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GodsCharacter.com: A book by book Bible study given by Dr. Brad Cole. Video on demand, audio streaming, PowerPoint slides, PDF documents and more!

Events & Schedules

March 20-21, 2009 — The Good News Tour (Dr. Greg Boyd, Dr. Brad Cole, Herb Montgomery, Pastor Manuel Silva, Marco Belmonte—with more to be announced): Vancouver Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, updates at GoodNewsTour.com. **Contact:** Dorothee Cole @ 888.250.4612

Ongoing Weekly Events

Thursday, 12-1 PM — Loma Linda University Medical Student Bible Study (Dr. Brad Cole): See GodsCharacter.com

Monday, 12-1 PM — Loma Linda University Allied and Public Health Bible Study (Dr. Brad Cole): See GodsCharacter.com

The Good News

A NEWSLETTER ENTIRELY ABOUT GOD : ISSUE TWENTY-TWO : JANUARY, TWO-THOUSAND AND NINE



THE SERVANT by Marco Belmonte

The night before He was murdered, Jesus gathered His disciples in the upper room for one last dinner. Oh how He loved them and how He wanted them to realize what was about to happen so they would be ready for the fierce trials ahead. He had spent so much time teaching them, showing them the way to the spiritual realm where they would be connected to their Heavenly Father and could help lead us out of the darkness and into the light. But, as our Lord looked around the room hoping to find eyes illuminated by the truth that He had come to reveal, all He heard were arguments and anger over, “I’m going to be number one in the kingdom.” The heart of Christ ached with agony as he realized how His students were still idolizing the god of social status and selfishness and how hard the yoke of Satan’s delusions weighed on the necks of the oppressed. What could He do in those last hours to reveal the character of God? “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had

a newsletter **entirely** about God

[continued from front] come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded." (John 13:1-5, NKJV) Jesus quietly got up and slipped to the back of the room where he untied His robe, grabbed a towel and put it around His waist. With a basin of water in his hands, He walked over to His disciples. There was no sign of anger or frustration on His face, but I imagine a warm and pensive smile as He got down on His knees to wash twelve pairs of dirty, stinky feet. A hush came over the room as the disciples pondered what Jesus is doing. At that time, not even Peter fully understood, yet the impact of this situation eventually changed the lives of these twelve men for the rest of eternity. As Jesus completed his task, he approached the last disciple. He put the water over Judas' feet, gently massaging the dirt and grime away from the person who was about to betray Him. Jesus looked into the eyes of Judas, hoping that Judas would see the power of God's kingdom – the power of humility, the supremacy of being last, the authority of service. Yet, Jesus knew that even in this act, Judas' heart would not be turned, and yet, Jesus washed His betrayer's feet nevertheless. Does this act bring a new reflection on just what kind of a person God is? It is this truth about God's loving character that will set our minds free from Satan's distortions of who God is. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:16), exclaimed Paul and I believe it was the Good News about a God who kneels before mankind to wash their feet that caused Paul to feel this way!

The picture you see on the front page is our new and updated "Servant to the World" illustrated by Lars Justinen who was commissioned by HeavenlySanctuary.com to create this thought-provoking painting for their Good News Tour conferences. The world leaders depicted (from left to right): Chancellor Angela Merkel (Germany), Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Canada), President Barack Obama (United States), President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Iran), President Vladimir Putin (Russia), Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (India) & President Kim Il-sung (North Korea). The Man who is washing their feet is the Lord Jesus Christ (King of the Universe). [END]

COSMIC CONFLICT

by Brad Cole

The articles in this newsletter have many times emphasized the importance of placing every theological belief in the context of a cosmic conflict that revolves around the issue of God's trustworthy character. Cosmic conflict theology places everything on a much larger canvas and provides a richer context to understand the reality around us. Context, as they say, really is everything and this is especially true when it comes to our understanding of God. The incorporation of a cosmic conflict over the character of God is like going from a 2-dimensional to a 3-dimensional world and once such a fundamental change has taken place, there is no going back. It would be analogous to living in a house with the blinds pulled down for the first thirty years of life and with no concept or consideration that there might be something outside the walls of the house, until one day someone pulls up a set of blinds, and then another, and then another, until finally a whole new world is seen. And then, as the individual marvels at all of the hustle and bustle going on outside the window, the exhilarating thought occurs, "I am actually meant to be an active participant in what is going on out there! I can actually walk out that door and experience this new world!"

For a time, Daniel was missing this larger context when it seemed that God was not answering his prayer. In Daniel chapter 9, Daniel earnestly prayed that God would fulfill his promise and allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem. He then received a vision that was so troubling, he mourned for 21 days (Daniel 10:2). Daniel must have wondered what was going on and he continued to pray about this as was his custom. Remarkably, an angel then appeared to Daniel to "open the blinds" and explain what was going on behind the scenes and to reveal that God was in fact acting on Daniel's prayer. "The angel said to me, 'Daniel, God loves you.' Stand up and listen...Daniel, don't be afraid. God has heard your prayers ever since the first day you decided to humble yourself in order to gain understanding. I have come in answer to your prayer." (Daniel 10:11-13 GNT) The angel then went on to describe an intense cosmic conflict that was going on behind the scenes during those 21 days and the reason for the apparent delay: "The angel prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief angels, came to help me... Now I have to go back and fight the guardian angel of Persia. After that the guardian angel of Greece will appear. There is no one to help me except Michael, Israel's guardian angel. He is responsible for helping and defending me." (Daniel 10:13,20; 11:1 GNT)

Imagine Daniel's surprise to discover that his prayer had, in part, caused good and evil angelic forces to be launched into combat against each other! In this story, Daniel was a "prayer warrior" in the highest sense and had actually become an active participant in the complex battle that was taking place between God and Satan. Daniel's eyes were opened to the real enemy – one who is far more sinister than any king or kingdom of this world: "For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age." (Ephesians 6:12 GNT)

Likewise, as our eyes become opened to the cosmic conflict, it will naturally have the effect of drawing us into the fray as we see that God eagerly waits for us to prayerfully align ourselves with his will, as Daniel did. Just let your mind reflect on the deep significance of Jesus' promise to us that, "I will do whatever you ask for in my name..." (John 14:14 GNB) Does this mean that if we say the words, "I ask for pizza on the table right now in the name of Jesus" that the pizza will magically appear? Of course not! In the Bible, "name" is synonymous with character and we are to pray for things that are in harmony with the other-centered love and character of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the understanding of our role to play in the cosmic conflict will cause us to take Jesus at his word and to pray with a much greater sense of urgency and with a real conviction that God has given us the power to actively intervene in this great controversy. Like Daniel, when we pray for things that are in harmony with God's character, we unleash angelic forces and the mighty power of God to spring into action. "The prayer of a good person has a powerful effect" (James 5:16 GNB) because when we pray for the things that are in harmony with God's character, we allow God to intervene against Satan in the cosmic controversy. [END]



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