into exile? Simply because the political winds of fortune changed and Assyria or Babylon outmaneuvered it? No! Israel's real problem all along was sin! And that means the real enemy was not ultimately Assyria, Babylon, or Rome, but Satan.

This means that true victory, true liberation must deal with the real issue and the real enemy. What we read in Luke 4 is the first round of this ultimate showdown between the Son of God and Satan. In this light, we could entitle the story of the temptation as *The Empire Strikes Back*—except in this case it is the world's true King fighting back, sending the adversary to flight, and beginning His mission to redeem Israel and the world.

Stay, Stand, and Abound, 1 Corinthians 15:57-58, by T. Sean Sullivan

What is the greatest motivation in the life of a Christian? The desire for a better life here—love, joy, peace, Gal 5:22-25? The desire for God's approval, Heb 11:6? Perhaps motivation is as simple as the desire to do what is right, 2 Tim 2:15. But the greatest thing that propels us forward is the opportunity to live beyond death. Once we have discovered that God's plan provides for life after mortal death, we desire never to miss out on this one great opportunity—eternal life with our glorious God!

Paul spoke of this hope and immediately connected hope with our motivation: "But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore [because of our hope of victory, here it comes—our motivated diligence], my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor 15:57-58. Consider in three points how Paul described our work ethic when it comes to gaining the victory.

1. Stand Steadfast. "Steadfast," as a word, is fading away from our spoken language. We very rarely hear it spoken outside the discussion of certain Scriptures. "Steadfast" means "resolute, persistent, committed; faithful; firmly fixed in place," cf. 1 Cor 16:13; 7:37; Col 1:23; Heb 3:14. We could read 1 Cor 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be committed..."

The goal of a home in heaven is all about our commitment. We commit or resolve or determine resolutely to leave our old life and to adopt a new life. In Christ we can have newness of life, Rm 6:1-4. We can have a new life—created according to God, Eph 4:17-32. We can have a renewed way of life—living like Christ, Col 3:1-10.

Our commitment is to obey God's will, in all that He commands. We give ourselves to do His will, Mt 7:21. We devote ourselves entirely to understanding and applying the word of God, 1 Tim 4:13-16. In this, we become willing both to hear

and to do the word of God, Jas 1:17-22.

Our commitment must always be to continue living God's will without wavering or going back. Paul said we run with certainty, we fight with purpose, we discipline our bodies, 1 Cor 9:24-27.

There is no hope in neglecting our hope, Heb 2:1-4; we must not go back to the old life again, Heb 10:35-39. Because of our hope, we remain committed to God.

2. Stay Immoveable. To be "immoveable" is to be "righteously-stubborn." There are times in life to be truly stubborn; we stand firm and intractable in the truth of God's word. When we discover the truth, as Jesus promised we could, Jn 8:31, we must not let it go—because only the truth can set us free from sin and death, Jn 8:32; Rm 8:2.

There are many ideas of men that are trying to move us. There are false teachers and their messages; we must be very careful not to fall for them. Paul described these false messages as "wind of doctrine, ...the trickery of men," Eph 4:14-15. Wind can be powerful; we must stand against it. Men can be cunning and deceitful; we must be careful not to fall for their tricks. When they employ their wily, scheming craftiness, plotting to deceive us, we must be careful not to let them win us over. The brethren in Galatia had fallen for another message, Gal 1:6-7; we must be aware, be careful not to receive any other message than what has been given to us by Jesus and His apostles, Gal 1:8-12.

There are also lusts that move us away from God. The temptations of this world corrupt us and draw us back to the world, 1 Jn 2:15-17. We often fail to see these pulls. For example, Demas, who was faithful to Christ for a time, Col 4:14, was pulled in by his love of the world, 2 Tim 4:10. We need to put on the whole armor of God to stand against all of these destructive things—to stand against the devil's wiles, Eph 6:10-18.

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Psalm 133:1

God's harvest we'll glean in 2016 "Please let me go to the field and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." —Ruth 2:2

Stay, Stand, Abound, from p. 2
We do all to stand—we give all our strength and energy, we give it everything! We stand! Because of this hope, we will be stable, established in God and immovable from Him and His love.
3. Always Abounding. There are many measures in this life. There is the classic measure of the optimist, "The glass is half full." There are the ideas of full, of satisfied, and even of over-filled. Usually, we like to have enough; many times only barely more than enough is plenty. We live in a time and a culture that typically affords us "more than enough" for most areas of life, especially material things. Yet, we know that material things cannot give us our victory, Lk 12:13-31.

We need to seek after an "abounding," abundant measure in our spiritual pursuits. We are to bear "more" fruit from God, Jn 15:1-8. He gives us abundant life, Jn 10:10. We know that God, and His promised victory, are more than worth all the effort we can give; we need to see that worth. Knowing God's treasures and rewards, we give Him our whole heart, Mk 12:30, all that we are, Rm 12:1-2. We remain devoted to His will, Col 3:17. Paul described fullness as walking "worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy," Col 1:10-11. We are to "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," 1:9. As we abound in good works, in knowledge of God—as we are strengthened for patience and longsuffering with all might by His glorious power, we are "giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us

Discipleship Here At Home

to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light," 1:12. Because of this hope, we seek to abound in Him.

What is the single greatest motivation in your life? It should be the opportunity to live beyond death, our mortal-end, with our Creator-God in a home that He has prepared for His faithful. More than anything else in this life, we should all want to be walking with God. He has not left us to guess; He has given us His plan that provides for victory over death.

He Himself is our victory. May we sing with all the assembly, "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty," 1 Chr 29:11. Stand with God, stay with God, and abound in His will—this is how we set our sights on heaven today. Because of our hope for heaven, we seek a life that is "steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord," 1 Cor 15:58. Do you want this hope? Determine to make it yours, beginning now. "O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Christian Harrod; Addison Tope; Rocco Jr.; Ann Cox; Logan Corray; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Orchid Cox—chronic blood clot condition
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Kirk Johnson—MS; **Amanda Mailloux**—IBS
Virginia Menard—macular degeneration
Sandra Perry—diabetes complications
Eric Perry—recent pre-diabetes diagnosis
Cheryl Reames—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
Judy Sartin—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
Judy and Mike Strand—hepatitis treatment
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Rejoice Expecting babies: **Shreves**, their first, a girl, this month; **Addys** their third, a boy, in May; **Witheringtons** their first child in October. **Mekiah Fink** is suffering persecution at school for her faith; nominated for Mayors' and Commissioners' Award, Clear Creek
Directory Update **Jennifer Clayton** has moved back and will work and worship with us: 1475 N. Downing St, Denver 80218 303-332-6010

Travel **DeWayne Howell** will return home from KY tomorrow after driving his parents' moving van from AZ last week.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Delmer Hice**—home; labored breathing; COPD
- **Janelle Hall**—breast cancer; surgery 4/26
- **Sarah Hadders**—hospitalized last week, but much improved and home
- **Mike Menard**, Virginia's son—pancreatic cancer; home, antibiotics to fight infection before he starts treatment—some improvement; **Virginia** pain walking from wrenched leg.
- 10-year-old **Benjamin Hymel**, of Longmont church—brain cancer; home after surgery; to start year's radiation and chemo cycles at end of April
- the **Boyd's** extended families are undergoing hardships: **Wendy's** father, **Dan Gutierrez**, back in care center with cognitive problems either from stroke or brain bleeding; pray for **Eileen** and **Dan**; **Kenny's** sister and brother-in-law—divorce, b-i-l **Kevin** buried his father recently; pray for family **Jennifer, Kevin, Chloe, & Elijah Whittemore**
- **Gary Boyd**—injured in car accident recently
- **Samantha Harrod**—benign cyst removed from her back recently; recovery 5 more weeks
- **Linda Szymanski**—broken arm & wrist
- the **Addys** ask our prayers for **Levi's** former boss in Odessa—**MacDonald** family: 17-year-old son murdered parents; 19-year-old sister survives
- **Sarah McMurray's** mentee **Lakeisha Griffin**—age 12; missing from school, not located
- **Judy Strand**—finished with chemo for liver transplant; testing in prep for transplant in April or May
- **Sheryle McNeill**—pinched nerve
- **Berney Charo's** brother **Eliud**—prostate cancer
- **Ian Anderson, Mina Gonzalez's** nephew—rehab
- **Letha Fink's** brother **Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, diagnosed with neuro-muscular disease
- **Bill Dennis**—improving; recurrent cold
- **Brittany Tope's** mother **Gayle**—biopsy of spot on liver shows breast cancer has spread; **Brittany's** grandmother—on dialysis
- **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; **Brett's** grandmother **Sue**, and Aunt **Connie Doss**—cancer returned
- **River** and **Forest Cox's** great grandmother **Martha Rowe**—in rehab for knee strengthening
- **Judy Sartin's** friend **George Vernon**—stage 4 esophageal cancer
- **Kim Howell's** coworker **Rachel Daniels**—new baby **Titus** has genetic disease
- **Andrea Songer Greer**, daughter of **Bill** and **Debbie S.**—chemo for stage I breast cancer
- **Bereaved** • **Ernesto Gonzalez's** father **Fidencio** passed away last week of congestive heart failure after stage IV lymphoma; family has returned from El Paso. **Brandon Williams**, the father of **Adriana Williams, Ava Kosik's** school friend, passed away unexpectedly recently. Pray for **Adriana**, her mother **Savana**, and the family.
- **Jordan Corray's** grandfather **Glen Kowalski** passed away Friday. Pray for **Jordan's** grandmother, **Marilyn Kowalski**, and the family.



Exposing current trends religious freedom

Immigration Exam Returns to "Freedom of Religion," by Tony Perkins

As part of the naturalization exam that prospective immigrants take to become United States citizens, Homeland Security made a few edits to the First Amendment over the last eight years. Where "freedom of religion" used to be, a more restrictive term, "freedom of worship," appeared in its materials, including the text of the U.S. citizenship test [and speeches by President Obama and Hillary Clinton]. Critics, including Sarah Torre of the Heritage Foundation, argued, "This incorrect view of religious liberty argues that faith should remain a private affair—relegated to personal activities or weekend worship services. Step outside the four walls of a home or house of worship and robust protection of religious freedom ends."

Senator James Lankford (R-OK) agreed. Last June, Lankford sent a letter to DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson calling on the agency to correct the error. "The freedom of religion is much more than just the freedom of worship," Lankford wrote. "Worship confines you to a location. Freedom of religion is the right to exercise your religious beliefs—it is the ability for Americans to live out their faith or to choose to have no faith at all." It may seem like a minor change, but it has had major consequences on Christian businesses, charities, service members, athletes, celebrities, teachers, and others hurt by this narrow understanding of our First Freedom. These people have not been able to practice their religion in the marketplace, on the field, in the media, in the schoolroom. The administration would have us pack up religious symbols, Biblical beliefs, and free speech and stash them in the church building, where they could be quarantined.

Lankford noted that "the answer choice 'freedom of worship' has been used since 2008, when [US Citizenship and Immigration Services] was advised that the word 'worship' was more inclusive than the word 'religion.'" He said, "Our Constitution is clear—Americans have the freedom of religion. The naturalization test and its corresponding materials must be equally as clear... Not only is 'freedom of worship' inconsistent with the text of the amendment proposed 226 years ago today, [but also] saying that 'freedom of worship' is more inclusive than 'freedom of religion' flies in the face of a pillar upon which our entire nation was founded."

DHS finally agrees. Last Thursday, ten months after Lankford's first request, DHS issued a notice to the public that it will update its material—including the test—to reflect the "freedom of religion." It was a rare victory after seven years of frustration over America's freedom to believe. "I applaud the Department of Homeland Security for listening to me and deciding to change their material to reflect our First Amendment right of freedom of religion," Lankford said. "The 'freedom of religion' language reflects our right to live a life of faith at all times, while the 'freedom of worship' reflects a right simply confined to a particular space and location... To protect freedom and diversity, we must carefully articulate this right throughout the federal government." Thank Senator Lankford for making religious freedom the priority it should be!



meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
720-295-4530

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, "Courage to Live Holy Lives," Jim Reingrover
- **sermon**, Preaching Through First Corinthians (PTFC): chapter 9, "Preachers' Rights and Self-Denial," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **new sermon series on GENESIS**, "Adam and His Family," Genesis 2-5, Larry Campbell