THOUGHTS OF MAY, 2012

1. The Lord is the Master Architect of all creation, before and beyond [remember that He existed before He created anything], infinitely and finitely. That has to do with being in direct oversight and control of every cell in our bodies and every event in our lives. He is looking for those who will acknowledge Him to be that sort [and more] of an All-Mighty. That is an accurate and life-changing theological building block. Once we begin to get that revelation, it settles many issues for each of us, which allows us to then get about life, faithfulness and service the way Jesus did. If Jesus did not know that foundational bit of theology, He never would have left heaven to become a part of His creation’s humanity.

This last week, the last week of April, I had spent days working on a series of 4 talks, one to be given every Sunday evening in May. As I was putting the last touches on it at my computer, it just “went.” All of it disappeared. After Nancy’s and my prayers, and phone consultations with K. E. and K. B., almost all of it was restored. Until it was restored, I had ample time to tell the Lord that He had millions of reasons for that to have happened but that I hoped for some of His abundant restoration. The small part that I had to rewrite was better than the first edition, thus showing one of those millions of reasons.

2. Along the same Thought, the thought that bad things happen for glorious purposes, some of the economy experts are saying the world in headed for a double dip recession, meaning that this recession will not fully recover before we have another.

Britain is in its longest peacetime slump in a century, suffering the worst recession recovery cycle of the last 100 years [excepting the period of World War II].

The Eurozone is much worse off. Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, France and Holland are descending further by the week. Their economic problems may go on for decades, without a recovery in our lifetimes.

China is in a serious slowdown. Japan is in a recession. Australia is on the verge of a recession. That and more, plus several things not having to do directly with economics [wars, terrorism, weather insanity, immorality, etc.], can mean that we are looking at a synchronized global slowdown of huge scope.

Everything is spiritual, and is orchestrated ultimately by the Lord for His purposes. We appear to be in for a cleansing. It will be painful, yes, but it will be good for the nations – meaning people. Spiritually, it would be the best of times.

3. Have you noticed that the term “global warming” is going out of style and that “global climate change” is taking its place? Two things have caused the change:

a) There was a worldwide scandal in the wake of disclosures that scientists have slanted their observations to confirm their doomsday hypothesis. It was discovered that they had distorted their data to dramatize their politically-connected message of global warming.

b) Observations clearly revealed that over the last dozen years or so there has been no global warming at all! Global temperatures have been cooling. In order to lessen their embarrassment and continue the panic, the term “global climate change” was invented.

My Thought is that whether there are or are not global climate problems, the movement of those pushing that message was and is for the purpose of gaining control of nations. Lots of cover has to be removed in order to reveal that purpose. It is not a surprise to Bible students that all roads lead to a one world government, meaning the millennial reign of Christ after a short reign by the anti-Christ.

4. If you are looking for more evidence of a creator’s design, how’s this? The gestation period of animals and humans is always a multiple of seven [the “perfect” number]:

Mice – 21 [3X7] days.

Rabbits and rats – 28 [4X7] days.

Cats – 56 [8X7] days.

Dogs – 63 [9X7] days.

Lions – 98 [14X7] days.

Sheep – 147 [21X7] days.

Common hens – 21 [3X7] days.

Ducks – 42 [6X7] days

Humans – 280 [40X7] days.

Common germs – 21 [3X7] minutes [I need someone to check my memory on this one].

There are 7 colors in the visible light spectrum. Although there are many more frequencies than these, the human eye was designed to see only 7 – the colors of the rainbow. Corresponding to colors in the visible light spectrum are the seven basic musical notes [the eighth note is an octave of the first].

Seven seems to be the predominating number, not only used as a numeral, but in the occurrences of important words. In the Revelation, “Jesus” occurs 14 times [2X7], seven times alone and seven times with “Christ.” “Lord” occurs 21 times [3X7]. “Spirit” appears 14 times [2X7]. I don’t think John knew what he was doing in that regard, but the Holy Spirit did.

5. What kind of favor have you been receiving lately? To the miserable it is mercy, to the poor it is pity, to the suffering it is compassion, to the obstinate it is patience, and to the unworthy it is grace. We can understand things about ourselves if we will analyze the type of favor we have been receiving.

6. The feasts of Israel and their dates were created and set into Israel’s life by the Lord. They are commemorative historically and are very prophetic. The first three feasts [Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits], in the first month of the Jewish calendar, point to their and the world’s Messiah’s first coming. The last three feasts [Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles], in the seventh month, point to His second coming. The middle feast [Pentecost] highlights the church. They are God’s outline of His workings with His chosen people, in allegorical style.

7. To many, it is “obvious” that the Colorado River required more than the scripturally-indicated allotted 6,000 biblical years to scratch out the Grand Canyon. But perhaps the Colorado did not do it the way it is supposed. It was a revelation to science when mud flows from the eruption of Mount St. Helens gouged out sizeable canyons through solid rock **in just a few days.** We have much to learn, and faith will help us search for truth in the right directions. Other directions are delays and dead ends.

8. Failure is tough, and it is painful, and it can remain painful [without realized redemptive value] for the rest of our lives. That’s not only bad, but it is not necessary. Righteous people make mistakes, some of which are sins, but they [the righteous] keep trying again and again. Their failures have the incomparable ability to toughen us for the next expected and bigger challenge. Failure is not the big thing to be feared, because it is part of the road to success, and greatness. “The righteous person falls seven times and gets up – Prov. 24:16.

9. Those who have no known meaning in their lives cannot be helped by vacations, bonuses or mansions. All of us have a burning need for meaning or we will continue playing meaningless games. Some of those games are “causes” but they fall short of the ultimate. When they [if ever] ask themselves, “”What am I willing to die for,” they begin to question why they even exist. There is a lot to the statement, “If you don’t know what you are willing to die for, you don’t know why you are alive.” Jesus knew exactly why He was alive and was willing to die for it. So do I. Nancy’s and my lives are full of eternal [quality and quantity] purpose. We are thankful for the Lord’s plans and accomplishments, much of which will go onward after we leave this earthlife.

10. I’m basically very simple. That makes my Bible teachings and personal testimonies understandable. I can explain my life in simple terms and stories, because they are simple. That also allows me to take questions and be able to answer them to others’ satisfaction. Those questions also sharpen me and remind me to keep it simple so I can understand and answer challenges. “If you can’t explain it, you don’t fully understand it” – Prov. 22:18.

11. By all traditional military, social and economic reasoning, the likelihood of Israel’s survival, surrounded by Arab nations with 640 times more land mass and 360 million more people, is slim. But for that little nation the regular rules do not apply. Its existence continues to be a miracle because the Lord’s eyes are always upon it” – Deut. 11:12. It’s good that the same applies to every believer.

12. With all of the information going around on the internet these years, it is an exercise in wisdom and free will to resist feeding the endless flow. Just because the information is there is no reason to contribute to it. Some appear to have become addicted. A wise man has said, “All that is thought should not be said. All that is said should not be written. All that is written should not be published. All that is published should not be read.” The world needs less information [of sorts], more revelation, and more true inspiration.

13. Everyone has dreams, not of the nocturnal type but of the aspiring type. Many should not be pursued, and thus are not because they are passing fantasies. Some are possibly to be pursued but end in limbo before disappearing altogether. Others are truly inspirations and should be chased to success, or necessary failure. It’s with the middle type that we need some help. Those dreams that we just don’t act upon, but that bother us “forever,” are the ones that can be helped by our setting a deadline. Deadlines motivate us, apply pressure on us, and even supercharge us. Sometimes the difference between a dream and an accomplishment is the setting of a deadline.

14. Wives, here are some things your husbands would like for you to know but he will not likely be the one to tell them to you.

1) He loves you very much and relies upon your knowing that. He certainly does not often tell you in clear words that he loves you, but his soul is become built upon the concrete reality of his love for you. You may prefer that he speak or show his love for you in certain non-man ways, but you did not marry a woman [did you?].

2) He is very sensitive to the way you talk about him. In fact, he is painfully injured when you speak even lightly negatively about him. Making a joke about him, doing a funny thing at his expense, revealing his quirks, lightly treating his sacrifices for you – these shame him and slowly [?] chip away at his trust of you as his secret and loving sweetie.

3) Except for the Lord, he wants to be your life, no matter how good and devoted you are to the family, home or club. Special time does not need to be majority time, but it should be special and show that he is your No. 1.

4) If he is not a Christian, or if he is not a committed Christian, you greatly determine his sense of self-worth. Your response to his ability to provide for you is life-giving or death-dealing. Only/mainly you can make it life-giving even when he is in a time of failure. It’s amazing what a wife’s confidence in her husband can do to him when the whole world seems against him and his basic calling to provide for his family.

5) Appreciate him, and don’t expect him to verbalize his appreciation for your appreciation. It just builds him up. He probably doesn’t thank you for it because he has not admitted to you or to himself that he needed it. That’s just a man thing. Let him have it that way. When the strain is over, and he is on top of the world, he will tell you and others that he could not have made it through his provision-crisis without your help.

If you need more along this line, talk to Nancy, my wife.

15. I hope you are as blessed as I am at the way the Lord appears to bend His rules for the sakes of those who love him and desire to obey His every instruction. He even gives second chances where there appears [to us] to be none. Example: When Israel came out of Egypt, they brought the bones of Jacob [Gen. 50:25-26; Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32] and probably his 12 sons,’ their patriarchs who had died in Egypt. Those who carried those coffins for 40 years toward their final resting places in the Promised Land were ritually unclean and could not observe the Passovers. The Lord made exceptions for them – Num. 9:1-14. I confess to not understanding the Lord when He does that, except that His exceptions seem to be the rule [!!!]. As a Bible teacher, I must teach His word and apply it with benevolent diligence.

16. My flesh still complains a bit when I take 2 folding chairs to an out-of-doors event, one for Nancy and one for me. My flesh knows that there is little chance that I will enjoy sitting in my chair, that there will come along a lady or an older gentlemen to whom I will give my chair and they will take it after some graceful declinations. Slowly, meaning decades, my flesh is yielding to my spirit in the enjoyment of giving; that is, being more blessed by loaning my chair to another than keeping it for me. It’s the same way with saving a seat at an event. I have stopped the practice of placing my Bible or some other “marker of possession” in a seat to reserve it for myself “because I got here first.” As said, that has been slow developing.

17. Some of you saints may be having thoughts of how much longer you may live and just how you want to spend your remaining time here. Remember what Elisha told King Joash in 2 Kings 13. In short, don’t coast out; keep going at what the Lord has put your hand to until promotion time.

One very dear saint in our past had asked the Lord to let him go full steam until the boiler burst. Years later, after being honored as the man of the year in his city, he gave his appreciation speech, sat down and “died” [shed his body]. That is the patriarch’s way of moving on – Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 49:33.

18. “My conscience is captive to the Word of God.” – Martin Luther, 1521

19. Whittaker Chambers was a Communist spy in the United States Military Intelligence from 1932 to 1938. He was never discovered as a Communist agent; he was born-again and just stopped spying. The Holy Spirit showed him that revolutionary ideology [atheism, socialism, class warfare, international strife] was a lie, and that it lied about the nature of man and the source of his being.

How did his change come about? What was the Lord’s earthly tool to reveal Himself to this hardshell atheist? One morning in 1938, 10 years before he revealed his previous treasonous acts, and shortly before leaving the Communist Party, while feeding his young daughter, Chambers concluded that the shape of her ear could not be explained by Marxist materialism. Something that beautiful and unique, Chambers observed, implied design, which implied the existence of God. To Chambers, she was a divine gift.

What a wonderful and powerful God!

20. As government grows, often with the avowed purpose of helping the more vulnerable, the individual’s true and right desire to help others is replaced with a belief that government will take care of them. That is one of the clearest and strongest but least persuasive and least effective arguments for limiting the role of government at all levels. Why is a clear and strong point ineffective? Why is deeply held care for the true welfare [and religious liberty] of humanity such a weak argument against abuse of the needy? I think it is a matter of, 1) obtaining accurate information and 2) the mental training to think one step, from a fact to its proven outcome. The mind that is uninformed or unable to move from point A fact to point B result will function on superficial reasoning or none at all.

21. This week I had an eventually fruitful encounter with my carnal, judgmental, stingy flesh. On a trip out of town I stopped to refill my gas [petro type]. In a car next to mine was a man, woman and girl 5 or 6 years old. The man was in perfect disguise for possibly being an angel. He was unkempt and full of tattoos. His car was aged.

He asked if he could borrow my cell phone. I told him I did not loan my phone, and asked him what he needed. He wanted to call a buddy for help because he was out of gas and out of money. I noted that he did not ask for money or gas.

The little girl smiled and waved at me just once. I was hooked. It was no longer a matter of how undeserving this man [and family??] may be; the Lord had laid a trap for my flesh and had pulled the trigger with that one little wave. After I had filled my tank, I put 10 or so gallons in his tank, for which he and his wife were duly thankful.

When I drove away I heard that still, small voice ask, “Why didn’t you fill his tank?” My guilt-filled answer was that he had said he was a local, so he did not need a full tank. The Lord was silent; so was I. I was guilty and convicted. Next time it’s a full tank, whether it’s gas, food, rent, time, or whatever.

If you can learn from my experience you will recognize angels incognito on assignment into your life. Even if it’s not angels, it makes no difference. Humans will do God’s job equally well.

22. If we do not change today, we are not likely to change tomorrow. Tomorrow will be another today.

23. Jezebel was really an evil person. She was likely possessed by an evil spirit. At least, she was given over to evil. She was the wife of an equally bad person, King Ahab. He fought his battles and she ran him and his kingdom. She was manipulative, rebellious, immoral, and an idol worshiper.

Jezebel refused to have a relationship with anyone unless she had control and dominion. She was responsible for the nation of 10,000,000 Israelites worshipping Baal. In the nation there were only 7,000 souls faithful to Jehovah. The spirit of Jezebel was responsible for corrupting an entire nation. Satan had come full force against Israel, God’s people.

Women are not the only sex to be targeted by the spirit of Jezebel, but that spirit is uniquely effective in women. It has a sophisticated ability to target women who are embittered against men, no matter the reason. It may be due to past mistreatment, insecurity, jealousy, vanity, or an outright desire to dominate. This spirit will publicly humiliate a husband, so one way it controls him is by his fear of public embarrassment.

The spirit of Jezebel is easily found among the best of people, in and out of the church. It’s effect on the church corporately is to make the bride of Christ exactly like Jezebel.

24. The rabbis teach that “How goodly are your tents, Oh Jacob, your dwelling places, Oh Israel” [Num. 24:5] means that no one’s tent door faced anyone else’s tent door. If so, Balaam was duly impressed with Israel’s sense of modesty and privacy, and that it was a personal, community, and national trait. That which happened inside one’s tent was not for sharing; it was private! Privacy preserves dignity.

I’m going to bring that into our modern and very open lives in only one area – the various displays of one’s life on the internet. In some cases there seems to be no shame.

Home and family are special. Special relationships are not maintained when we reveal them and about them. I suppose that in a time of immodesty, anything can be revealed. Just as, “Where there is no vision the people perish,” where there is no discretion, judgment, common sense, prudence, self-control or self-discipline -- anything goes.

We need goodly tents and dwelling places, and private lives.

25. It has been said that the secret to success and a happy life is found when we begin to express gratitude. That’s good, especially when our gratitude is built around the Lord.

26. In this God-directed world we are never stuck with no way out. In our most impossible situations He makes His way for us. The question is, do we want His way for us? Our flesh may rebel at the choice, or refuse to see the choice because we believe it moves us in a negative direction. Israel, fleeing Egypt, was trapped at the Red Sea in an impossible situation. Ordinarily, there were three possibilities – swim, fight and die, or return to slavery. But they had a living and functioning God, which opened up all sorts of other possibilities.

That same God has continued to sustain faithful creation and humanity. He always makes a way out. He always turns bad things to good. Our question is: “Do we want God’s way out?”

Relying on the Lord does not mean relying on miracles. It does not mean we should abdicate personal responsibility. It almost always means doing the right thing and depending upon Him to move us and our situation forward. He runs the world, you know!

27. Truth is not meant to merely change our minds, but to change our lives.

28. I’m impressed with the stability and faithfulness of many saints, when everything is going well.

When I think or write something like that, my soul quivers a bit as I review my attitude. My first check is to see if it’s the truth. The second is to see if it’s in love. There is yet a third check – would I say it face-to-face to my Best Friend about His beloved bride for whom He died while rescuing her from the pit and has co-covenanted with me to bring her into perfection?

29. Social-economic-political freedom is impossible without a free economy. The more restrictions made upon our economy, the less freedom we have in all other ways. The exception: Spiritual freedom is increased when religious freedom is decreased.

30. The best way to help the poor is to start a business, if you are in a free economy. To do business, you must attract, satisfy and keep your customers. Better products, service and prices are essential to success. The public, including the poor, recognize those qualities and are drawn to them due to being benefitted by them. In turn, satisfied customers benefit the business.

31. Do you recognize the spirit of rebellion when it challenges you? It can be very deceptive, like; “I don’t want to do it just because others do it.” Surely, we don’t want to be blind followers, but I have heard that said by those gathered for a group singing, or going through hand actions, or kneeling on kneelers to pray according to a more liturgical occasion than usual.

How about, “I don’t want to do it just because it’s written in the Bible. I want to do it when it comes out of my soul naturally. I want it to be really me, not because I should do it. That would be legalism.” When I have done that, much later I have realized that I rejected God’s human tutors in the classroom of my life. Good habits are most commonly developed by intention. They later become more spontaneous righteousness – the ones we would have liked to have started with without putting forth effort.

32. Have you youngers ever wondered how you will ever learn to be a good mom or dad? You have come to the right place. Sit down for a minute and I’ll put your wondering mind at peace. No, I’m not going to be religious, although the Lord Himself and His word [the Bible] will be a really big help to you.

I’m going to go right to the answer: Your children will teach you. The Lord will sustain and encourage you, and His word will give you valuable basics, but your children will teach you to be a good parent.

Each child will teach you something different. Each will require you to adjust and build on the basics, to customize according to them. If you are a hoverer, you will lose that with your first child. If you are a controller, that will go with your second. You will be changed with every child, and with every stage in their growth.

So, it you want to be a good parent, first learn the basics. Your children will teach you the remainder.

33. I can imagine five types of sermons, each causing its own particular response in the hearers. Each has a measure of goodness.

The first is a sermon designed to offer heaven instead of hell. It spreads a wide net. After all, “who wants to go to hell? Heaven is a far better place.” Responders to this preaching are green fruit, self-centered, self-etc. – meaning that they want the best for themselves. Who wouldn’t? Read on.

The second is the type of sermon [actually, more of an “overall ambience”] that appeals to social reasonings. “My family belongs to this church. So does my boss.” “I like the paneling and the air conditioning.” “The building/singing/music is my style.” The preacher preaches comfortable sermons. Things are pleasing to the senses. We are attracted and comfortable in our flesh. Doesn’t Jesus want us to be comfortable in church?

The third type of sermon is designed to move the hearer to service. “Saved to serve.” “Don’t just sit there. The world out there is lost.” The preaching in this church is effective, especially among those who are results-driven. Doing nothing for periods of time, especially for years, evidences failure to them. Quietness and stillness are wasteful. Activity is evidence of spiritual reality.

The fourth is designed to move the hearer into righteous living. Righteous living, which is to be diligently sought, can be the highest purpose of a self-centered Christian’s life. Much of Scripture’s teaching encourages us to righteous living. Myriads of books are written on righteous living. The result of righteous living is our betterment and a measure of God’s glorification, now and in the hereafter. It is thought by some to be the highest quality of Christian being.

The fifth calls us to bear our crosses daily. Those who respond are “ripe fruit.” They join the family, not for what they can get out of being a member, but for the glory of Jesus. They respond to His great love by giving Him their utmost. He is their life. They are called “disciples.” This preaching brings into the church those who are escaping “self” because the Lord is everything to them and He deserves their all.

34. I wonder if we can refer to self-responsibility as a gift?? It may be a gift, but it may be learned or improved by being taught by parents or others, or through other classrooms of life’s experience. I’m not real good at remembering cerebral things of my childhood. Life on a German-American farm was not real cerebral to us as kids. I don’t think I was taught to be a responsible person as such. It seems that I was given an assignment and was expected to do it the right way and in the time allotted, so I did. That means my parents, uncles and aunts, and grandparents had good parenting skills without being able to describe their methods as such. Much of life is passed on from elders to youngers through example and trust, and by being put in places of responsibility from early age.

35. Since leaving office several years ago, former Prime Minister Tony Blair has become a very religious man. He converted to Catholicism, started a religious foundation, and has made vibrant and bold statements on the role of faith in society. Recently he told a congregation at Holy Trinity Bromptom Church in London: “I think a world without faith would be a world on the path to tragedy and disaster.” That’s certainly a move in the right direction. I wonder if he shared some of his faith with President Obama during their recent visit in Washington.

36. A Gallup poll this month showed that Americans are more pro-life and less pro-abortion than in quite some time. This trend started when the public began to be educated on partial-birth “abortion,” and ultrasound technology pictures began to be shown to mothers of their preborn babies. The truth does good things.

37. As we continue on the course for a one-world government, take a look at least occasionally at what continues to go on in Europe. The advantages [one currency (not yet accomplished), no borders (not yet accomplished), one court system and set of laws (not yet accomplished), one economy (not yet accomplished), one cultural outlook (not yet accomplished), and one etc. of the 27 nation European Union are becoming inadequate compared to the disadvantages. Adequate and broadly satisfactory agreements are uncommon. Compromises dilute longstanding stabilities.

The dilemmas of a too-large government warn us that an absolute dictator is the only solution, of which we have two on the horizon – the unrighteous antichrist and the righteous Christ.

38. I have had a recent exposure to a group of bureaucrats in a committee meeting. I’m part of the committee. I think we may be able to accomplish something, but… My “but” is that I have again been impressed with how the government in its various forms is trying to do the work of families and the church, and that government is significantly incapable of doing anything socially without causing more need and problems.

When the church breaks down, the individual breaks down; when the individual breaks down, the family breaks down; when the family breaks down, social structures break down – and civil governments are incapable of healing breakdowns on any of those levels. Brief example: Widows and other women, especially those with children, need financial help [money, apartment, food stamps, etc.]. The government gives them help according to their needs, including according to the number of children in the family and the presence or absence of a father/husband/paycheck generator. The single woman chooses to have more children and no husband because she can be “fathered” by the government. Another family unit breaks down.

So, I am on this committee to help the government do the work of the church and the family. I expect us to move further from the truth at every meeting as we devise governmental solutions to spiritual problems. We will try to do our best.

39. The bad news is that all humans have sinned and are headed for a hell worse than anything here on earth. The good news is that we are offered a savior, Jesus Christ, through whom we can be forgiven of all our sins and cleansed of our sinfulness. At one point we escape from hell.

If the good news is changed to our being made happy in Christ and that we can escape the hassles of this life, we will be disappointed in the message and its results.

Shalom, this month meaning: “The authority that destroys chaos and establishes order.” Jesus has that authority in and over you, and you have it over those He has given you. Trust Him.