

*“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).*

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## “THANKS BE TO GOD”

*John Edwards*

This phrase appears twice in the word of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 8:16). As Christians, we are to be a thankful people (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17; 1 Th. 5:18; Heb. 13:15; Phil. 4:6; Col. 2:7; 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:3-4; Col. 3:15), and have so much to be thankful for! Like Paul, we can say THANKS BE TO GOD:

**FOR VICTORY.** Who likes to lose? It’s thrilling to learn that your team got the victory! There’s victory in Jesus! Paul wrote, *“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor. 15:57).

**FOR TRIUMPH.** Satan is a formidable foe. Peter penned, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Pet. 5:8). Yet, God leads us in triumph in Christ! *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place”* (2 Cor. 2:14).

**FOR THE CARE OF CHRISTIANS.** Aren’t you grateful to know those who care? It’s a sad thing when, *“I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man*

*that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul”* (Ps. 142:4). Paul said, *“But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for us”* (2 Cor. 8:16). When Christians *“have the same care for one another”* (1 Cor. 12:25), we ought to be thankful!

**GOD’S GIFT.** God is a great gift-giver (Mt. 7:11)! He *“...gave his only begotten Son...”* (Jn. 3:16). Romans 6:23 says, *“...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* James recorded, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...”* (Jas. 1:17). In the context of *“the ministering to the saints”* (v. 1), Paul declared, *“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift”* (2 Cor. 9:15).

**BRETHREN.** How many times have you let your brothers and sisters in Christ know how thankful you are for them? Do you ever tell them, “I thank God for you”? Such expressions of thanks are common in the writings of Paul, the man of God (Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:3; 1 Th. 1:12; 2 Th. 2:13; Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Philem. 4).

**THE INHERITANCE.** God’s future blessings are in the form of an inheritance (Acts 20:32; 26:18; Eph. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:4). It is written in Colossians 1:12,

*“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”* (Col. 1:12). How did He do that? Read the next two verses: *“...delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”* (vv. 13-14). Aren’t you grateful to be in line to inherit?

**GOD’S GRACE.** We sing, *“Amazing grace how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me!”* Titus 2:11 informs us, *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”* Think where we would be without God’s grace! In his writing to the Corinthians Paul expressed thanksgiving for God’s grace in these words: *“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor. 1:4). Now read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and you will understand why!

**WHEN FOLKS RECEIVE THE TRUTH.** Not everyone receives the truth, and such is indeed sad! 2 Thessalonians 2:10 states: *“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”* But thanks be to God for those who

do receive the truth like those in Thessalonica! *“For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe”* (1 Th. 2:13).

#### **WHEN FAITH GROWS.**

Faith is essential! We can't please God without it (Heb. 11:6)! Faith has great potential to grow as one gives concerted attention to hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Paul, Silas and Timothy were able to say to the church of the Thessalonians: *“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith growth exceedingly...”* (2 Th. 1:3).

**WHEN BRETHREN LOVE ONE ANOTHER.** It's a beautiful thing when brethren love each other as the Bible teaches (Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; 1 Th. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:11; 4:7, 11-12; 2 Jn. 5). When Paul gave thanks in 2 Thessalonians 1:3, he went on to say, *“...and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.”* Our cup needs to run over in

that we abound in brotherly love!

**TO BE A MINISTER.** Paul uttered, *“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry”* (1 Tim. 1:12). Paul did not let his past (*“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious”*, v. 13) keep him from being a minister! May God help us to share His grace with others and consider it a great privilege to be *“ministers”* (1 Cor. 3:5).

Have you given thanks to God lately?

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### **TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL**

*John Edwards*

The Scriptures record some occasions when men were touched by an angel.

**JACOB.** Genesis 32 records a wrestling contest. Verse 25 says, *“And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh...”* Hosea 12:4 adds,

*“Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed...”* May this lesson touch our hearts: If we depend on our own strength, we will fail. If we rely on the help of God, we will prevail!

**ELIJAH.** When Jezebel threatened to have the prophet Elijah killed, he *“...sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die...”* (1 Ki. 19:4). *“And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold an angel touched him...And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him...”* (vv. 5-7). The Lord still had work for Elijah to do (vv. 15-21). So, if you find yourself under the juniper tree, let it touch your heart that you are not alone, *“Arise and eat”* (vv. 5, 7), *“Go, return on thy way...”* (v. 15) and do the Lord's bidding!

**DANIEL.** Daniel 9 records the man of God's prayer and confession. Daniel said, *“Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation”* (v. 21). This touches us with the power of prayer!

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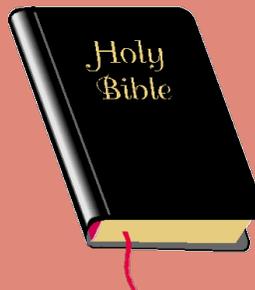
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