

# The Gathering Net

Dear Saints,

In the last 30 years of counseling and pastoring, many people, including Christians, have asked me, "Why is life so difficult? Why do we, especially as sons of the King of King's,

have to go through so many trials, pains, problems, frustrations and sadness?" Most of the time I had a succinct and concise answer; "This is not heaven and we live in a fallen world!" Obviously, I would follow up with scripture that would refer to our time here on earth being a (1.) temporary training ground, (2.) being conformed to the image of Christ, (3.) in addition to this we share the Good News of Jesus with others that we have the same kind of problems they have, but our blessing is that we can experience peace, joy, and hope in the midst of our world falling apart. It is true that we believers have the additional benefit of getting to taste portions of heaven here on earth. But there is one fruit from the Holy Spirit that carries me through everyday life. It is Hope! It is defined as "a favorable and confident expectation of the unseen; the happy and joyful anticipation of good in the future." One of my favorite scriptures pertaining to hope is **Romans 15: 13: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit!"** Saints, that verse, along with **Acts 17: 28 "in Him I live and move and have my being and my breath."** sustain me every day of my life!

## Heaven on Earth

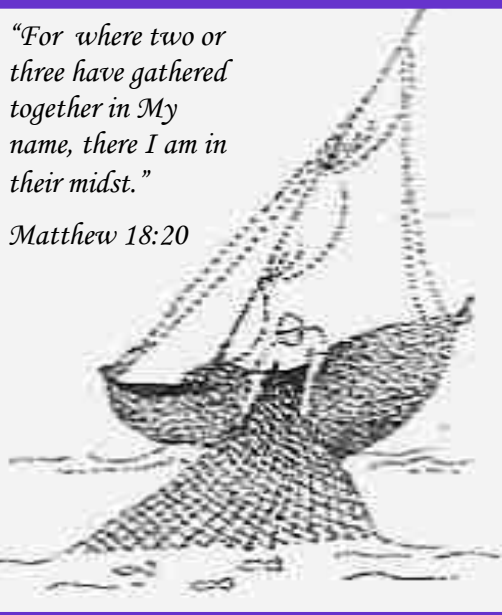
But there is one aspect of hope I would like to address for this newsletter. It is the *hope* of "**a New Heaven and a New Earth**", the focus being on the word *new*. One day as we pass through the doors of death, we who are redeemed, will finally be in the presence of the Lord and see him face to face. WOW! Can't wait!! But, for many years I have always wondered what Heaven is really going to be like. Without sounding negative, it always seems to me to be somewhat abstract and ethereal. I have had difficulty in putting my mind around the reality of Heaven. Now, I

want to digress here a moment. Obviously, my finite mind cannot comprehend eternal and infinite things. Also, I am a strong proponent that if Scripture is silent about some subjects—I am about to be emphatic here—we should not speculate or build a doctrine on what WE say it will be. Scripture does give us some hints about heaven, but there are some things that remain mysteries of God to men. Now to return to the word, **new**, my focal point. I have thought for many, many years that what God started in the beginning (**Genesis 1 & 2**) He will eventually finish or as I like to say "God will have his way... in spite of mankind and sin." There are many scriptures to support this but we do not have the time or space to go through them. Now back to the point: New Heaven and New Earth. I have felt somewhat guilty about enjoying so much of this life here on earth.. What I mean is, I love to have fun. I enjoy good food (don't even go there), fellowship, relationships and also the beauty and awesomeness of nature — God's creation. I love to observe animal behavior, mountains, oceans, waterfalls, and the sky, etc. The reason we were created from the earth was to be on the earth, to take dominion over it and enjoy it for God's glory. He desired to walk with us in the cool of the evening. Remember before Adam and Eve sinned and all of creation was radically altered, God said, "It is Good!". Therefore, God in

*(Continued on page 2)*

*"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst."*

*Matthew 18:20*



"The Gathering" is a ministry of unity and reconciliation of the Body of Christ under the leadership of Pastor Carmen and Elaine Falcione, Montgomery, Alabama.

**Genesis 3: 15**, promised a Redeemer to restore all things unto him and make them new. Well, I don't know about you, but even though I enjoy many temporary things of this life, I am still so unfulfilled and so incomplete. This is evident through all the disorder and chaos throughout the world. Paul does a great job conveying what I'm trying to say, in **Romans 8:18-25** *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as Sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."* These are the truths that keep me keeping on; part of the foundational scriptures that I have been studying recently regarding the New Heaven and the New Earth. These are the truths that I can put my affections on. In these my hope and affections will never be wasted.

I must digress here one more time. There is some disagreement between theologians on whether the New Heavens and the New Earth are literal or figurative. Now at this point I want to state an absolute truth and fact regardless of your beliefs about the last days - eschatology (study of last things). The Bible says that Jesus will return again someday and reign over the New Heaven and New Earth and the New Jerusalem! So, whether your position is pre, mid, post tribulation or pre, post or "a" millennial reign, Jesus will return to a New Heaven and a New Earth. Again, whether you believe it is literal (actual, exact), or figurative (analogy or metaphor)—He is coming back to a New Heaven and a New Earth.

So in summary I want to share with you in the midst of a very difficult year in *the dark night of the soul*, God has dropped in my spirit a revelation of hope for the future—an oasis in the desert. Through my recent studies I now lean toward a literal New Heaven and New Earth, which means I will get to enjoy it to its fullest, the beautiful creation of God, with no restrictions. At this

time I would like to quote from a book by a contemporary writer<sup>1</sup>. It really does capture how I feel and believe. I hope you really enjoy it.

There are two words for **new** in the Greek language. The one Peter uses in **II Peter 3:13** is the word that means **new** in terms of **quality**, not new in terms of never existing before. That means the New Earth is not something that is brand new, but a **new version of the original**. It is the **original earth**, but in a **renovated and refreshed form**. At the end of the millennium, after all the judgments and prior to the beginning of the eternal state, all the decay and corruption of the earth is going to be taken away. All evidence of disease and destruction and depravity, in so far as it impacted the physical earth, will be eliminated; the present earth will be cleansed, purified, and made new.

Commentator William Hendriksen describes the change this way: "The first Heavens and the first earth have passed away.....The very foundations of the earth have been subjected to purifying fire. Every stain of sin, every trace of death has been removed. Out of the great conflagration, a new universe has been born. The word used in the original implies that it was new, but not 'other.' It is a new world, but not another world. "It is the same heaven and [the same earth], but gloriously rejuvenated....."

God's original declaration that the earth was "very good" (Genesis 1:31) has not been rescinded. He is not going to destroy His original creation—just make it pure once again as it was in the beginning.

Randy Alcorn: "God doesn't throw away His handiwork and start from scratch—instead, He uses the same canvas to repair and make more beautiful the painting marred by the vandal. The vandal doesn't get the satisfaction of destroying his rival's masterpiece. On the contrary, God makes an even greater masterpiece out of what his enemy sought to destroy."

What a glorious reward our Papa provides for His children for eternity.

Hoping in His future promises and thankful for His many blessings,

*Carmen*

A Blessed Thanksgiving Season to You!

<sup>1</sup> *What You Always Wanted to Know About Heaven* by David Jeremiah

# CARMEN'S CALENDAR

## What has he been doing?

- October 45** Ministry in Panama City, Florida
  - October 11** City Watchman Assignment
  - October 13** "Night With the King" Movie
  - October 16** Selma Baptist Association Missions
  - October 17** All-day State Council Pastors' Mtg, Birmingham, AL
  - October 18** Servant Leadership Team, John 17 Luncheon
  - October 20** Opening Night Celebrate Recovery at Alliance Church, Boone, N.C.
  - October 26** Bible teaching at Canaan Land Autaugauville, AL
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- November 4** Bible study at BeasleyAllen Law Firm
  - November 4** Central AL Prayer Leaders' Network Leadership Mtg. at Frazer UMC
  - November 4** Men's Bible Study/Breakfast at Snoudon Baptist Church

## What is yet to come?

- November 15, Wed. 10:30- 11:30** at Frazer UMC  
Servant Leadership Team Meeting  
John 17 Pastors' Luncheon
- November 16, Thurs. 12:00-1:30** Bible Teaching at BeasleyAllen Law Firm
- November 17, Fri. 9:30-12:00** Host PTL Program on TV 45
- November 17- 27** Carmen and Elaine to Arkansas to care for Elaine's mom for holidays.
- November 30, Thurs. 8:00-11:00** Bible Teaching at Canaan Land Ministries

## PEEKS AT THE 2006 PASTORS' PRAYER SUMMIT



**TIME TOGETHER IN UNITY WITH  
THE FATHER!**



**Pastors and Christian leaders in prayer and communion with Almighty God - meeting with Him as Creator, Redeemer, One Who Loves them Infinitely, their Heavenly Papa!**

**Thank you, pastors, for making yourselves available to Him for these three days of time with the Father and your brothers in ministry.**

**If you weren't there, wow!, you missed a blessing!**

**"THE GATHERING" IS A MINISTRY OF UNITY AND RECONCILIATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**

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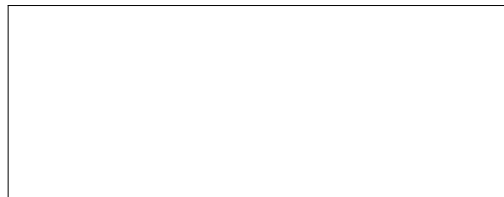
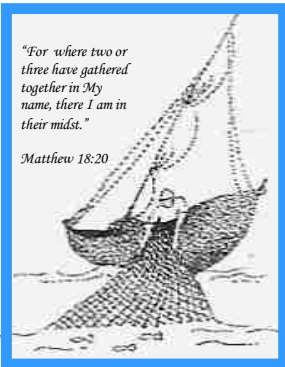
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*"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst."*

*Matthew 18:20*



## ***the prayer closet* - "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. 5:17**

- \* PRAISE TO GOD! Wow, thank you for praying for the Pastors' Prayer Summit! This side of heaven we can only imagine what mountains were moved in each man's life, in their congregations, in the city-wide "churches" of Montgomery and Selma. We KNOW God is faithful to answer the effectual fervent prayers of righteous men!
- \* Carmen has a special burden for us to join him in praying for a brother in ministry, Tom Bridges, and Let God Arise Ministries. Pray for Tom as he ministers in the local county and city jails, leading many men and women to Christ and a closer walk with Him. Pray for provision for financial needs of this ministry at this time.
- \* As you pray for Tom, please pray for God to also provide financially for The Gathering Ministry and thank Him for those who faithfully give and serve in this ministry!
- \* Continue to pray for ongoing health needs for Carmen, Elaine and Elaine's mom. Elaine is recovering well from surgery but will have to not lift and take it easy for several more weeks.
- \* Carmen and Elaine will be going to Arkansas November 17—27 to help Elaine's mom and be with her family during Thanksgiving and Elaine will be returning for eye surgery on Nov. 28. Please pray for safety, her not to overdo, her eye while she awaits surgery, and blessed time with family.
- \* Pray for each of you who read this newsletter and all who are involved in this ministry to have a precious time during this upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas season of drawing close to the Father, our Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit and bringing honor and glory to them!

### **Daily Chuckle:**

*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.*

Recently Carmen went to visit Brother Al Perkins in the hospital. Brother Al said, 'Did you hear about the brilliant scientist that said he had finally done it. He had created life. He looked up to God and said, "I can do it." Then he reached down and picked up some dirt. God said, "Wait just a minute. That's my dirt. You make your own dirt and then you'll be doing something.'"