

# CHRISTIAN LIGHT PUBLICATIONS

May – June 2012

## Struck by Lightning

**I**t was shortly after midnight, early on that Sunday morning, when I was awakened by a bright flash followed by a rumble of thunder. A few minutes later the lightning flashed again and was followed shortly by a severe crack of thunder.

*That was getting pretty close,* I thought, now fully awake. I was lying on my back in the upstairs of our mission house. My wife was sound asleep by my side. Having grown up in Pennsylvania, we were no strangers to thunderstorms. However, this storm brought back memories of the many storms in my childhood. Sometimes we would be chased in from the celery patch by a thunderstorm and have to wait it out on the porch. Several times we experienced nearby strikes. There would be a harsh fizzing sound followed immediately by a tremendous crack. There was something awesome about watching such a storm.

A few more minutes ticked by. Suddenly, a tremendous explosion filled our bedroom. It was orange and black and smelled like something burnt. I instinctively threw my arm across my eyes and lay still. My wife awoke and asked if I was okay. I replied that I was, and found out she was okay as well. But what about the house? Was it even now starting to burn?

We had battery-operated lights, but I was afraid to turn them on right then for fear it might do something to attract another lightning strike. So much for thinking rationally.

I asked my wife for the flashlight on the nightstand beside her. She reached for the nightstand, but the flashlight was no longer there. I got out of bed, went around to her side, and began groping on the floor for the flashlight. When I found it, it did not work.

I felt my way to the stairs and down to

the main floor where we had a Coleman lantern hung on a nail. I was able to light the lantern and look around. What a mess! A battery-powered, fluorescent light fixture lay shattered on the floor. In one corner of the house my .22 rifle and .270 moose rifle had been standing. The .22 lay about six feet out into the room, the stock completely splintered off the gun. The concussion of the strike had shaken the house; and even though my wife had cleaned it well the evening before, it was very dirty. In the kitchen corner, my wife found pie pans spot-welded together and some canning jars with streaks on their sides.

Going back upstairs, we held the lantern in our room. The nightstand was an old stereo speaker which we used to hold the kerosene lamp and our flashlight. The corner nearest the bed looked as if it had been shot through with a shotgun. We considered it a miracle that the kerosene lamp had not spilled and ignited. By now our young daughter was stirring in her room just beyond the stairs. We found her unharmed even though it looked like a high-powered rifle bullet had come up through the floor a couple of feet from her head. Tiny wood splinters were embedded in the curtains and throughout the room. When we stepped into our bedroom again, we saw smoke coming from the mattress. I quickly ran downstairs, grabbed a knife, and dipped some water from the water barrel. Running back upstairs, I slit the mattress and began sloshing water into the batting until the smoldering cotton padding was quenched. We checked the rest of the small cabin for signs of fire and, finding none, we attempted to go back to sleep.

Something changed that night. Whereas I had usually enjoyed a lively thunderstorm, now I wrestled with fear. Sunday afternoon a mild thunderstorm came through, and we did not enjoy it in the least. Several years would pass before I again could enjoy the majesty of a lightning storm.

As we reflected on that night, we began to understand that God might be trying to tell us something. After four years of serving in a school setting,

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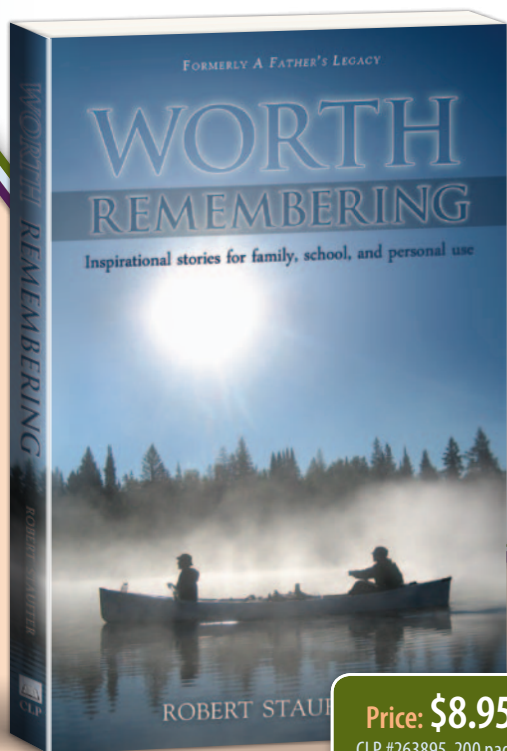
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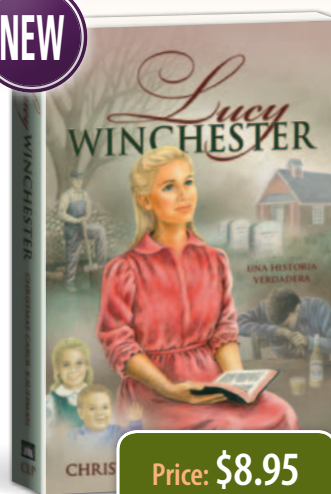
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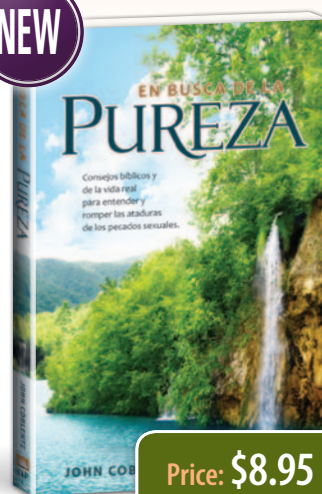
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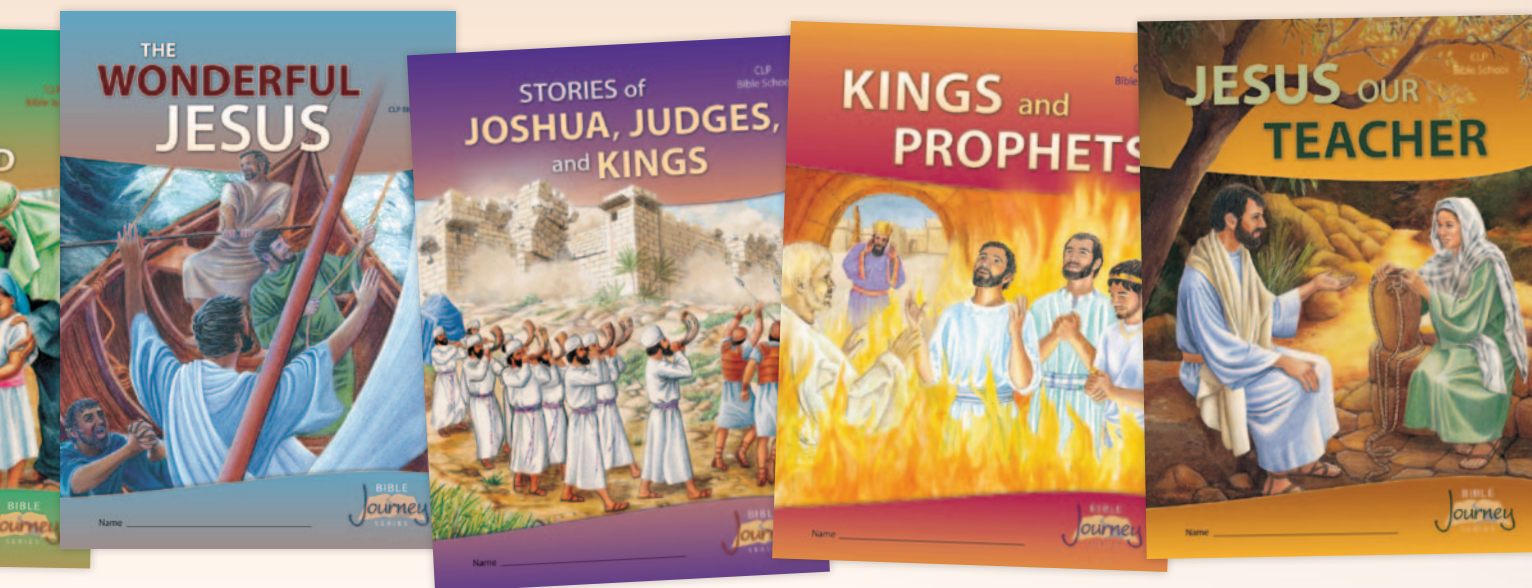
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we had made a hasty decision to enter another area of work. We had not sought the counsel of our parents nor the advice of those who were in authority over us at the school. The plans we had so carefully thought out in our move were quickly unraveling. I almost never got sick, but that summer I contracted impetigo, which turns the smallest scratch or scrape into a contagious, angry, red blotch. My wife, my daughter, and I were all afflicted. Was God trying to get our attention to tell us we had made a wrong decision? We were much in prayer over the next weeks, and when we were able to get to a phone, spent some earnest time seeking the counsel of our parents about what we should do. We ended up leaving the mission field for a number of years.

Looking back, we now understand some of the dynamics of that whole chain of events. It is a humbling chapter in our hall of shame as we considered the quick decision we made without honestly seeking the counsel of the authorities in our lives. We are grateful to God for finally getting our attention with the lightning bolt that struck the bed we were sleeping on. I wonder how many smaller things God sent which we did not recognize. The lightning was not pleasant, but it was for our good. May God be praised. ■

Excerpt from *Worth Remembering* by Robert Stauffer.  
Featured on page 2.



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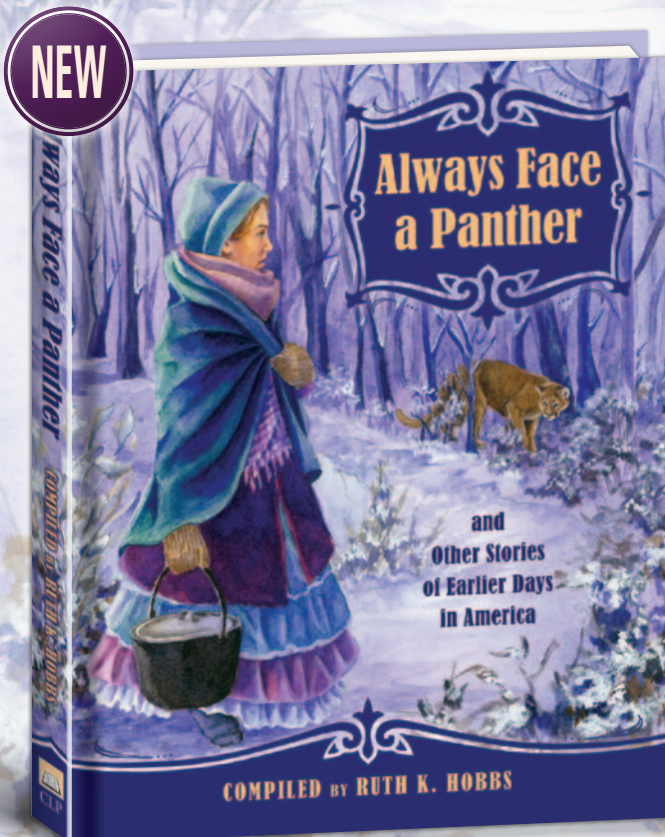
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