The Hidden Treasures of Messiah Jesus

A Ventures for Christ Newsletter

To those hungry Disciples who long to intensify and expand their following of the Savior by taking up their cross.

Issue 29 October 2026

Words of Eternal Hidden Wisdom

Our Purpose in His Vision

All Cross Disciples must learn the secret of asking. If they obey, they have the promise of Jesus that He will hear and answer.

And the Lord Jesus Himself says, "I will open My mouth in parables. I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world" (Matt. 13:34-35).



Our Challenge in His Promise

All Christ Disciples meet with other Christians to do two things: come into His presence and joyfully worship Jesus.

"Collect for yourselves treasures in heaven," and prove my eternal wealth is Messiah Jesus in my heart (Matt. 6:19-20).



"All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him" (Col. 2:2-3), the Apostle Paul.

"But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19), response of the Virgin Mother.

"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1-3), the Apostle Paul to Timothy.

"Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6), Job after being rebuked by the Lord.

The God Picture and the Z Life (Part 1)

The A to Z of Our Speaking to Him and the A to Z of His Speaking to Us

Pastor McCarty

As a young boy one of the first phrases that I learned, that became a permanent part of my growing vocabulary, was that "I had to learn my A-B-C's if I was to be successful in school." I still remember how proud I was when I could recite A through Z without a slip up. I didn't know it at the time, but I was on my way to learning the A-B-C's of all my relationships; how to pass high school; learning to play the French horn and drums; working pick up jobs; taking voice lessons; selling real estate; the A-B-C's of college; the A-B-C's of being an Air Force jet pilot; the A-B-C's of preaching and teaching; the A-B-C's of studying Hebrew and Greek; the A-B-C's of being a husband and father; the A-B-C's of my Ph.D.; the A-B-C's of living life successfully; and, above all, the A-B-C's of knowing, following, worshiping, and yielding to Messiah Jesus. I have now used my initial A-B-C's to advance to M-N-O's and my arrival at my essential X-Y-Z's to write hundreds of articles, scores of research papers, my doctoral thesis, and to speak millions of words about Jesus to thousands of people through hundreds of talks and sermons. I thank Him and praise Him for giving a limited, flawed, somewhat dense Christian sinner like me such a precious privilege! I am finally beginning to learn and grasp all the A's through Z's of who our splendid Lord Jesus really is. I am truly an Ephesians 3:7-13 man seeking those people in my life to suffer for! I've known the Savior for 76 years, and only now am I seeing and catching on to some of His most amazing intentions, plans, will, power, grace, and truth. The last five years have been phenomenal in being gripped by His love, forgiveness, wisdom, patience, power, and freedom. I know and experience what it is to be 94 in my body, but there is no doubt in my mind and heart I'm still a Jesus 33 in my spirit. I'm living at the peak of my Christian life. The reason I know that I'm truly excited by thoughts of my death! I'm so excited that I will see my Savior face to face and get glimpses of His Father's Heaven.

I owe the above paragraph to the words our Messiah Jesus used to describe Himself in the book of Revelation. He called Himself "the Alpha and the Omega" the first and last letters in the Greek language. He will be our A to Z. The Holy Spirit said to me when I realized the fact that as I had learned my A-B-C's to X-Y-Z's to communicate with mankind, I'd best learn my Alpha-Beta-Gamma through Chi-Psi-Omega to effectively communicate with the Godhead. I couldn't quit with A-B-C—or even M-N-O-P—but had to know my X-Y-Z's to read, write, and attain my maximum human knowledge of the Lord Jesus. I concluded it was the same with the Godhead (Father, Son,

Holy Spirit)! I wanted to know all about His claiming to be Alpha and Omega. I hungered to know and experience all the letters and words in the Greek that would reveal the Savior's riches and promises. At the same time, I realized that many Christians learn their A-B-C's about Jesus but then quit. Some go on to M-N-O-P's level and begin to mature in faith, power, and victory. Yet I longed to be an X-Y-Z disciple, to expose myself to all the Lord Jesus was between the Alpha and Omega.

Communication is impossible without a vocabulary...be it a secular one for the world, or a linguistic for a different language, or a spiritual one with our Creator. To have an impactive vocabulary demands your command of words—and words demand letters—and letters must be in the right order to communicate with others and especially to our Lord. My earthly vocabulary and my heavenly vocabulary have never been greater. I am truly a Christ creation of at least two vocabularies or more. I know A to Z in English, and I'm striving to know the Alpha and Omega in Jesus.

A good communicator has learned how to put letters together so that in combination they make words—impactive, clear, and beautiful—to fulfill his or her purpose to express both a major or minor messages. Every language on earth—German, Spanish, Hebrew, Greek, French, Chinese, Japanese, and English, etc.—has letters or symbols that create words to convey ideas and realities. Those words are essential to exchange both simple and deep-thinking thoughts that inform, free, and persuade. I say all this to testify to the life transforming and exciting discovery of our gift of God language—the letters—the words—the ideas—the will—the promises—of Jesus. Our Redeemer, by His Spirit ignited words, is bringing us by His voice to explain and give significance to His chosen ones! (Ponder John 15:18-21; I Peter 2:9-10; Hebrews 2:10-18!) The Savior also made this very clear in John 6:63, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life."

Peter and the A-Z Life

This entire passage, John 6:41-70, tells a sad story. Jesus is putting before His potential followers both the priceless rewards and the sacrificial cost of following Him. "To eat His flesh and drink His blood" means symbolically to go to His cross for us and die on it (6:55). When He said these words, many people decided they would no longer follow Him. With a broken heart the Savior asks the Twelve Disciples if they also planned to leave Him! Peter then made the great confession that began his life's great destiny, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God" (6:68b-69). Today, you and I must make the same confession and sacrifice of our lives and spiritual blood—if not more—but He will show us which of our cups we are to drink—and what crosses to carry—to please Him and carry out His plan for our lives! This is the mystery and magnificent teaching in our lives. So many of us don't realize we are invited to participate in His divine nature but only X-Y-Z Life disciples touch the wonder and splendor of it fully. Please ponder prayerfully and carefully Peter's concluding words of his life in II Peter 1:3-11. Look slowly at each word. Linger on each implied experience. Everything conquering supernatural life has been already given to us through increasing our knowledge of the Amazing One—the Sent One—the Mighty One—the Pure One—the Glorious One—Jesus—the One Alone who has the words that pour into us His eternal life. This is our promise as we take up our cross for Him and unbelievingly—stunningly—astonishingly—amazingly—astoundingly—and phenomenally—etc., etc., etc.—are actually filled and captured by the Godhead's divine nature as we participate in the Messiah's spirit, mind, heart, power, fruit, and will. This is guaranteed to happen according to our hungering for His leadership, denying ourselves the trivial and lesser things in our existence, taking up the implications of His cross in our actions, committing all the moments of our day to please Him, and, finally, listening and yielding to everything His voice tells us to do! Here we experience our Perfect-Purpose-Relationship.

Peter goes on to tell us, in his maturity, that in light of what we are offered as the Savior's Cross Disciples, there is only one logical and spiritual Godhead pleasing action to take. Knowing his and our foundation is secure and his own death is close, Peter can't resist the compelling love in his heart for his beloved recipients. In II Peter 1:12-21 he can't help but to remind them of the greatest event in his life about the Lord Jesus! At the conclusion

of his life, Peter declared victory over life by saying "I have the words of the prophets made more certain to my life" (1:19, HDM).

Finally, he pleads with all of them to keep paying constant attention to the light shown them in Christ, so it will expose all the darkness in their life, and the Lord Jesus will grow to be their full splendor. They will know then that it's not him, the old Peter, that had so much to learn, but that the Lord Himself had spoken to him and through him for their eternal good! In so many words Peter is giving my own thoughts some 1900 years later. I could safely summarize his final appeal before he died in my own words. My heart is fixed on the same thing. Peter announced victory over life, and so do I.

For the A-B-C Christian Life: Peter says, "Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk so you can grow up in your salvation" (I Peter 2:2).

For the M-N-O-P Christian Life: Peter says, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority...for it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk for foolish men" (I Peter 2:13-15).

For the X-Y-Z Christian Life: Peter says, "To the elders among you I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness to Christ's suffering...be shepherds of God's flock" (I Peter 5:1-2).

John and the A-Z Life

In the first few verses of the great letter of Revelation, written by one of the Savior's dearest disciples, John, we find our first clue of knowing the Godhead's truth from A to Z! Again, the Lord Jesus spoke the words Himself as to who He was and what He was about, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty'" (Rev. 1:8). That says it all...from eternity past, the now of eternity present, and the promise of eternity future. "And Jesus said to His critics...I tell you the truth...before Abraham was born, I Am!" (John 8:58, HDM). Please ponder Exodus 3:11-15.

Alpha (A) is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega (Ω) is the last. The Savior also adds, "Who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8b). The obvious message to us who speak English is clear, "I Am the A to Z of all reality...<u>what was before</u>, <u>what is now</u>, and <u>what will be</u> all <u>centers in Me</u>. It all belongs to Me" (Rev. 1:17-18, HDM). In other words, "I Am the sovereign I Am...the sum of all that exists! Nothing exists unless I created it for My eternal purposes!" (HDM).

Only a few verses later the Savior repeats the title He gave Himself with different words. The beloved John fell at His feet in great fear, but the Lord Jesus placed His right hand on him and said, "Don't be afraid. I Am the First and Last. I Am the Living One: I was dead, and behold, I Am alive for ever and ever. I have absolute control over every domain, every issue, every purpose, every outcome, even death and hell" (Rev. 1:17-18, NIV, HDM, Greek).

The Lord also declares His title at the conclusion of this great book of prophecy in both Revelation 21:6 and 22:13. In chapter 21 He spoke to John and combined His first title with a new one, "I Am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 21:6). Then in the 22nd chapter He repeats all three Himself describing what He claims for His majesty, might, and sovereignty: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:13). When He says, "I Am who I Am" He says it all (Ex. 3:11-14). The greatest statement, declaration, claim, and truth ever stated to all creation is "I Am who I Am! Everything that was, is, or shall be begins and ends with Me! I Am the zenith, climax, culmination, eminence, pinnacle, the ultimate and all powerful and eternal!" (HDM).

I am tempted to discuss the mystery and message of these wonder claims of "I Am— the Alpha—the First—the Beginning," but I must limit myself to the present point of what is clear for our understanding and application. (It's a good thing as I know I don't possess the mind, the knowledge, the wisdom, the experience, much less the ability to explain and share the depths, mysteries, and splendor of His full A to Z.) It is obvious to me, and I

hope to my honored reader, that there is a beginning, purpose, continuing, ending, finishing, and continuing to our knowledge of the Father's vast salvation and perfection revelation. The redeeming work on the crucifixion cross by His Son, Jesus, is the ultimate fulcrum, fuel, fact, fountain, flame, fire, and force of the Father's ultimate message of reconciliation to this fallen and broken world.

At this point, please ponder Revelation 1:4-6, "...He has freed us from our sins by His blood...." We must ask ourselves, if we truly love the Savior, "Am I attempting to carry a 'bloodless cross'?" Is our cross just for show to others or can we be lying to ourselves and carrying a cross that has no blood on it? Though few of us will be called to bleed physically, as He did, our bleeding will be inward as we inwardly die to self so His life can be expressed and totally lived through us. This is Paul's exact meaning in II Corinthians, "We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body" (II Cor. 4:7-18). The true Cross Disciple strives to measure his or her sacrifice as they seek to recognize and embrace the cross sacrifice the Master has given them to carry. There is no "cross free life" to those who follow Jesus. In fact, it is only in continually and constantly seeking and taking up your cross that the Believer is initiated in all the other mysteries and glorious riches centered in Savior Jesus! Our cross—sought with determination, discovered by prayer, experienced innocently, weakly hanging, painfully experienced, carried with patience, longing for drink, and endured in joy—is the only path that will awaken us and take us to the zenith of our personal potential! The Holy Spirit dwelling within each of us is ready and eager to reveal His accomplishment! That is a long sentence, but that's what is going on when you take up your cross as the Master commanded! The pain for most of us will be emotional and psychological suffering. But it will be real! Bloodless perhaps, but the Lord Jesus accomplished much more for the Father in righteousness and eternity by sharing His blood.

We'll examine more of the Master's two alphabets, the A to Z of our speaking to Him and the A to Z of His speaking to us in Part II of "The God Picture and the Z Life" next month.



Abide and Bear Fruit

Michael Floyd, Editor

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

October brings harvest to mind almost automatically — fields cut down to stubble, orchards heavy before the picking, and farmers' markets stacked with the season's yield. It is the month when months of unseen growth finally become visible — the roots did their work back in July, out of sight.

Jesus reached for this same picture the night before His crucifixion, sitting with His disciples after the Last Supper, hours from His betrayal and arrest. Of everything He might have said in those final hours, He chose to talk about vines and branches and fruit — about what makes a life actually productive, spiritually speaking, and where that productivity comes from.

His answer might surprise us. It has almost nothing to do with effort.

The True Vine

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener," Jesus said (John 15:1). The image would have been immediately familiar to His disciples — Israel itself was often pictured in the Old Testament as a vine, planted and tended by God. But that vine had failed to produce what it was planted for. Jesus doesn't just compare Himself to a vine. He calls Himself the *true* vine, the one that will finally do what the vineyard was always meant to do.

Every branch's life comes from the vine. A branch has no independent source of nutrients, no private root system, and no ability to manufacture its own vitality. Whatever growth or fruit it produces flows entirely from its connection to the plant it's attached to. Cut it off, and it has nothing left to draw on.

This is the claim Jesus makes about Himself in relation to us: "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5). He is not offering good advice or a moral example to imitate through sheer determination; rather, He is the actual source of spiritual life — the only place from which real fruit can grow.

The Father, meanwhile, is the gardener, tending the vine with attention. He removes what isn't bearing fruit, and He prunes what is, "so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:2). Pruning is not punishment. It's care — the deliberate removal of what would otherwise drain energy from what actually matters.

Grafted Into Life

What Jesus offers here is not a technique for spiritual productivity. It's a relationship that makes productivity possible in the first place.

"No branch can bear fruit by itself," He says. "It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15:4). The Greek word translated "remain" — sometimes rendered "abide" — carries the sense of staying, dwelling, making one's home. It's not a single decision but an ongoing condition.

This is what Jesus accomplished for us: He made a way for people who were cut off from the source of life to be grafted back in. Paul describes something similar in Romans 11 — wild branches grafted into a cultivated root, given life they didn't originally have access to. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus opened a connection between God and people who had none. His Spirit now flows through everyone who belongs to Him, the way sap flows from root to branch, carrying with it everything necessary for real fruit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

None of that fruit is manufactured by human effort; rather, it's produced. The branch doesn't strain to grow grapes. It stays connected, and the vine does what vines do.

Remain in Him

If fruitfulness isn't primarily about effort, what is our part in it? Jesus is direct: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5) — not less, not with more struggle, but nothing at all. And yet He doesn't leave us passive — He calls us to remain, to actively stay connected, which is its own kind of ongoing choice.

Remaining isn't a private project. It looks like the ordinary practices that keep us near Him and near each other — time in His Word, prayer, obedience to what He's already made clear (John 15:10), and the regular company of other believers, since branches on the same vine are joined to one another as much as to the root. None of these practices produce fruit directly. They keep us where fruit gets produced.

Remaining also means submitting to the Father's pruning without resentment. Some seasons feel like loss — habits stripped away, comforts removed, plans interrupted. It rarely feels like care in the moment. But a gardener prunes precisely what he intends to keep, not what he plans to discard.

The Harvest Is His

October's harvest didn't happen overnight, and neither does spiritual fruit. It's the slow, often invisible outcome of staying connected to the right source over time.

Jesus said this teaching was meant to produce joy — "so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11). Fruitfulness was never intended to be a burden measured against some invisible standard of enough. It's the natural overflow of a life staying close to the vine.

You don't have to manufacture your own growth or strain toward fruit that only the vine can produce. You simply have to remain — and let Him do what He said He would do.

He is the vine. Stay close, and watch what grows.

[Michael Floyd is Editor of The Hidden Treasures of Messiah Jesus, the monthly newsletter of Ventures for Christ, Inc. You can find more of Michael's content at http://thegospeltoday.online.]



Ventures News

Changes in the VFC Board

The Ventures for Christ Board is pleased to announce our new chairman, Gary Bien. We are so grateful to Gary for taking on this responsibility and also grateful to our wonderful out-going chairman, Scott Bull! Scott has served faithfully as chairman of Ventures' board since 2009! The Lord has blessed Ventures for Christ with an outstanding group of godly men, who seek to help Pastor fulfill the goal of leading others to have a passion and love for the Lord Jesus!

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