

# FIRE, COAL & TRANSFORMATION

By Tim Saxton, Associate Speaker

Long ago, in the days of the one-room schoolhouse, Kenneth was walking home from class, greatly troubled. You see, during recess, Kenneth had entered the back of the school to care for an injury he received while playing ball. Standing in the back and unnoticed, Kenneth watched as Jack, another student, had entered the supposedly empty building.

As Kenneth watched, Jack walked to the desk in the front of the classroom and reached for the teacher's purse. Opening it, Jack withdrew the first cash his hands could find, then slipped back out of the classroom.

When the students returned after recess, the teacher stood before them with a serious look on her face. "Children," she said, "someone in this room has taken money from my purse. Who has done it?" Yet, no one stirred or said a thing.

After school, some of the students met with the teacher, and the finger of accusation was pointed at a different boy and not toward Jack.

Knowing all of this, Kenneth was troubled as he walked home. "What am I going to do?" he thought. "If I tell what I know, I may lose my friends for being a tattletale. Yet, if I say nothing, then I am not standing up for what is right.

As he walked into the house, his mother greeted him. She could see the distraught look on her son's face, and soon the whole story came out. After talking a bit, mother and son knelt in prayer, praying for the boy who was the real thief

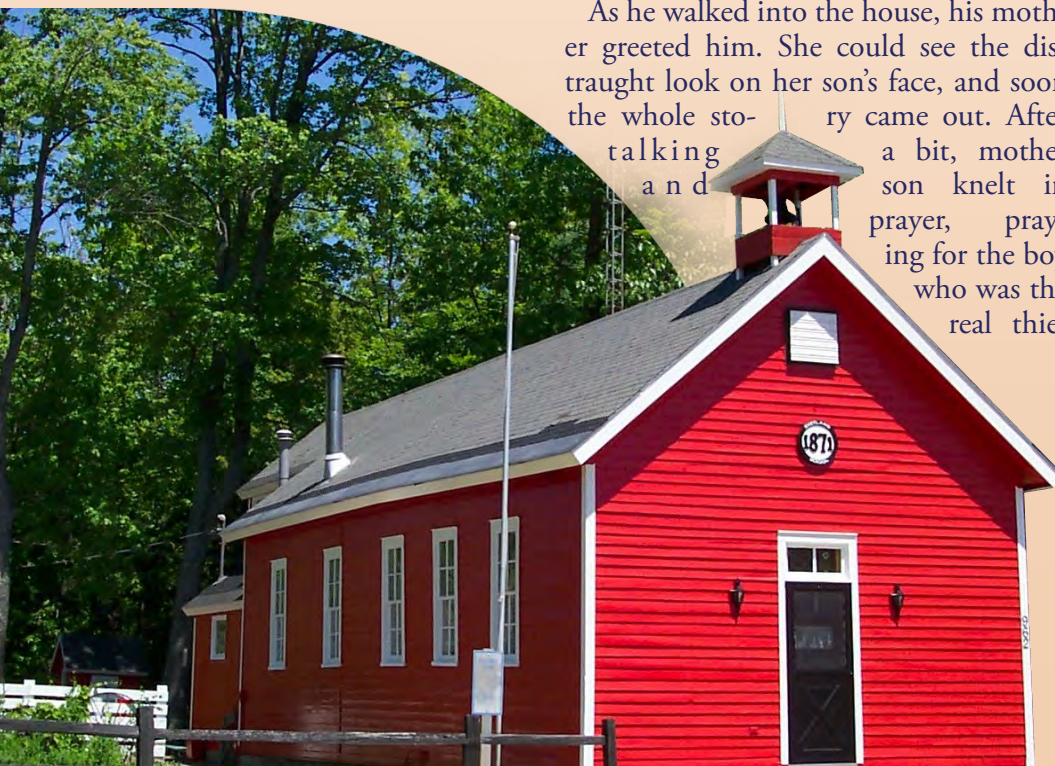
and praying that Kenneth would have the courage to stand for the right.

The following day, school opened in the normal manner, but at 10 a.m., came Student Assembly hour, in which all students gathered together. Two of the local school board officials were present, for it had been determined that they would summarily deal with the boy suspected of being the thief.

Suddenly, the students saw Jack stand to his feet, trembling. "I-I-I know something about this, if you will let me tell it," he faltered. Coming to the front, he said between sobs, "I am the one who stole the money." Then continuing, he stated, "And the reason I am telling you all this is that last night I had a dream. In my dream, I saw a man unlike anyone I have ever seen before. There was something about this man in that I knew he cared about me. He had the most wonderful face I have ever seen.

"In my dream, this man made me know that what I was doing was hurting him, and more than anything, I did not want to hurt the man in my dream. I do not know who that man was. Maybe some of you know who he was; maybe some of you could tell me about him.

"Anyway," Jack said, "here is your money (handing it to the teacher). Do with me whatever you want, only never let me forget the face of the man I saw in my dream."\*





An incredible story of transformation! Yet, look closely. What was it that changed Jack? Who had he encountered? In his dream, he had come face to face with Jesus, and it changed him.

In the Scriptures, there is a story of another young man who is changed when he comes face to face with Jesus.

We find the story in Isaiah chapter 6, starting with verse 1:

***“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”***

Now, Isaiah was a prophet of God, called to ministry and serving during the reign of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh.

We can tell the timing of Isaiah’s vision was early in his ministry, for it occurred after the death of Uzziah, the first king, which would have occurred when Isaiah was relatively young.

Continuing with verses 2 and 3:

***“Above it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.***

***And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”***

So, Isaiah had a vision, and in vision he saw the throne of God, and one of the

angels around the throne said the whole earth is full of God’s glory.

In prophecy, when will the whole earth be full of the glory of God? When does that occur?

We find the Book of Revelation refers to this time in chapter 18 and verse 1, where it says:

***“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.”***

This is further expounded upon in Habakkuk 2:14, which states:

***“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”***

The Bible speaks of a coming time shortly before Christ’s return when the power of God’s Spirit will be poured out upon His waiting people. This is similar to what happened in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost. In the power of the Spirit, men and women go out with boldness to make Christ known. This event, at the end of time, is termed the Latter Rain, for it is the refreshing from the presence of the Lord that occurs just before earth’s final harvest.

The Bible says in the Book of Joel, chapter 2:

***“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.”***  
(Verse 23)

***“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”***  
(Verse 28)

Thus, the power of the Spirit of God, shining through His people, lightens the world with Heaven’s final warning. This is also known as the “Loud Cry.”



Continuing with Isaiah’s vision, we read . . .

***“And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.”***  
—Isaiah 6:4

Why are the posts of the door shaken and the house filled with smoke?

Inside the temple of God was something called the altar of incense. From this altar, the smoke of burning fragrant coals would rise up before the mercy seat or throne of God.

Revelation 8:4 tells us that the smoke from the incense is identified with the prayers of God’s saints.

Now what is the significance that the posts of the door are shaken?

For a deeper clue, we go to the Book of Amos, chapter 9.







In verse 1, we read about the shaking of the posts of the door . . .

***“I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake . . . and I will slay the last of them with the sword.”***

The smiting of the door results in the shaking of the posts.

The context of Amos 9 includes the sifting of Israel or the sifting of God’s church at the end of time. In verse 9, we read:

***“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”***

The sifting or “shaking” of the posts is the shaking of God’s church, which happens near the end of time and occurs as the prayers of God’s people are ascending earnestly before him, meaning the temple is filled with smoke.

Isaiah 6:5 says:

***“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”***

During the period of the shaking of the church, Joel chapter 2 tells us that God’s people will be weeping between the porch and the altar, crying out for God to spare His people during this troubling time.

The intensity of the shaking is compounded by the persecution coming upon God’s church, as the mark of the beast is being enforced. During this same time, God’s destructive judgments are in the land.

The honest in heart are earnestly seeking the Lord. As they do, they realize the wretchedness of their filthy condition, their unfitness for Heaven, and their desperate need of the righteousness of Christ. Their situation is typified in the story of Joshua, the high priest, found in Zechariah chapter 3. In that story, Joshua was clothed with filthy rags as he stood before the Lord, and Satan stood by to accuse him (see our previous study titled *The Dragon’s Roar*, on this subject).

In Isaiah’s vision, he likewise sees his sinful condition in a whole new light, for he had never before realized how spiritually poor, blind, and naked he was until he came face to face with His Lord.

Isaiah 6:6 says:

***“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.”***

What is the angel bringing? A live coal. What makes a coal “live”? It is on fire.

Where did the coal come from? The altar.

When the Holy Spirit fell upon the early disciples, what visible form was revealed? Tongues of Fire.

In the Bible, fire is often used as a symbol to represent the Spirit of God and His transforming power.

Isaiah 6:7 says:

***“And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”***

Does this sound anything like what happened to Joshua in Zechariah, chapter 3? In that chapter, Joshua had his filthy garments removed and was clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness.

Now, Joshua, as we learned in a prior study, represented God’s people at the end of time, when the church would be shaken followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or Latter Rain.





So, let's review:

Isaiah has a revelation of who God is. This comes during a time of shaking.

In the revelation of who God is, there is a revelation of who Isaiah is: revealing total wretchedness.

Isaiah confesses his sin as a woe, and in the realization of his unworthiness, something happens: he is touched by a live coal (or fire) from off the altar, and his sin is purged or removed. Does that sound like an end-time scenario?

Notice what Peter says in Acts 3:19:

***“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”***

Now the term, “times of refreshing” is another term for the time of the Latter Rain, when the Spirit of God is poured out and the earth becomes full of God's glory, as the Loud Cry message goes out to the world.

Notice what Peter says though: “that your sins may be blotted out.” When? “When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

What does that mean?

Here, Peter is not referring to individual forgiveness of sin nor the surety of salvation. The Bible is very clear that:

***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” —1 John 1:9***

Also:

***“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” —2 Corinthians 6:2***

Here, Peter is referring to something unique that occurs in Heaven at the very end of time, when there is a blotting out of the record of sin during the times of refreshing from the Spirit of God.

The Bible teaches that a record of sin is recorded in the books of Heaven. We find this brought out in Daniel 7:10, which states: “the judgment was set and the books opened.” We also find it stated in Revelation 20:12, that “the dead were judged according to what was written in the books” and also in Revelation 3:5, where Jesus says, “And I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life.”

So, it is clear there is a record made of sin, and there is a judgment or review of the record books before Christ returns, for the Bible says when He returns, His



reward is with Him.

In this review or judgment, it is determined who has truly surrendered their lives to God and accepted the salvation which Christ offers, and who has not.

After all, the Bible says in Matthew 7:21:

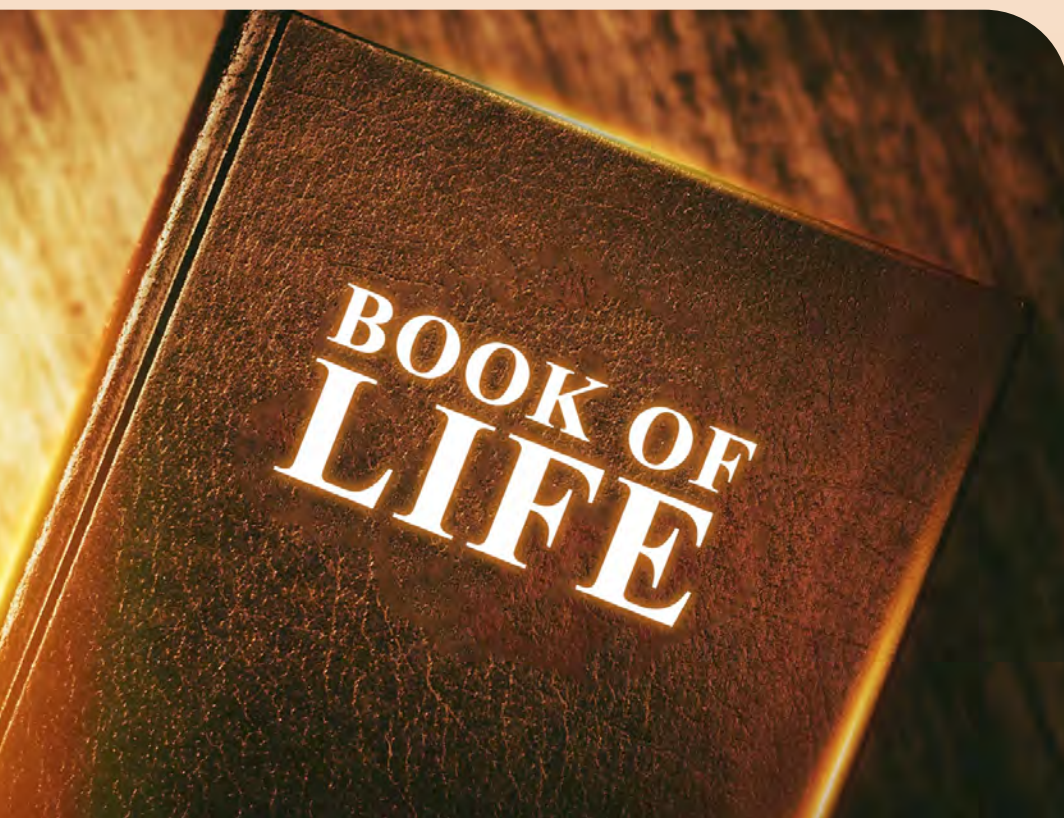
***“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”***

Many claim the name of Christ, but deny Him in their lives. Thus, we see that prior to Christ's return, a final and just determination is rendered for every case in the courts of Heaven.

Now, during this time of judgment, when the saints of God are being “sealed,” the record of everyone's sin is still in place in the books, both the righteous and the wicked. However, at the end of this judgment, the sins of God's people (the righteous) are removed from the books of Heaven to be remembered no more. This thought is brought out in the following quote:

***“When the times of refreshing (latter rain) shall come . . . then the sins of the repentant soul who received the grace of Christ . . . will be removed from the records of heaven . . . and be remembered no more . . .”***

***—Signs of the Times, May 16, 1895***







We also find this time referred to in Jeremiah 50:20:

*"In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."*

Another quote states:

"The sins of Israel must go to judgment beforehand. Every sin must be confessed at the sanctuary, then the work will move, it must be done now. The latter rain is coming on those that are pure—all, then, will receive it as

formerly." —General Conference Daily Bulletin, February 7, 1893

In the book, *The Great Controversy*, the servant of the Lord states the following regarding the saints of God (those who were sealed):

"Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance." (Page 620)

Thus, we find at the time of the Latter Rain:

1. The saints of God (within the church) are sealed.
2. Their record of sin is removed from the books of Heaven.
3. They are now prepared to receive the Latter Rain, which results in the giving of the Loud Cry to those who have never heard.

Continuing with Isaiah 6:8 it states:

*"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."*

We are counseled in *Testimonies*, Volume 9, Page 46:

"But to the call, 'Whom shall I send?' there have been few to respond, 'Here

am I; send me.'"

"When the reproach of indolence and slothfulness shall have been wiped away from the church, the Spirit of the Lord will be graciously manifested. Divine power will be revealed. The light of truth will shine forth in clear, strong rays, and . . . The earth will be lighted with the glory of the Lord."

Notice that presently, few are willing to say, "Here am I; send me," yet a change is coming to God's people. Though it will come under a time of intense persecution and trouble, nevertheless, it will come.

This change that comes energizes God's people to go forward as one to make Christ known, for now the dross has been burned out of their human hearts, and like the early disciples, nothing can keep them from presenting Christ to the world.

Isaiah 6:9,11 states:

*"And he said, Go . . .*

*Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate . . ."*

After his sin is removed, Isaiah goes out to give the message of the Lord, until when? Until the cities be wasted. What period of time is this referring to?

Again, we return to the Book of Joel, chapter 2:

*"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." (Verse 29)*

We know this is referring to the time of the Latter Rain. Now, notice the next verse:

*"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." (Verse 30)*

The time of the Latter Rain is also the time of the beginning of the direct judgments of God upon a wicked world. It is not the time of the seven last plagues, but





just prior to the plagues, for it is judgments still mixed with mercy, as those filled with the Spirit go forth with a “loud cry” to give the Bible’s last warning message. Thus, they are pleading with people to make their final decision.

As these judgments fall upon a wicked world, and particularly on the cities, they awaken many to the reality that earth’s final days are at hand. On every side, people will be hungering for truth and finding that it is the righteousness of Christ that truly saves. Speaking of this period, the servant of the Lord says:

“The time of God’s destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter. Large numbers will be admitted who in these last days hear the truth for the first time.”

—Bible Commentary 7, Page 979

Let’s review what we have learned:

Isaiah is given a picture of the Lord, and in so doing, he is brought to see his own



wretchedness. As a result, he mourns his wretched condition. While in this state, he is touched with a coal (fire) brought from the altar, his sin is removed (blotted out or purged) and it is remembered no more.

Suddenly Isaiah is changed and ready to go give the Lord’s message, and he goes forth to proclaim it till the cities are wasted.

What prophecy does that sound like to you?

The story of Isaiah 6 is the story of God’s church at the end of time. For in a time of shaking, persecution, and earnest prayer, God’s people will seek the Lord their God. As they do, He will reveal Himself (in character) to them. As they look upon Him, whom their sins have pierced, they receive a stark realization of their truly wretched, sinful condition.

As the people of God plead before Him for purity of heart, the command goes forth, and they are touched by the power of the Holy Spirit. Heaven’s final judgment is rendered on behalf of those who are now sealed, and they go forth in one last “loud” cry to tell the world of Christ’s imminent return.

During this time, the knowledge of salvation is seen flashing everywhere, and the world is lighted with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. God’s people maintain this loud cry until the cities are wasted by God’s falling judgments upon earth’s wickedness.

The story of Isaiah 6 also reveals the transforming power of Christ available to God’s people today. For being a Christian is all about being transformed into the glorious image of Jesus, which is representing Him in every thought, word and deed.

As we consider that beautiful thought, let us remember what it was that ultimately changed Isaiah, it was the revelation of Christ to his innermost soul! Thus, the same power will also transform His church today.

The servant of the Lord states:

“The vision of Isaiah represents the position of God’s people in the last days, when they are privileged to see by faith the work going on in the sanctuary above. Jesus is seated with His Father on the throne, high and lifted up, and all who come to God through Him will find access into the inner sanctuary. The view of the glory of God in His excellent majesty prepares the heart to humility; and the very work done for Isaiah will be done for all who humble themselves and acknowledge their sins; for the bow of promise is above the throne.”—*The Bible Echo*  
September 9, 1895

The same revelation that changed Isaiah will change God’s people as well. As they view a perfect revelation of the righteousness of Christ and catch a glimpse of the glory of His character, like Isaiah, they too are changed.



The words of that old faithful hymn ring true:

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.”

However, we do not need to wait until the end of time and in the extremity of our condition to plead for Christ to be revealed to us. God desires us to plead for this revelation now.

For it is when others see the power of the Spirit of God in our lives, when they see the reflection of Christ in our character, that they will be changed as well.

Do you want that change in your life today?

Many years ago, in Syria, there was a young, ragged girl named Nayoof, who cared for her father's goats. At times, her young brother Habeeb accompanied her. One day while out herding, Nayoof and her brother met another young shepherdess named Washiba. Washiba was not ragged but was dressed in nice, colorful clothes. Washiba shared her lunch with Nayoof and Habeeb, and the two girls became friends.

Yet, there was something different about Washiba. She was a Jesus worshipper and went to a Jesus school. Nayoof's father hated the Jesus people, and when Nayoof brought up the subject of going to the Jesus school, her father threatened to beat her and responded, “You will never go to that school.”

Time passed, and Washiba shared all about Jesus and the Jesus school with Nayoof, though Nayoof never told her father. Then Nayoof found a great longing in her heart to go to the Jesus



school as well, and in the evenings, she would confide such things to her mother.

One day, while out with the goats, Nayoof looked over the mountains and saw her friend Washiba and Washiba's father setting forth on a journey through the mountain trail. Nayoof knew what it meant. It was Washiba's time to return to the Jesus school. Suddenly an overwhelming longing seized Nayoof, and she called to her brother, “Take the goats back to the house,” and off she ran to catch up with her friend.

It took quite some time, for Washiba and her father were walking at a steady pace, but finally rounding the mountain trail and going down to the river, Nayoof caught up to them as they were resting.

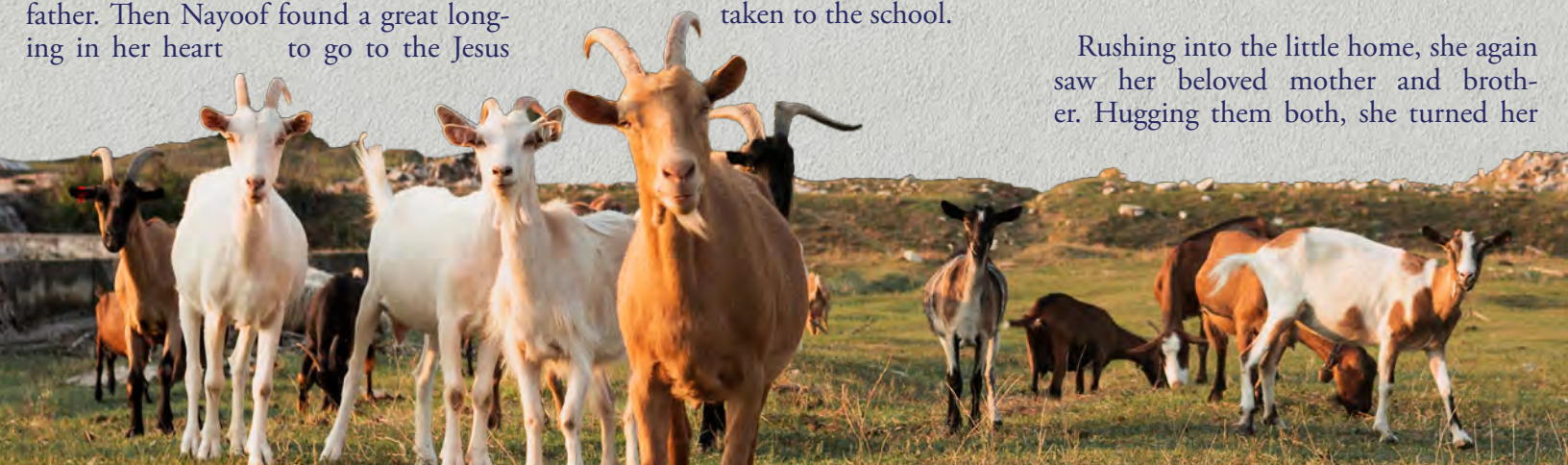
In tears, she told Washiba she wanted to go to the school and had run away. She stated that her father would now kill her if he found her. She was comforted by Washiba and Washiba's father, and taken to the school.

At the school, her rags were changed into beautiful school clothing. The Jesus people were so nice, and she had food to eat and a place to sleep. But in time, word came from her father that she must never return home; for she was now dead to him.

As the years went by, Nayoof changed from a ragged girl to a fit young woman. She went through the nursing course and helped many, both in physical healing and in pointing them to her Savior for spiritual healing. After about five years, an epidemic of typhus spread through the country, and word came to Nayoof, through Washiba's father, that Nayoof's father was terribly ill.

“I must go to him,” she said. “No,” said her friends. “He will not accept you, but will only curse you.” But Nayoof was determined. Both she and a friend traveled quickly to her home village. Upon arriving, the village people said to her, “It is too late, he is dying. He knows nothing.”

Rushing into the little home, she again saw her beloved mother and brother. Hugging them both, she turned her







attention to her father. Tenderly, she brought out the clean, white supplies and linens she had brought, and prepared a comfortable bed for him to lie in. Then she sat by his side for the next two weeks, tending to his every need. During this time, he was in and out of consciousness and quite delusional. Finally, as time passed, he awoke and seemed surprisingly better. Turning to his wife, he said, "I had a dream that our little Nayoof was a beautiful white angel and came and took care of me. Please tell her to come home."

Then he looked and said, "There is the beautiful angel," pointing to his daughter. "Father, it is me, I am your little Nayoof." "But," said her father, "you were only a ragged girl. Now look, you're a beautiful woman."\*\*

Later, he slept and awoke again. This time, he was even more alert than before. "God is good," he said. Turning to his daughter, he said, "Nayoof, my beautiful daughter, take your brother Habeeb also to the Jesus school, so they can make him, just like they made you."

What was it that changed Nayoof's father? It was seeing the reflection of Christ in his daughter's character.

What is it that will change the world?

It will be seeing the reflection of Christ in your character and mine.

Jesus said,

***"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."***  
—John 12:32

Would you like to join me in saying, "Yes Lord, I want You lifted up in my life, that all who look at me, will see only You instead"? Is this your desire?

Let's pray:

*Heavenly Father, we praise You for the gift of transformation made available through the power of Your Holy Spirit and confess that such transformation does not come from our own efforts, but from Your perfect righteousness.*

*We pray that, like Isaiah, our lips will be touched with the live coal from off the altar, that our sinful nature (self) would die so that Christ alone is seen.*

*We realize time is short and many don't know you. Please grant us the power of your Spirit to boldly proclaim to the world the news of a soon coming Savior.*

*We thank You for hearing us in the most precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

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\* "That Wonderful Face" Youth's Instructor November 15, 1932, Violette June Cady.

\*\* "The Yesuah (Jesus) School" Youth's Instructor May 4, 1926.