



THE BEACON BEAM

May 2026

TRUTH TO ANCHOR THE SOUL

Resting in the Righteousness of Christ



by John Bunyan

To be united to Christ by grace though faith is to be counted as having lived His life, obeyed His law, suffered His punishment, died His death, and risen in His resurrection. The believer is not merely inspired by Christ; he is represented by Him. Christ's perfect obedience was rendered on our behalf; He fulfilled every command of God's law in our place (Romans 5:19; Galatians 4:4-5). His death was not merely an act of martyrdom. It was the full exhaustion of the law's curse for our sin (Galatians 3:13). And His resurrection from the dead is the public declaration from God that the believer is now justified, fully accepted and acquitted in His sight (Romans 4:25; 1 Timothy 3:16).

This means justification is not a process, nor is it contingent upon our progress. It is a once-for-all verdict,

grounded in the finished work of Christ, granted before we perform any act of obedience or experience any inward renewal (Titus 3:5-7). Our status before God does not rise and fall with our spiritual condition. It is as unchanging as the righteousness of Jesus Himself (Hebrews 13:8; 1 Corinthians 1:30). The gospel, then, assures trembling sinners that the moment they are in Christ, they are as justified as they ever will be (Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:10).

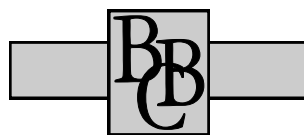
Such a gospel dismantles every attempt to mingle Christ's righteousness with our own works. Even the slightest reliance on our obedience (whether in gaining or maintaining favor with God) undermines the very grace of the gospel (Galatians 2:21). It dishonors Christ by implying that His obedience was insufficient (Hebrews 10:14). Worse still, it

leaves the conscience without peace, for if our standing with God is even partially based on our performance, we will never rest, never know security, and never truly be free from guilt (Romans 5:1; Hebrews 9:14).

But faith ... true, saving faith ... looks away from self entirely. It does not contribute; it receives. It rests wholly on the righteousness of Another (Philippians 3:9). This righteousness is not infused, earned, or grown into. It is imputed, credited by God Himself (Romans 4:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21). It is alien to us, but ours by grace. In trusting Christ alone, the believer finds unshakable peace, because his salvation rests not on shifting sands, but on the finished and faultless work of the Son of God (Isaiah 32:17; John 19:30).

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Beacon Baptist Church

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Robert F. LaTour, *Minister of Pastoral Care*
Gregory L. Phillips, *Minister of Music*
N. Hunter Strength, *Minister of Youth*

Sunday

Morning Worship...9:30 AM
Sunday School.....11:10 AM
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday

Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION

by Greg Barkman

The Lord gave us a wonderful Spring Bible Conference in April on the doctrine of resurrection from I Corinthians chapter fifteen. Pastor Mark Webb, our speaker, is no stranger to Beacon, as this was his thirteenth Bible Conference with us. He is the retired pastor of Grace Bible Church in Olive Branch, Mississippi, a superb of Memphis, Tennessee. Mark and his wife, Paula, divide their time in two locations. They live in Olive Branch during the Winter, and spend Summers in their ranch in Hartsville, Wyoming. The Lord continues to sustain Mark with good health, and he stays busy traveling and preaching across the United States and beyond. Needless to say, we love the way he expounds God's Word, and look forward to his ministry whenever he comes.

Since we began on Easter Sunday, the doctrine of resurrection was a natural choice for a conference theme. Although our Spring Bible Conference routinely begins on the first Sunday in April, we discussed the wisdom of moving it to a different week to avoid conflict with Easter. We decided to keep the standard date, hoping we were not making a mistake. By God's goodness, the holiday had little effect upon attendance. Some were out of town, as expected, but others brought their visiting relatives with them, and it evened out nicely. God has given us a congregation that loves sound Bible exposition, and we had good attendance for every service.

The conference addressed much more than the resurrection of Christ alone, although that is where it began. But Christ's resurrection leads to questions about the believers' res-

urrection, and many puzzling aspects about the resurrection of believers was helpfully clarified during this meeting. Here is a brief summary of what we heard.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION ASSERTED AND ATTESTED

(I Corinthians 15:1-11) The message on Easter morning focused on the resurrection of Christ. The Apostle Paul makes clear that this is an integral part of the gospel, and the truth of His bodily resurrection is thoroughly attested by Scripture as well as an astonishing number of witnesses who saw the risen Christ with their own eyes and were alive and available for personal inquiry at the time Paul wrote this epistle nearly thirty years after the fact.

***Deny Christ's
resurrection, and
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Are you aware that there are at least two instances when skeptics determined to write a book to disprove the "myth" of Christ's resurrection, only to become true believers after a thorough examination of all the evidence? The resurrection of Christ is one of the best attested facts

of history. Only those who are willfully blind deny it. Those who weigh the evidence thoughtfully believe it.

WHY DOES THE RESURRECTION MATTER?

(I Corinthians 15:12-19) Does it really make a difference whether or not Christ rose bodily from the grave? Can't we still believe in Jesus' death upon the cross for our sins, and go to heaven whether or not we accept His resurrection as true? The short answer to these questions is yes, it really makes a huge difference, and no, you cannot be saved without believing this truth because it is part of the gospel. Deny Christ's resurrection, and you deny a critical component of the gospel, and nobody is saved who denies the gospel, in whole or in part.

The church in Corinth apparently had some members who denied the reality of bodily resurrection in general. Greek philosophy taught that the body, being physical, is intrinsically evil. The goal therefore is to be freed from our evil bodies so that our pure spirits can thrive without the encumbrance of physical evil. This philosophy, common in first century Greece, considers the prospect of bodies raised from the dead an unwelcome thought. Why would anyone want to return to their bodies? To the Greeks, death was a welcome release from a hopelessly evil material body.

This thinking led to the denial of bodily resurrection in general. To such people, the doctrine of bodily resurrection was unacceptable, even abhorrent. But as Paul makes clear, if there is no such thing as bodily res-

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urrection, then Christ could not have risen from the dead. If Christ did not rise from the dead, the gospel preached by Paul and others is a false message. If Christ did not rise from the dead, nobody is saved from their sins, and our believing loved ones, who have died before us have perished forever. If we believe that Christ has saved us, we are badly deceived and are in a miserable state. Without the reality of resurrection, there is no hope beyond the grave.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

(I Corinthians 15:20-34) Thankfully, the truth is that Christ has risen, is now alive in His physical body in heaven. He is the first fruits of a great harvest of resurrections to come. It must be so. Death came by one man, namely Adam. Christ came to reverse the curse of Adam's sin. One man, Adam, brought death upon humanity. Another man, Jesus Christ, defeated the power of sin and death, and by His sinless life, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection, He restored eternal life to sin-cursed believers. All who are in Adam die. Since all humanity descends from Adam, all humanity is "in" Adam and are partakers of the penalty for sin,

A great transformation takes place in the resurrection. Bodies designed and suited for Earth, are raised suited for Heaven. We will live forever in glorified bodies made to live in heavenly splendor. It's an astonishing declaration, but certifiably true by divine revelation.

which is death. But all who are in Christ are made alive. We are "in" Christ when we savingly believe the gospel of Christ, and salvation involves the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. The resurrection of the body is the final element of salvation, but when Christ returns to Earth again, He will bring with Him the souls of departed saints, and they will be rejoined to their bodies in that great day of resurrection. Christ's resurrection guarantees the believers resurrection. The glorified state of Christ's resurrection body reveals the glorified state of the believer's resurrection body.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RESURRECTION

(I Corinthians 15:35-49) Paul continues to address the objections of skeptics who question the "how" and "what" of the resurrection. He begins with an analogy from nature. The resurrection is something like the sowing of a seed in the ground. Before it can produce life, it must decay, that is, it must die. But when it dies, it produces new life. We are all aware of this because it is an everyday occurrence in agriculture. But in truth, no one can adequately explain how, when a seed dies, it produces life. Though it cannot be explained, only a fool would deny it. It happens millions of times a day all over the world. We take it for granted, though our food depends upon its happening.

Similarly, a human body dies and decays in the ground. It returns to the dust from which it was made in the Garden. But when Christ returns, that body, dead and decayed, will spring forth to new life. It will be resurrected in an unexplainable, mysterious manner similar to that of a seed sprouting to new life again.

Nature also illustrates the mystery of mortal bodies being raised to immortal bodies. When a seed sprouts, it produces a life far more glorious than the seed itself. Plant a corn seed, and you will get a large corn stalk

with long leaves and several ears with many hundreds of seeds. That which came out of the dirt is far more glorious than what was buried in the soil. But the glorious stalk is connected to that seed. It had its origin in the seed, and it grew to a glorious body from that seed. There is an undeniable connection, but an amazing difference. So it is with our mortal bodies. They are sown in corruption but raised in incorruption. They are sown a mortal body, but raised an immortal body. They are sown an earthly body, but are raised a heavenly body. A great transformation takes place in the resurrection. Bodies designed and suited for Earth, are raised suited for Heaven. We will live forever in glorified bodies made to live in heavenly splendor. It's an astonishing declaration, but certifiably true by divine revelation.

THE GLORY OF OUR RESURRECTION

(I Corinthians 15:50-58) This last section tells us the "when" of resurrection, namely at the second coming of Christ. When the last trumpet sounds, the resurrection of believers takes place. The bodies of believers that have died will be raised incorruptible, and believers alive at Christ's return will be changed instantly from mortal to immortal bodies. This is the last stage of redemption. Stage one is regeneration, when our souls are made alive in Christ. Stage two is the glorification of the soul, when believers die and their souls enter the presence of Christ. Stage three is the resurrection and glorification of our bodies, joined to the souls of believers who return with Christ, and all believers will reach our final redemption. Redeemed eternally both soul and body, forever to be in the presence of the Lord. "Oh that will be, glory for me!" Even so come, Lord Jesus.

3 REASONS FOR HOPE IN THE FACE OF GRIEF AND WORRY

by Alistair Begg

Most of us are a mixture of emotions and experiences. The good, the bad, and the ugly wash over us regularly. The key issue is what we do with these feelings and experiences.

How does being a believer shape the way in which we view our world, especially when we're faced with worries and grief?

In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom tells the story of looking forward to her first railway journey. Although her trip was not for many weeks, she would regularly go to her father and ask him if he had the tickets. He would tell her over and over that he did. She realized that her problem was a lack of trust in her dad; she did not believe he would take care of everything. She was worrying that he would lose her ticket and that somehow she would be without it on the day she was to travel. In that lesson, she learned that God gives us the ticket on the day we make the journey and not before. He, of course, is much better at keeping it safe than we are.

In our pilgrimages through heartache, disappointment, the loss of loved ones, and personal failures, we can learn that this is indeed true. Therefore, we must trust him.

On the day we make the journey from time to eternity, if we know Christ, we know he will give us the ticket. If that day is today, then the ticket is on the way. If not, then what is the use in lying awake and letting our emotions control us and our worries crowd in on us? We are not at the mercy of arbitrary, impersonal forces; we are in the hand of our loving God. That brings us to the first reminder that can bring peace during times of trouble.

1. Our Times Are in God's Hands

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say "You are my God." My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love! (Ps. 31:14–16).

***This is our security.
Our times—short or long,
rich or poor, sad or happy—
are in his hand. He will give us
good works to do each day,
and then on our last day,
he will bring us safely through
to the place where our days
are infinitely long,
unimaginably rich, and
unutterably happy.***

"My times are in your hand" is a six-word affirmation to remind Christians that, despite disasters and difficulties, we're under the care of the Almighty God.

In the opening verses of Psalm 31, it's apparent that David is in anguish. As we read on, we seem to find him in a position of assurance just a few verses later, only for him to return immediately to a state of distress. This cycle of pain and joy is not an unusual experience for the Christian pilgrim. In fact, the recurrence of disappointment and discomfort is fairly common along the path of faith.

But God says to us, *Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden. Come to me with all your burdens,*

fears, panics, anxieties, and heartaches. Take my yoke upon you. Live underneath my loving rule, because my yoke is easy and my burden is light, and you will find rest for your souls, forever (see Matt. 11:28-30).

This is our security. Our times—short or long, rich or poor, sad or happy—are in his hand. He will give us good works to do each day, and then on our last day, he will bring us safely through to the place where our days are infinitely long, unimaginably rich, and unutterably happy.

2. The Bible Acknowledges Our Emotions

Grief is an example of an emotion that can overwhelm us to the utmost. You may know this experience all too well. I remember its first intrusion into my life when I was a teenager and my mother died. Nothing could ever be quite as it had been before.

You do not have to live long as a believer to discover that faith does not insulate us from feelings like grief and the fear of it. Paul wrote about the near-death experience of his friend Epaphroditus: "Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow" (Phil. 2:27).

The thought of losing Epaphroditus broke Paul's heart. He understood that death was not the end, but he also recognized that in experiencing loss, or even in the prospect of it, there is true sorrow.

Grief is hard because something has been lost, and certain joys are now

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irretrievably gone. But we also know that grief is a reality to which Scripture plainly speaks—a reality that will one day be redeemed by a far greater joy. And we know that grief is a reality with which our Savior is personally acquainted.

3. Jesus Enables Grief and Hope to Coexist

As Jesus stood at the grave of his friend Lazarus, he—the second Person of the Trinity—grieved with those who had gathered there. Though he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, he still wept because he was sincerely sad. The mystery in this scene is that Jesus so identified with our humanity that he shed genuine tears at the loss of his beloved friend (John 11:33–35).

Grief is a reality with which our Savior is personally acquainted.

Although the Bible introduces us to the reality of Christ’s victory over death and the grave, it doesn’t call us to some kind of glossy, heartless triumphalism. Rather, as Alec Motyer writes, “tears are proper for believers—indeed they should be all the more copious, for Christians are more sensitively aware of every emotion, whether of joy or sorrow, than those who have known nothing of the softening and enlivening grace of God” (90).

The fact that our loved ones who died in Christ are now with him lightens but does not remove the anguish of loss and loneliness. We continue to long for the day when such pain will have ceased.

Until that day comes, we can find comfort in knowing that Jesus was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3) as we look to him as our example, as we see that he is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25), and as we look to him for our eternity. Knowing this is what enables hope to reign in our hearts, even as very real worries and grief exist in our lives.

Alistair Begg is general editor of the CSB *Spurgeon Study Bible*, senior pastor of Parkside Church in Cleveland, and the Bible teacher on *Truth for Life*, which is heard on the radio and online around the world. He graduated from theological college in London and served two churches in Scotland before moving to Ohio.



It’s a bit of a paradox when you find yourself clinging to the very God who is putting you through the fire. In these times, all of life is distilled to its essence. Priorities shift. Things that once seemed extremely important fade into the background, and eternal matters take center stage. In the past, you understood intellectually that every breath was grace. Now you’re living it.

If that’s you, and even if it isn’t, I want to encourage you today. If you’ve been called by God and are a follower of Christ, he is working “all things ... together for good” in your life (Romans 8:28). Real good—by his definition of the word, not yours or mine. If we filter the word “good” through a worldly lens, then we might assume we’re promised material success or respect in our work, or that God has to give us that one thing we’ve been asking for, because obviously it’s a good thing. But if we use a biblical lens, we realize that the good he promises may be the suffering or trial or persecution that he knows we need to be conformed to the image of his Son, and that is our greatest possible good.

As a Christian, the word of God tells me that every difficulty, sorrow, or loss that touches my life will ultimately be redeemed and transformed into a gift, but I have to choose to see it that way. I choose my response: resentment or trust? A stubborn “Why?” that refuses any answer but the one it wants? Or a deliberate “Thank you” that believes and confesses that God is good even if a thousand questions remain?

—Matt Chandler and Friends, *Joy in the Sorrow*

WELCOME TO EXILE. IT'S GOING TO BE OK.

by Alistair Begg

When I was a child, I was taught this chorus:

*This world is not my home,
I'm just a-passing through.
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue.*

Honestly, until recently I had no idea what I was singing. For us in the English-speaking West, this world has tended to feel very much like home, and our treasures have been right before our eyes.

Perhaps it is only in the last few years in the United States that we have finally faced that what the Bible says is true: in this world we really are sojourners and exiles (1 Pet. 2:11). That reality has been clouded and obscured by the size and legal protection of the church in most of the Western world. But this world is not actually our home. We're not supposed to settle down here. We're not supposed to expect the church to be large, influential, and respected.

Christians are increasingly going to be seen as different, and not in a good way. We are increasingly going to have to choose between obedience and comfort. The next decades will not bring apathy to the gospel, but antagonism. And that's OK. After all, that has been the reality for most of God's people through most of history.

In this sense, as we move ahead in time, we're going back—back to the world of the first-century church, and back even further to the Babylon of the exiles. And so we have many lessons from early Christians, and from men like Daniel and his friends.

Statue vs. Rock

When we think of drawing inspiration for a post-Christian world from the book of Daniel, our minds perhaps instinctively turn to the fiery furnace or the writing on the wall or the lions' den. But even before any of those events, there's rich truth for our times in the dream that God gives the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar, and enables his godly servant Daniel to interpret—for here is a lesson about what the church is, and what the great empires and nations of the world are.

Here is, as Daniel explains it to the king, the content of the dream:

You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:31–35).

The statue represents the great empires of the ancient world, with Nebuchadnezzar's as the head. And

all—all—are superseded by, and brought to nothing by, a small rock. The meaning? “The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people” (Dan. 2:44).

Here is the main and the plain thing: human history is under the control of God, and he has a purpose that will be achieved. The message of the dream was for the young exile as much as for the apparently all-powerful king. God would replace every kingdom and bring into being his everlasting kingdom. And that is what he did when he sent his Son, who announced that “the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15). Jesus was (and still is) the rock that God fashioned out of nothing. Here was the everlasting kingdom of God. And it appeared that the Roman statue had smashed the rock by nailing him to a cross, and yet it was not possible even for death to keep hold of this king (Acts 2:24).

Even then, at the turn of the first century it must have seemed impossible that the Roman Empire would ever fade and perish—yet fade and perish it did, even as the kingdom of King Jesus grew throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. The rock smashed the statue, and the rock became a mountain that filled the entire earth.

What a comforting message for the young, exiled Daniel. What a confidence-building truth for us, too: God is God, he is in control, and his kingdom has no rivals.

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His Kingdom Knows No Rivals

We have seen more than Daniel could. We know the name of the rock; we can look back in history and around in our world and see how the rock became a mountain. Yet we find ourselves complaining about everything, looking back to the good old days and worrying that the church cannot survive the empire of an aggressively secular post-Christendom. Too much of the public face of evangelicalism is characterized by angry venting or panicking—rather than prayerful, humble, calm, and confident belief in a sovereign God who is in control of things.

How will we handle the onset of persecution? How will we handle the loss of our jobs on account of our Christian faith? How will we handle the closing of public worship? Will we give up, or grow defeatist or angry? Not if we remember that God is God, that he is in control, and that his kingdom ultimately knows no rivals.

In the 1920s, Lord Reith helped to establish the British Broadcasting Corporation and served as its first director-general. He was a somewhat severe man from the highlands of Scotland. As the BBC began to be

carried along by the tide of secularism that swept through Britain in the 1960s, a young producer stood up in a meeting and said to Lord Reith that the world was changing, and that the BBC did not need to continue with its religious programming. People were no longer interested in religion, he said, and the church was becoming increasingly obsolete.

Lord Reith, who was 6'6", told this young man to take his seat. Then he stood up and said: "The church will stand at the grave of the BBC."

And you know what? It will. It will still stand when the BBC—and CNN and Fox as well—dwindle and die. God's kingdom will stand when every organization and institution and empire meets its end.

Give Yourself to the Church

Your church may seem small. As you drive to meet with the household of God on a Sunday, you may pass hundreds of houses whose inhabitants give no thought to what you are doing, except politely (or not so politely) to deride it. It may feel little. But God's kingdom is unsmashable, and it has an embassy in your neighborhood that we call the church. Don't be discouraged as you meet; don't be

distraught over dwindling numbers or a more and more hostile media. Instead, commit to it.

Serve your church family. Give yourself to it. Because when the Lord builds his church (either in number or in maturity) through our labors, gifts, and giving, we are being used to build the only kingdom that will last forever. There is nothing coming next. So, give your best to this kingdom. It may feel small, but it is never in vain, for this kingdom is eternal, and it is God's. So we do not panic and we do not vent, and we enjoy a deep confidence even as the tides seem to run against our faith. God is God, he is in control, and his kingdom—his church—ultimately knows no rivals.

Alistair Begg is general editor of the *CSB Spurgeon Study Bible*, senior pastor of Parkside Church in Cleveland, and the Bible teacher on *Truth for Life*, which is heard on the radio and online around the world. He graduated from theological college in London and served two churches in Scotland before moving to Ohio.

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WBAG 105.9 FM (Burlington, NC) 12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC) 2:00 p.m.
WDZY 1290 AM (Richmond, VA) 6:15 a.m.
10:00 a.m.
WDZY 103.3 FM (Richmond, VA) 6:15 a.m.
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WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC) 10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC) 10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC) 10:30 a.m.
WLES 590 AM (Richmond, VA) 10:30 a.m.

WGNQ mixlr.com/wgng-radio (M-F)
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(Internet station based in Greenville/Washington, NC)

Saturday

WNAH 1360 AM (Nashville, TN) 2:00 p.m.

BEACON HIGHLIGHTS FOR MAY

CALENDAR

- 02 The Forge (Men's Bible Study)
- 03 ESL (English as a Second Language)
Awards Banquet
- 06 IMPACT Clubs
- 10 Mother's Day
Lord's Table
- 12 Elders/Deacons Meeting
- 13 IMPACT Clubs
- 17 53rd Anniversary and Homecoming
- 20 IMPACT Clubs
- 24 Members Meeting
- 25 Memorial Day
Church Office Closed
- 27 IMPACT Clubs (Awards)
- 28 Silver Saints

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 02 Brent Rogers
- 04 Becky Tow
- 11 Sara Cardwell
- 12 Darlene Sutton
- 15 Lesley Fannon
- 16 Anne Enoch
- 18 Michael Karns
- 19 Mary Shaw
- 22 Brandon Counts
- 23 Claudette Delorge
Eddie Driver
- 24 Melanie Lowe
- 25 Howard Beatty
- 26 Zachary Beck
- 27 Elijah Beck
Bernie Braley
- 30 Susan Mullis

MISSIONARY BIRTHDAYS

- 07 Connie Chapman
- 10 Remi Borsini*
- 12 Tony Honeycutt
- 21 Isobel Cassells

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