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To Our Graduates

As the tassel is turned a page is turned
To one that is spotless white;
A pen is laid in a trembling hand:
The question is, "What shall I write?"

Place your hand in the Master's hand —
Ask Him to guide your pen.
Your eyes can but dimly see the path
But He knows the *where* and the *when*.

Along the way you will err sometimes:
He has an eraser for you;
It is the blood of His blessed Son
To cover the wrongs that you do.

We wish you well in the years
 ahead
On the road both bright and
 dim,
But we know that all will be
 well with you
If you put your trust in Him.

— Victor Scott

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"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU (ROMANS 16:16).



UNITY AS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

A great deal of teaching has been done on unity, and at the same time the subject of division has been condemned. Much of what has been said has been in regard to the denominational world, showing that the many churches and religious groups created by men keep people from being united in the one

body of Christ, as God intended from the beginning.

Perhaps these Scriptures have been somewhat misapplied, inadvertently. Christ was praying in John 17 that His followers — *His church* — might be united. The admonitions in the epistles concerning unity are speaking of unity *among Christians*. The statements do not encompass those who are actually *outside the body of Christ*.

While it is true that all of the denominational groups are generally made up of believers in Christ, these believers are not *in* Christ because they have never done what the Lord requires in order for them to be added to His church (Acts 2:38-47). Since the world is not familiar with what the Bible teaches about the church, it assumes that all of these man-made churches are of the Lord, though they are divided. This is not what the Scriptures teach.

Division is bad, of course, but these people are not in error because they are divided, but because they are *in bogus churches*, churches that were established by men who were trying to go to heaven on their own terms.

At the time Christ lived, and for several hundred years after His church was established, there were no denominational churches in existence. There was not even any type of Catholic church in existence. There were false teachers, but none of these had broken away to form separate churches.

Whatever unity or division existed in the first century was *within* the

Lord's church. The church at Corinth is an example of such problems. Yet in spite of the division, Paul addressed his letter to *the church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints*, (1 Corinthians 1:2). But he pleaded with them by the name of the Lord that they all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10). He then proceeded to reason with them, asking them why they were dividing into different groups to follow Paul, Apollos, Peter, and even Christ. He asked if Christ was divided, if Paul had been crucified for them, or if they had been baptized in the name of Paul. Of course they knew that Christ was not divided, that Christ alone had been crucified for them, and that they had been baptized only in the name of Christ. The conclusion to Paul's logic was obvious: why were they following men, and why weren't they following Christ? Surely they got the point.

In John 17, Christ prayed, *"Neither pray I for these alone [the Apostles], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that*

they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast love me." (John 17:20-23).

Now how could His words be any plainer? Christ was not praying for the world, or even for the "believing" world at large, but He was praying for the Apostles and for all who would believe on Him through their preaching — for the church. He was praying that they would be one even as He and the Father were one. The Lord pleaded for this type of unity so that the world would believe that God had sent Him. Why is it that we find it difficult to impact the world? It is because of divisions that exist among us. Being divided, we waste our time and money opposing one another, and therefore the world pays no attention to us. If we were united, however, we could concentrate on teaching and converting the world. What a difference that would make!

But why would there be divisions among the Lord's people? Because the church is made up of human beings. We have our weaknesses, personality clashes, and even those who can be deceived by the world and by the teaching of the present-day religious world. As long as humans make up the church with their varying depths of under-

standing, commitment to truth, and willingness to compromise, there will be some divisions scattered throughout the church.

Some seem to reason that if the church is led into division, it must not truly be the Lord's church. They have evidently forgotten the division that Paul and others found in congregations in the first century.

Certainly, the Lord hates division, condemned it, and prayed that we might all be one. As Christians we want unity, we must not quit the church as though it, itself, is wrong if division raises its dirty head among its members. We must remember that *the church* is *one* and that it will remain *united in Christ*. Those who pull away and create division are the ones who are wrong and will have to pay a heavy price for their actions.

Paul said, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*" (Romans 16:17,18). Notice that in this case the thing that causes divisions among brethren is false doctrine or teaching. Notice also that those who cause division are not of the Lord. Therefore, the ones who do remain faithful to the Lord *remain the Lord's unified church*.

Then Paul says further, "*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*" (Ephesians 4:1-6). Again, isn't that plain? If one wanted to teach unity, how could he improve on that clear statement?

Does the Lord's church exist today? It certainly does, just it has always existed from the day it was established (Acts 2), and it will continue to exist until Christ returns to deliver it up to God. Is it united? Those who *remain faithful* to the Lord are united. The world, however, focuses on those who break away, the apostates, the unfaithful. These are not examples of true Christians, however, because they have ceased to be the Lord's faithful. Unless they repent and return to God they will be lost for all eternity.

I plead with you to become a member of the one church of the Bible and to put forth every effort to keep the church unified. Remember that Christ is not divided and neither will we be if we follow Him. †

INDOCTRINATION— THAT'S OUR JOB!



Byron Nichols

The word “indoctrination” is one which is frequently misunderstood and misused. This word has a bad connotation in the minds of some; they use it in connection with such ideas as brainwashing and coercive action to cause people to accept ideas that they really don’t want to accept. Even in the church there is

confusion and misunderstanding regarding this word. In strongly denouncing indoctrination as being wrong, one writer said, “Indoctrination eliminates truth, honesty, openness, a search for right, thought, understanding. The word Indoctrination is not in the Bible! To indoctrinate is to program, to control, to dominate.” If the things that this writer has attributed to indoctrination are accurate, then he is absolutely correct — indoctrination is evil and has no place whatsoever in Christianity. However, please don’t draw your final conclusion just yet.

I would agree that the word “indoctrination” does not appear in the Bible. Hopefully our readers have recognized that a major thrust of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** is to point people back to what the Bible, the inspired Word of God, says. However, just because a word does not appear in the Bible does not have to mean that God rejects that word. For example, I don’t know of anyone who believes it is wrong to use the word “missionary.” Nevertheless, this is a word that has not come to us from the Bible, but men have originated this word to refer to activities and persons that are very biblical in nature. Likewise, the terms “gospel meeting” and “lectureship” are not to be found in the Scriptures but are commonly used in the church and are very biblical in nature. These examples should be sufficient to make our point.

Undoubtedly the writer referred to above is very honest in his thinking, and I'm sure that he is trying to correct something that he believes is wrong. However, it is possible that his definition of "indoctrination" is inaccurate. Since the word is not in the Bible, we must find its definition in a dictionary instead. A review of a variety of English dictionaries indicates that the following definition from *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged* is typical: "**1. to instruct in doctrines, theories, beliefs, or principles. 2. to instruct; to teach.**"

With this in mind, it would appear that instead of indoctrination being **wrong**, it is **right**. Not only is it *right*, it is **essential**. Now that does not mean that those who engage in indoctrinating people cannot be guilty of abusive control, restricting the search for what is true and right. That most certainly can and does sometimes happen. We can even be guilty of harmfully indoctrinating when we teach and preach the very Gospel itself. Paul cautions in Ephesians 4:15 that we are to speak the truth "*in love.*" Truth can be spoken, taught, and revealed in a variety of manners. It can be conveyed in a loving and compassionate manner, but it can also be conveyed in a hateful manner, in an arrogant manner, in an argumentative manner, etc.

Moses, at God's direction, told the Israelites, "*And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall **teach** them diligently to your children, and shall **talk** of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up*" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7). This is indoctrination. Moses was saying that parents have an obligation to teach (indoctrinate) their children. He most assuredly did not mean that they are to "brainwash" their children, but he did mean that parents are to train, teach, and persuade their children, and to guide their thinking so as to help them to become faithful followers of God.

The Lord expects the church to be busy indoctrinating. Elders are to be men who are teachers (indoctrinators), (1 Timothy 3:2). Paul told Timothy to commit the things that he had heard (been taught) "*to faithful men who will be able to teach (indoctrinate) others also*" (2 Timothy 2:2). In Hebrews 5:12 we read of some who should have matured to the point of having become teachers (indoctrinators), but rather were still in need of being taught (indoctrinated) themselves.

The Bible makes it very clear that the primary mission of the church is to preach, teach, instruct, and persuade. In other words, the mission of the church is to **indoctrinate** folks as to the Gospel of Christ. Jesus has told us to "*preach the gospel to the whole creation*" (Mark 16:15). Thus, it would be quite accurate to say that Jesus has commanded us to **indoctrinate** the whole world regarding the Gospel. †

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**THE VOICE OF TRUTH
INTERNATIONAL**

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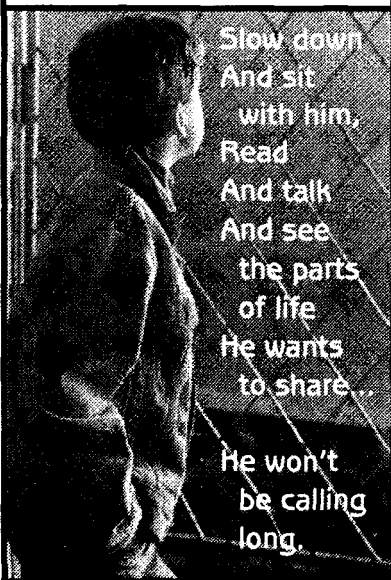
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Take the Time

Your life is busy,
Every day too full —
A job to do
The meals to make
The house to clean,
And washing to be done. . .

He calls,
Unmindful of your tasks:
"Mommy, come and see..."
Impulsive words
Would tumble out,
"Not now — not now!
There's work to do..."

But take the time;



Slow down
And sit
with him,
Read
And talk
And see
the parts
of life
He wants
to share...

He won't
be calling
long.

— Betty Burton Choate



SAVIOR and LORD

Jack W. Carter

I suppose it has been so since the advent of Jesus. Multitudes want Him as a *Savior*, but only a few of these will allow Him to be their *Lord*. Even many of us who feel that we have accepted Jesus as our Lord prove this to be false by the way we live our lives.

That which determines our acceptance of Jesus as Lord is the way we honor His direction. The writer of Hebrews tells us that God now speaks to us through His Son (Hebrews 1:2). In the next chapter we learn that that which was first spoken by the Son was then spoken by those who heard Him (Hebrews 2: 3). These, of course, were the apostles and other disciples. This means that the words of our New Testament are actually the words of God. This shouldn't surprise us, because we already know that the New Testament is inspired, and the meaning of "inspired" is "God-breathed." So, honoring the words of Jesus means honoring the words of the entire New Testament.

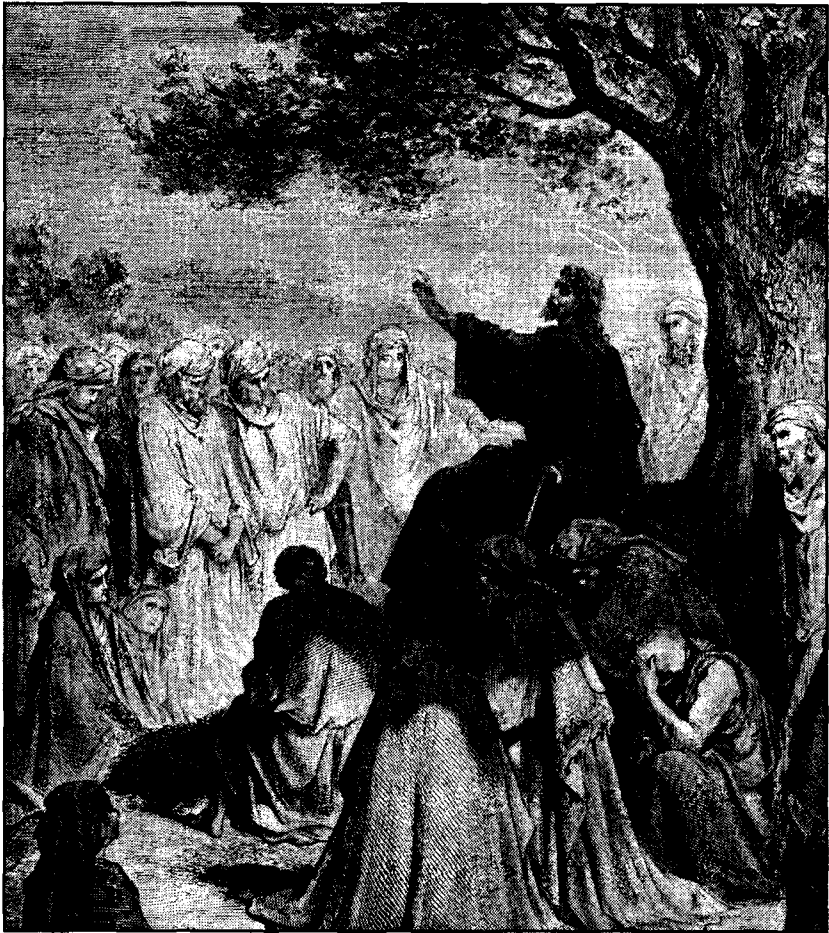
One of the great infractions of our relationship with Jesus as our

Lord is the way we so often pick and choose what we want to accept from Him as far as His direction is concerned. Such an attitude proves, without debate, that *we* are the lord of our lives, not *Jesus*. If we obey Him only when we agree with the direction He gives, we are actually doing our own will, not His.

The great fallacy of all of this might be the way we convince ourselves that this is going to somehow give us what we want. In a manner of speaking, it can. We can go along in life under the pretense that Jesus is *our Lord* (even though we have overruled Him) and get our way in most instances. That is, we will get our way in *this life*, unless Jesus decides to show us who is really in charge.

But the only one who will determine whether or not Jesus will be *our Savior* is Jesus, Himself. This is an area in which we cannot overrule Him, and He makes it very clear in the writings of the new Testament that *He will not be our Savior unless He is truly our Lord.*†

Jack W. Carter preaches for the church in Castle Rock, Colorado, U.S.A.



Jesus: The Master Communicator

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

Our world is a world of clashing ideas, opposing ideologies, changing cultures, and confused

values. In the battle for the minds of people, multiple causes and messages are being communicated.

GOD

Christians, too, are in the business of communication. The message is one of God's glory, grace, and love. God has spoken — what He has said must be heard and received.

Jesus, the Son of God, came in the flesh as the ultimate communicator from God. He was the **master communicator**. He was called "*the teacher who came from God*" (John 3:2). He communicated what God is like. He taught how men can have life abundantly (John 10:10).

Those whom Jesus called, first the apostles, then that community of believers called the church, were involved in the business of communication. By word, example, and life, the followers of Jesus have impacted their world. How successful have we been? Are we being heard? Have we been effective in channeling the blessings of Christ to others?

Perhaps it would help us to pause and examine the effectiveness of the Master. The common people heard Him gladly. Why?

1. Because He identified with them. He was the "*Son of man.*" He was not catering to any special interest group. He was neither a Pharisee nor a Sadducee. He came to be "*servant to all.*"

2. Because He made no distinctions. He did not value one above another because of color,

race, money, or fame. He looked upon each person as a soul made in the image of God and worth saving. There was no partiality. He treated the Syro-Phoenician woman with the same dignity that He gave the master in Israel, Nicodemus.

3. Because He had a message for all. It was a message of hope for the despairing. It was a message of love for the unloving and unlovable. It was a message of peace for the troubled and hurting.

4. Because of the simplicity of His speech. He could be understood. His language was direct and practical. His pictures, illustrations, and parables were drawn from ordinary life. The great and profound was couched in the simplest words.

5. Because His life harmonized with His teaching. Luke spoke of "*all he began to do and teach*" (Acts 1:1). He taught us to love one's enemies — He did! He taught us to forgive — He did! Hypocrisy is our greatest obstacle to effective communication.

We are His voice in this world! Are we coming across? Are we being heard? Could we mar the message? Let's be challenged by the example of Jesus to be more effective communicators. †

Clarence DeLoach, Jr. preaches for the Walnut Street congregation of the church of Christ in Dickson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Reason Reaching Into Faith

Owen Cosgrove

Coleridge wrote: "It has been my object and unquenched desire, to kindle young minds, and to guard them against the temptations of scorners, by showing that the scheme of Christianity, though not discoverable by human reason, is yet in accordance with it; that link follows link by necessary consequence; that religion passes out of the ken of reason only where the eye of reason has reached its own horizon; and that faith is then but its continuation; even as the day softens away into the sweet twilight, and twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness."

GOD

This reaffirms the statement made by the Apostle Paul, "We walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Human sight can go only so far. Reason can proceed beyond it, but it also finds its limitations. Beyond the bounds and confines of human power, when the scope of intellect reaches into the distant ethereal realms of breathless nothingness, except for the light of Heaven, there can be only darkness and gloomy despair.

Abraham Lincoln said of the Scriptures, "Accept all of them that you can by reason, and accept the rest by faith, and you will be a better person."

Without light from some spiritually stellar source, the world becomes a philosophical prison, a type of intellectual black hole collapsing in on itself. Peter writes with awe of the splendor of the Bible: "*We have a more sure word*

of prophecy; wherein ye do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shineth into a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts . . ." (2 Peter 1:19).

The sun of life goes down leaving us in the darkness and quietness of the tomb. All earthly wisdom and enterprise come to this place. Oh, Human Reason, is this all that there is? What will ever become of this silent, breathless crypt?

"Beyond the sunset, a hand will
guide me

To God the Father whom I adore;
His glorious presence, His words of
welcome


Will be my portion on that fair
shore."

—Virgil P. Brock

Thank God for faith and hope. †

**Owen Cosgrove preaches for the
Northside Church of Christ in
Waxahachie, Texas, U.S.A.**

"Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness'; and again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.' Therefore let no one glory in men. . . ."
(1 Corinthians 3:18-20)



How do you measure up?

Let no one despise your youth,
but be an example to the believers
in word,
in conduct,
in love,
in spirit,
in faith,
in purity.

Until I come, give attention
to reading,
to exhortation,
to doctrine
(1 Timothy 4:12,13).

EVIDENCES



Where Did Cain Get His Wife?

Keith Sisman

A question often asked of Christians is, where did Cain get his wife? This question is mostly asked to ridicule the Bible and the Christian, pointing to an alleged contradiction in the Old Testament. Whilst often asked in jest, the answer can be used to show the inquirer the inspiration of the Scriptures and their agreement with modern science.

There is a reason why this question is of deadly importance: because of Adam, sin entered the world and through sin, death (Genesis 3:3,19; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:45). In Romans 3:23 we learn that all have sinned. So because of the transgression of Adam and his wife we need another "Adam", the man Jesus Christ who laid down His life as a sacrifice for all of mankind, so that we may be saved (1 Corinthians 15:21,22,45). It is through these Scriptures that we learn that only the descendants of Adam can be saved! If we are NOT descended from Adam we CANNOT be saved!

Now, the Bible describes all humans as sinners, since the beginning, and it follows that all humans have descended from the first man, Adam, except his wife, Eve (Genesis 3:20; Acts 17:26).

So now we can establish through these Scriptures that Cain's wife also must be a descendent of Adam and Eve who had many sons and daughters other than their three sons whose names we know — Cain, Abel and Seth (Genesis 5:4).

If Cain's wife was not his sister, she would of necessity have been a very close relative. Would marriage to a sister or a niece have been wrong? No. The Mosaic law (Leviticus 18,19,20), which prohibited marriage of close relatives, was not given until approximately 2,500 years later. Also

EVIDENCES

remember that Abraham was married to Sarah his half-sister but, again, this was before the time of Moses. The only law of marriage that Cain and his wife were bound under was one man to one woman for life (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:2).

Now the big question that many unbelievers will ask is that of concern for genetical deformities, hoping that science can be used to prove the Bible wrong, but what does science have to say on this?

◆ Adam and Eve were created as perfect specimens (Genesis 1:31). With their gene pool, interbreeding would have presented no problems whatsoever. The evidence of modern biology supports these thoughts.

◆ The whole human race is very similar. We can interbreed without problems, so simple observation tells us that we are all the same, regardless of geography or color. In 1987 American scientists found that mitochondria DNA in women of several ethnic groups was virtually identical, suggesting that we all come from one woman (Eve). The date for this woman has been set at a maximum of 200,000 years.

◆ Likewise, all men have a Y chromosome inherited from their fathers, and a study in 1995 showed that all men, regardless of ethnic

background, share the same gene sequences on the Y chromosome, showing that we all come from the same father (Adam).

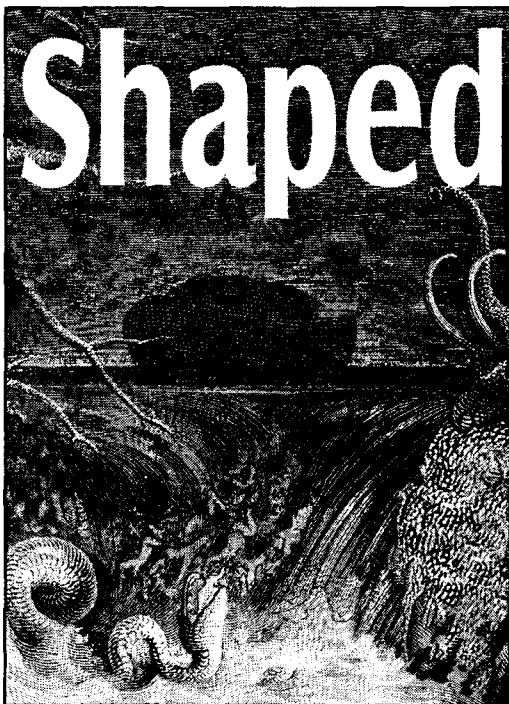
◆ The science of Population Kinetics has shown that through simple arithmetic we can reach the conclusion that the world's population has grown only for the last 4,500 to 5,000 years, the approximate time of the universal flood, as recorded in Genesis 6-8. If the growth of the population were to date significantly further back than that, the present density level would have been reached many years ago. It is interesting to note that this time-frame is when mankind first appeared historically, as revealed through archeology and the remains of civilizations.

Yes, there really was a literal Adam and Eve! All of mankind, regardless of background, is descended from them; and, yes, Cain did marry either his sister or a close relative; and, yes, man is recent!

The Bible account does not disagree with *known and proven biology, science or history*. We can be certain that when we read the record of the creation of mankind in the Scriptures, it is the only account that makes sense, being the very word of creator God Himself. †

Keith Sisman is a Christian and Bible teacher living in Huntingdon, Cambs., England.

Shaped by Water



**Betty Burton
Choate**

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

“And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.....’

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear’” (Genesis 1:1,2,6,9).

It would be impossible to travel in the western part of the United States without realizing that water has shaped the land. Everywhere are mountains composed of sedimentary layers, compacted into rock, cut and eroded and weathered by glacial movement, water, wind and time. There are valleys and great up-thrusts as layers bulged upward, reshaped by pressure from below. In other areas are great mounds of swirled sedimentary layers — water — water — water!

Modern, unbelieving geologists would describe the process in this way: “The ocean invaded this rift. Sediments, eroded from neighboring highland areas, were deposited for over a half a billion years along the margin of this ancient North American Continent in the Belt Sea. Many tens of thousands of feet of sediment accumulated Deposits of sand, silt, and carbonate

EVIDENCES

mud were buried, compressed by their own weight; they cemented to form sandstone, siltstone, shale, limestone, and dolomite.” (**Glacier, the Story Behind the Scenery**, P. 8)

The description closely resembles exactly what *would have happened* as the land mass of the earth was buried under the crushing weight of a water covering, before God made dry land appear on Day Three. The layers of sedimentation in that process — the so-called “pre-Cambrian” layers — were devoid of plant and animal fossils, for life had not yet been created.

Second Submersion

“...all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.... And the waters increased.... And the waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth.... And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.... The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered” (Genesis 7:11-20).

This second period of submersion for the land mass of the earth, during the universal flood of Noah, lasted about one year (and much longer in the areas where the water froze into snow, ice, and glaciers). Though we don't know how tall the

highest mountains were at that time, the Scriptures say the water was 15 cubits — more than 20 feet — *above* the tallest one.

Can we imagine the *weight* of the amount of water that would be required to completely cover the earth? Can we imagine how the entire land mass would have been crushed and moved and crushed and eroded by the great surging and washing of such a body of water?

Can we imagine the hundreds-of-feet depth of ice and snow that would have accumulated over the sections of the world which would have experienced their first onslaught of winter? Why should we be amazed at the bull-dozer type cutting of huge glaciers during the “ice age” that would have followed the flood? And why should it seem strange to see massive boulders lying here and there in areas devoid of other such rock formations, when we realize that rushing, un-baffled waters covering the world would have had the force and carrying power to move anything in their path? Without doubt, the water alone remade the entire surface of the earth.

All the tremendously lush tropical forest and jungle growth, along with all the bodies of humans and animals covering the earth would have been buried under this deluge — not only buried but compacted

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under a year's sedimentary accumulation and the combined weight of the sedimentary layers and the water. Tremendous beds of coal and oil would have been the result. The fact that well-preserved insects, leaves, trees, and other fossil remains are often found in the beds of coal show that, contrary to evolutionary descriptions of coal being formed over millions of years, the tremendous masses of plants were quickly buried and compacted, as would have happened in a global flood.

In Alaska, throughout Siberia, and other areas of permafrost, the remains of thousands upon thousands of animals have been found. "The extensive silty alluvium, now frozen, in central Alaska contains numerous mammal fauna.... Freezing has preserved the skin and tissue of some of the animals..." (R.F. Flint: *Glacial and Pleistocene Geology*). The list includes bears, wolves, badgers, saber-tooth tigers, jaguars, lynx, woolly mammoths, camels, horses, mastadons, ground sloths, etc., etc.

These burials say several things:

- ◆ The climate before the burials in these places was warm, else the lush growth of plants and the very large and varied animal population would not have been possible.
- ◆ The sudden death and burial of these plants and animals could only have been catastrophic, as in a global flood.

◆ The catastrophe caused a permanent change in the world's climate, resulting in conditions of permafrost and glaciers which continue today.

"You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever, You covered it with the deep as with a garment;

[The first statement describes God's work in creation; the second has reference to the flood waters which came later.]

"The waters stood above the mountains.

"At Your rebuke they fled; At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away" (Psalm 104:5-7).

Even though God sent a wind over the earth (Genesis 8:1), beginning the evaporation of flood waters, not all of the original waters above the heavens, as described in Genesis 1, returned to form the canopy that had evidently shielded the earth before the flood [The loss of this protective canopy changed the climate from tropical over the whole earth to the wide range of temperatures we now experience.] *But where did the remainder of the water canopy go?*

Genesis 7:11 also tells us that in the flood the fountains of the great deep were broken up, so that tremendous amounts of "juvenile" water were spewed from underneath the earth's crust. *Where did this water go, when it was time for the*

flood to recede?

With millions of cubic feet of water to be displaced, the only possible solution is that tremendous changes had to take place in the earth's surface. The writer of Psalm 104, by God's guidance, described the mountains and valleys that were developed.

"They [the waters] went up over the mountains; they went down into the valleys, to the place which You founded for them. You have set the boundary that they may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth" (Psalm 104:8,9).

So when geologists speak of the upthrust in the earth's crust [initiating the beginning of the volcanic activity that has been directly responsible for much of the shaping of this renewed earth] which formed the mountain chains, when they wonder at the displaced layers, when they say that land masses in one place were actually previously joined to land masses far from that place, we shouldn't be surprised that such upheavals occurred in the development of our present world. Logic says that those changes were necessary to make room for the flood waters, so that dry land could again appear. †

Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, editor of *The Voice of Truth International*. The Choates have done mission work in India and Asia since 1962.

Does God Care?

Does God sit in detached meditation, unconcerned about the things that are happening in the world? Particularly, are the cares in my individual life too small for His attention?

Jesus assured His listeners: *"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"* (Matthew 6:26).

When Jesus was living in the world, He was moved with compassion by the poverty, disease and grief around Him. He wept for others in their pain, and He worked tirelessly to alleviate physical and spiritual suffering, to bring people to the Father. *His life* was proof of the concern of God for humanity. *"...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7).

And more importantly, *His death* was proof of God's concern for every man's **spiritual welfare**. *We matter greatly to God.*

NEXT: Do I Have a Soul?

PUZZLE PAGE

The Book of Philemon for adults

Using a straight line, connect the names in column 1 to the descriptions in column 2. Your lines will pass through both a number and a letter. The number tells you where to put the letter in the box below. The answer will reveal what Paul was asking of Philemon.

PAUL •

•Sister in the Lord

PHILEMON •

•Runaway slave

APPHIA •

•Ambassador for Christ

ARCHIPPUS •

•Fellow workers

ONESIMUS •

•Fellow soldier

EPAPHRAS •

•Slave owner

MARK, ARISTARCHUS, DEMAS, LUKE •

•Fellow prisoner

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

GOD'S LIGHT MUST BE TURNED ON

Hollis Miller

How important is Bible knowledge? Or to ask the same question differently, how important is it that men know the will of God?

Hosea said: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Isaiah proclaimed: "My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge" (Isaiah 5:13). So important is knowledge of God's will that Jesus wants every disciple to be taught all He commanded (Matthew 28:20). The Hebrews writer seriously chided his readers because their knowledge level had failed to grow beyond infancy (Hebrews 5:11-6:2).

Service to God moves through knowledge to action, not through action to knowledge. The fact that God has revealed His will to men is clear evidence that He does not look with favor upon men deciding through their own wisdom what is, and what is not, proper faith in Him.

How does one acquire knowledge of God? Whether or not Paul foresaw this question, he nevertheless answers it. "All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable

for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Other knowledge can be obtained through research and from the ideas of men, but knowledge of the will of God comes through the investigation of His Word.

The Bible needs to be read with greater seriousness and devotion than any other book. For, as the Hebrews writer declared, "*The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as division of soul and spirit, of both joint and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart*" (Hebrews 4:12). Such "piercing" is meant to lead us as we walk life's pathway. Truly, the Word of God is "*a lamp unto our feet*" (Psalm 119:105), but it can shine on our path only when we turn it on! †

Hollis Miller is a preacher of the Gospel living in Cadiz, Kentucky, U.S.A.



THAT
IS ALL
I
KNOW
ABOUT
IT

David R. Pharr

The apostle Paul quotes from Isaiah 64:4 to show that we can never know the mind of God by our own abilities. *“Eyes hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”* (1 Corinthians 2:9).

“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God...Which things also speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth...” (1 Corinthians 2:10,11,13). These words serve as a reminder to us that a man cannot know the things within another’s mind, without being told. Only his own spirit can know his thoughts. Likewise, a man cannot know what is in the mind of God. It is God’s own Spirit that knows His mind.

The point being emphasized by the apostle is that all we can possibly know about the will of the Lord is what has been revealed by the Holy Spirit. In a parallel passage, it is explained that the things which were not known in other ages are now revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5). We learn the things of God through the inspired revelation of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Religious discussions may sometimes prompt speculative questions:

THE WORD OF GOD

“What if...Don’t you think...Is it possible...?”, etc. Questions which seek a biblical answer are legitimate, but those which call for mere opinion may be useless. In fact, opinions which suggest and encourage alternatives to what God has told us can cause great harm. 1 Timothy 6:4 cautions against “*doing about questions and strifes of words.*” Again, Paul says, “*But foolish and unlearned questions avoid*” (2 Timothy 2:23).

Those who want to appear scholarly may be tempted to answer unanswerable questions. Some may even speculate on ways to avoid what “*Thus saith the Lord.*” A faithful teacher of the Word, however, will be satisfied to point to the Scriptures and say, “That is all I know about it.”

For example, numerous questions arise over divorce and remarriage. Admittedly, there are sometimes difficult and complicated situations. But when all the “What ifs” and “It seems likes” have been stated, the fact remains that what the Bible says is all I know about it. The problem with what Jesus said in Matthew 19:9 is not that it cannot be understood. The problem is that people do not want to accept it. We would be wise to note that even on that occasion the listeners found Jesus’ answer to be a hard one. What was His response? “*All men*

cannot receive this saying...He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Matthew 19:11,12) He, Himself, was limited to whatever the Father had commanded Him to say (John 12:49).

There are also discussions about the plan of salvation. Questions arise about the honest seeker who dies without obeying the Gospel. Arguments may be made with both emotion and reason. But when I have read the commands, promises, and warnings in the Bible, that’s all I know about it.

We must be careful not to think of men “*above that which is written*” (1 Corinthians 4:6). There is much emphasis on education, intelligence, and ability. These may help in the study and teaching of the Word, but it must be remembered that all spiritual knowledge must still start and end at the same place — in the Bible.

One may know (or think he knows) a great many things about the material world. Those things may be learned from many sources. But the only *spiritual truth* that I will ever know this side of eternity will be what I learn from the Bible. The bottom line is, “**Here is what the Bible says. That is all I know about it!**” †

David R. Pharr preaches for the church in Clinton, Tennessee, U.S.A.

God's Drawing Power

W. Douglass Harris

"No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:44,45).

How does God draw sinful men unto Him? Does He do it in some mysterious, irresistible, better-felt-than-told way? According to our text, it is through teaching, as the Old Testament prophets indicated. But what is this teaching by which God draws sinners to Him? Answer: This teaching is what the Holy Scriptures call the **Gospel**. By the use of an acrostic of the word "gospel," let us see if we can learn what it is and how God draws men to Him.

Glad Tidings: Nearly all people, whether Christians or not, understand that the word "gospel" means "glad tidings" or "good news." In the New Testament, it is the translation of *evangelion* and denotes the good news about Christ and the salvation that is made possible through Him. So, it is the glorious good news as was announced by angels to the shepherds at the time of His birth (Luke 2:8-14). It is more than good advice; it is good news that meets all of our spiritual needs as a key fits the lock. This good news was preached in promise unto Abraham (Galatians 3:8).

Originated in the Grace of God: It is called the "*word of grace*" (Acts 14:3). Paul affirmed that the commission given him by the Lord was "*to testify to the gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24). Since this grace of God is the result of His love, John says, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). So this Gospel originated in God's grace (John 1:17), but it would be a false conclusion that its' being by grace makes salvation unconditional. This would ignore many other passages which state conditions with which man must comply to appropriate God's grace.

Simple, Yet Profound: Paul warned against being corrupted from the "*simplicity*" that is in Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3). This word in the original includes the idea of simplicity as well as sincerity. The Gospel contains

THE WORD OF GOD

simple facts to be believed (1 Corinthians 15:1-8); simple commands to be obeyed (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Matthew 7:21); glorious promises simple to understand (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:23; Mark 16:16); and simple warnings to be heeded (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9).

Powerful to Save: Paul affirms that it is God's power to save (Romans 1:16). Obedience thereto saves the believer from the power, the practice, and the guilt of sin. Paul reminded the Ephesians that they "*heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*" (Ephesians 1:13). This Gospel is powerful because it reveals God's love and grace, the love and sacrifice of Christ for sinners, and the Holy Spirit's exhortations not to harden the heart against it (Hebrews 3:7,8).

Everlasting in Its Blessings or Benefits: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*" (1 Peter 1:3,4). No other gospel can bring such benefits (Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9-11). Constant obedience thereto brings great joy in this life and eventually leads to heaven (Colossians 1:23).

Let It Be Proclaimed to Every Creature: (Mark 16:15). The Gospel is not a luxury to be selfishly kept to ourselves, but a sacred trust to be shared with others. This is the reason Paul was such an avid proclaimer — he considered it a trust (1 Timothy 1:11), and charged Timothy to guard that (the Gospel) which has been committed to him (1 Timothy 6:20).

Conclusion: This Gospel is God's drawing and persuasive power (John 6:44,45;12:32). Please read thoughtfully the following quote from Alexander Cruden:

"The gospel is a revelation of the grace of God to fallen man through a mediator. Or, it is a wise, and a holy, and gracious constitution of God, for the recovery of fallen, sinful man, from that deplorable state into which sin had brought him, by sending his own Son Jesus Christ into the flesh, to obey his law which man had broken, to make atonement for sin by his death, and thus to procure the favour of God, and eternal happiness for all that believe, repent, and receive the gospel salvation."

— Cruden's Concordance

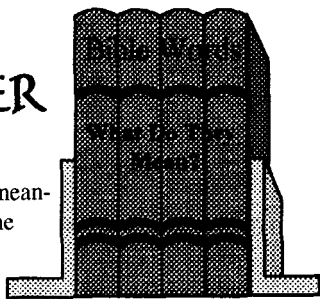


W. Douglass Harris is the editor of the *Caribbean Messenger* and lives in Decatur, Alabama, U.S.A.

It Helps to Enrich Your BIBLE WORD POWER

By Fenter D. Northern

Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the context found in Hebrews chapter 4 (KJV). After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.



1. **fear** A: tremble B: to run away from C: profound reverence D: offer excuse
2. **promise** A: to marry B: sign a note of debt C: an oath D: an undertaking or giving of something
3. **rest** A: to cause to cease B: to recline C: to catch one's breath D: sit a while
4. **mixed** A: to unite with B: inharmonious C: indecisive D: poor breeding
5. **sworn** A: having cursed B: affirming or denying with an oath C: make a resolution D: uttered idle words
6. **works** A: deeds of God B: interior of a clock C: to labor D: to have employment
7. **foundation** A: the act of throwing down B: the beginning of a lecture C: a funded scholarship D: a premise
8. **unbelief** A: to reject a premise B: astonishment C: choose differently D: disobedience
9. **today** A: now B: in this age or era C: until this very moment D: presently
10. **Jesus** A: Son of God B: One who loves C: A nazarene D: Jehovah is salvation
11. **labour** A: a work force B: to be diligent at doing something C: to give birth D: to perspire
12. **example** A: one of something B: to show by placing the correct number C: to single out for discipline D: a display
13. **quick** A: hurry B: accelerate C: agile D: to be alive
14. **powerful** A: active in work B: strong C: irresistible D: overwhelming
15. **sharp** A: well defined B: honed C: swift in cutting D: mentally bright
16. **piercing** A: a loud noise B: penetrating one's armor of unbelief C: to puncture ear lobes D: stabbing
17. **profession** A: confession B: one's job C: to speak D: act of instructing
18. **tempted** A: to have a desire for B: to lean in a direction C: proved or tried D: to succumb to pressure

1. **fear** (Gk. phobeo) C: profound reverence. That high respect for God which causes one to submit to his call for righteous moral conduct.

2. **promise** (Gk. epagellia) D: an undertaking or giving of something. Except for Acts 23:21 it is used in the New Testament only for the promises of God.

3. **rest** (in 4:1 Gk. katapausis; in 4:9 sabbatismos. A: To cause to cease, even to the point of reposing. While the latter word is used in 4:9, it means the same thing but is respective of keeping of a sabbath

4. **mixed** (Gk. sugkerannumi) A: to unite with. Hearing the promise (gospel) of God did not unite in their hearts with faith, thus it deprived them of entering Canaan rest under Joshua. Just so, no one will enter into the remaining rest under Jesus without faith in the Word.

5. **sworn** (Gk. omnumi) B: affirming or denying with an oath. In this case God gives his own word as a divine unalterable decree that unbelief in his word would prohibit entrance into Canaan.

6. **works** (Gk. ergon) A: deeds of God in this context. Frequently it means the active response of one's faith in the Word. See 2 Thess. 1:11)

7. **foundation** (Gk. katabole) A: the act of throwing down. The world was laid down with great force by the Almighty. Hence to lay down a base for building.

8. **unbelief** (Gk. apeitheo) D: disobedience, and it is so translated in the RV. Faith without obedience, such as the devils had in James 2:19, is invalid as it shows a hardness of heart against God's word. Saving faith and obedience to God's word are synonymous.

9. **today** (Gk. semeron) C: Until this very moment, is the best here as it means from the time it is mentioned in Psalms 95:7 until

the very day in which the writer of Hebrews lived.

10. **Jesus** (Gk. Iesous) D: Jehovah is salvation, that is the Saviour. In this context, the writer is not speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, but Joshua who succeeded Moses and led Israel into Canaan.

11. **labour** (Gk. spoudazo) B: to be diligent at doing something, in this context, to be extremely active in pursuing the rest that remains for the people of God.

12. **example** (Gk. hupodeigmata) B: to show by placing under (before) the eyes, thus, let those who fell by disobedience in the wilderness, missing the promise of rest, be an example before your eyes of what happens to the disobedient.

13. **quick** (Gk. zoe) D: to be alive. The word of God is engrafted with the spirit of life, hence is said to be alive. See James 1:21.

14. **powerful** (Gk. energeis) A: active in work. The word of God is alive and moving in the work of regenerating the heart. There is nothing hidden from it even if one stores it away in the deep recesses of the body and soul.

15. **sharp** (Gk. tomotos) C: swift in cutting, The preached word acts swiftly to cut (prick) the conscience clean of sin and guilt. See Acts 9:5

16. **piercing** (Gk. diikneomai) B: penetrating one's armor of unbelief.

17. **profession** (Gk. homologeos) A: confession. Stay true to everything implied in believing that Jesus is the Son of God.

18. **tempted** (Gk. pepeirasmenon) C: proved or tried, e.g. Jesus in Matthew 4.

Vocabulary Scale

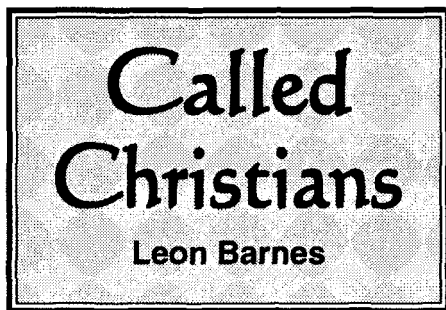
7-10 correct.....	Good
11-13 correct.....	Bible Student
14-15 correct.....	Bible Scholar

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

The term "Christian" is found only three times in the Word of God. Far more often those who were followers of Christ were referred to as "disciples" or "brethren." But the fact that Christian was used only three times doesn't take away from its significance. It has power and meaning which no other word in Scripture demonstrates.

"Christian" was used first in Acts 11:26. Peter had been summoned by the Lord to go and preach to the family of Cornelius back in Acts 10. Cornelius was a Gentile and Peter had not understood, prior to this point, that the mes-

really was for world. Oh, he statement to Acts two, when *the promise is your children are afar off, as the Lord our* But he was direction of



sage of Christ the whole had made the that effect in he said, "*For to you and to and to all who even as many God shall call.*" under the the Holy Spirit

in his words. What he preached didn't necessarily harmonize with what he thought or believed. God had to show a vision to Peter to get him to go and preach the Good News to Cornelius. As a result, Cornelius and his family became obedient to the faith.

In Acts 11 Peter returns to the Christians who were Jews and defends his going to the Gentiles to preach God's Word. It was after that that disciples went to Antioch and preached the Gospel of Christ to other Gentiles. "*The hand of God was upon them and a large number who believed turned to the Lord*" (Acts 11:21). The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to check things out and to help with the work.

After this Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul and bring him back to help in this ministry. They assembled with the church for a whole year. "*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch*" (Acts 11:26). It is surely significant that the name "Christian" was given only after the church was opened to people of all backgrounds. Before, many had looked on the message of Christ and those who followed Him as just an offshoot of Judaism. Now the Gospel was spreading to all the world. Thus, the name Christian was given to separate them from other religious backgrounds. It

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

declared the loyalty of those who wore the name to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. It shouted to the world, "We belong to Christ. We are His followers and His disciples."

The second instance of the name Christian being used was by Agrippa the king. Paul, in jail for preaching the Word, was brought before Agrippa so that Agrippa might figure out an acceptable charge against Paul for sending him to Rome to appear before Caesar. When Paul was given the opportunity to speak, he proclaimed with power the message of Christ. He even questioned Agrippa about his belief of the prophets. *"Agrippa replied to Paul, 'In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian. And Paul said, 'I would to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains'"* (Acts 26:28,29).

Some have said that Agrippa was using the name in derision. Maybe so. But Paul's response accepts the name Christian for himself and longs for others to use the same name in the way he has, except for the chains. It is true that the name is often misused and applied to people who are not really following Christ, but we can, like Paul, use it in the right way and try to draw others to the Lord with the name.

The third instance where "Christian" is used is in 1 Peter 4:16. Peter had challenged those scattered abroad to not suffer as thieves, murderers, evildoers, or busybodies. *"Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but glorify God in this name."* Notice the distinction between those suffering for evil and those suffering as a Christian. The name is descriptive and refers to those who are following Christ. He left us an example, that we should follow in His footsteps (1 Peter 2:21). To be a Christian is to follow the pattern He has set for us.

Every time this word is used in the New Testament it is used of individuals who were living for the Lord. I suspect we have applied the word much too broadly when it is used of a nation or organization. Even when applied to the home, it would need to be a home built on following Christ in our lives, and not just the fact all who are there have been baptized.

To wear the name Christian is an honor, but it should humble every person who speaks of himself as a Christian, because of the one whom we are claiming to follow by the use of His name. †

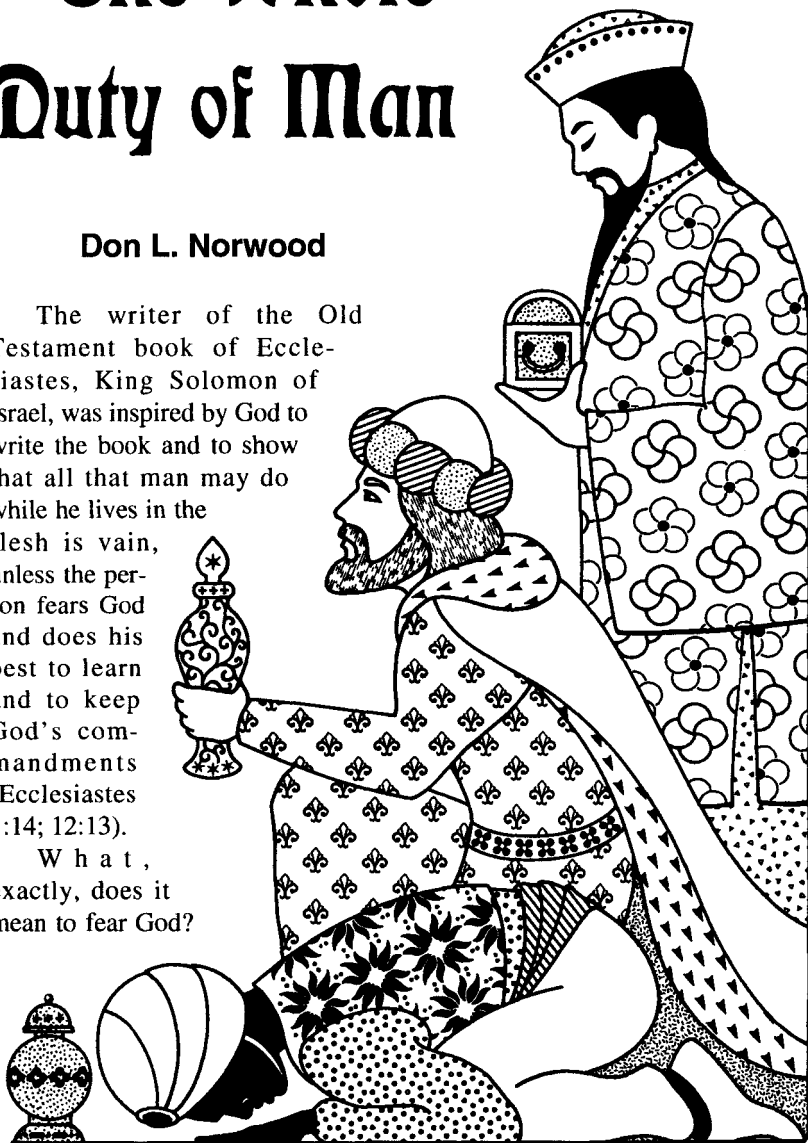
Leon Barnes preaches for the Barrow Road congregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, U.S.A.

The Whole Duty of Man

Don L. Norwood

The writer of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon of Israel, was inspired by God to write the book and to show that all that man may do while he lives in the flesh is vain, unless the person fears God and does his best to learn and to keep God's commandments (Ecclesiastes 1:14; 12:13).

What, exactly, does it mean to fear God?



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

This word "fear" used in Ecclesiastes 12:13 is translated from the Hebrew word "yare," which means "reverence for God." Reverence means "an attitude of deep respect, love, and awe for that which is sacred." Therefore, to fear God means to have the greatest respect for Him and also a feeling of terror or deep concern for being disobedient to Him.

In the New Testament "fear" is translated from the Greek word "phobeo," meaning "to cause fear or to terrify," used in such passages as 1 Peter 2:17; Acts 13:16; Luke 12:4,5.

Consider what Solomon revealed about man's life on earth in the flesh. All that mankind might accomplish as he lives in this world is truly vain (useless) unless he becomes spiritually reconciled unto God and lives in fellowship with God. Solomon thus said, "*And I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind*" (Ecclesiastes 1:13,14).

Solomon tried to satisfy himself with pleasure (2:1-11); he tried wisdom applied to earthly matters (2:12-17); he observed that man is totally

controlled by time while here on earth (3:1-15); he saw all kinds of injustice in the lives of people (chapter 4); he saw the excellence of wisdom if properly used following God's guidance (chapters 9 and 10). Yet, with all this and more, the conclusion was and is: "*fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man*" (12:13).

To keep God's commandments in this the Christian age or dispensation is to obey the teachings of the New Testament. Paul, the apostle, was inspired to write, "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but by the Spirit*" (Romans 8:1). This means that a person must enter into a covenant relationship with Christ through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (Galatians 3:26,27; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:8-10; Acts 8:35-39).

This is what it means to be "*in Christ*." Such a person, then, must "*walk by the Spirit*," which means to continue to study the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, and to be obedient to its teachings. This is what it means for mankind today to "*fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). †

Don L. Norwood gives his full time to the Lord's work in India.

The Fruits Of Repentance

Tom Kelton

When Jesus preached, *“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matthew 4:17), those who heard Him understood the message. They knew He was calling for more than simply a change of mind or a new perspective on who He was. Repentance to them meant a complete surrender of their will and a change of behavior — a new way of life, not just a different opinion. They realized He was calling them to admit their sin and turn from it, to turn around, to forsake their sin and selfishness, and follow Him instead.

The Old Testament was filled with truth about repentance. Ezekiel 33:18,19 says, *“When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, then he shall die in it. But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and practices justice and righteousness, he will live by them.”* 2 Chronicles 7:14 is a prescription for repentance: *“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin.”*

John the Baptist demanded to see good deeds as proof of repentance. When the religious hypocrites came to John for baptism, *“He said to them, ‘You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance’”* (Matthew 3:7,8).

What are the fruits of repentance? That is the question the tax-gatherers asked John the Baptist (Luke 3:10). His answer to them was, *“Collect no more than what you have been ordered to”* (verse 13). To some soldiers who asked the same question, his response was, *“Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages”* (verse 14). In other words, there must be a sincere change in one’s lifestyle. One who has genuinely repented will stop doing evil and begin to live righteously. Along with a change of mind and attitude, true repentance will begin to produce a change in conduct.

Good deeds were also what Paul considered proof of repentance. Note his description of his ministry to King Agrippa: *“I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring . . . to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance”* (Acts 26:19,20).

True repentance results in a change of life!

†

Tom Kelton preaches for the Lord’s church in Midland, Texas, USA.

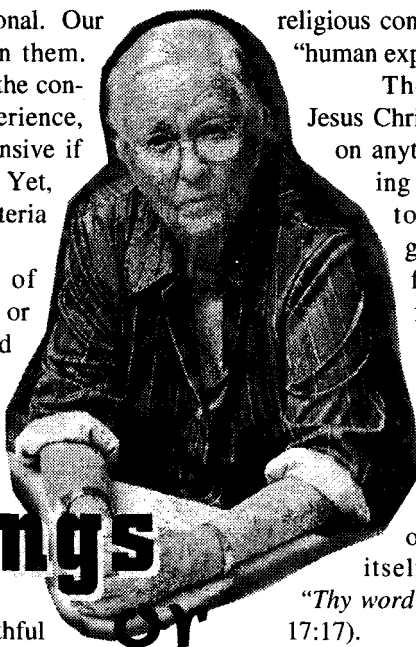
Feelings are personal. Our ego is wrapped up in them. When feelings are in the context of religious experience, we become very defensive if they are challenged. Yet, feelings are not a criteria for truth.

The experience of feeling close to God or alienated from God may have little to do with reality. A pious pagan might "feel"

Feelings

close to God, or a faithful Christian might experience a "feeling" of estrangement at times. External circumstances, physical well being, and a man's state of mind greatly influence his feelings; but they cannot be trusted as a basis for faith or a standard for truth. The Bible says, *"There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end is the way of death"* (Proverbs 14:12).

All religious people — Christian or pagan — experience religious feelings. Such emotional phenomena as conversion experiences, ecstatic utterance, and mystical trances can be found in most religions and sometimes outside of the



religious context. They are "human experiences."

The religion of Jesus Christ is not based on anything so changing and contradictory. It is grounded in faith that comes from the Word of God. The Bible is an absolute, objective standard of truth that never changes or contradicts itself. Jesus said,

"Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Faith?

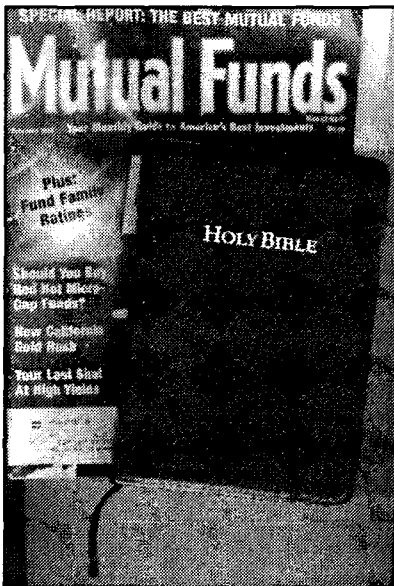
Jimmy Jividen

Do not espouse any religious teaching or practice because you "feel it is right." Others "feel" contradictory teachings and practices are right. A faith based upon feelings dies when the subjective feelings change, but a faith based on the Word of God is secure. God's Word does not change. **Think about it.** †

Jimmy Jividen is a writer and preacher for the Oldham Lane congregation in Abilene, Texas, U.S.A.

An Incorruptible Inheritance

Wayne Barrier



Every day estates worth hundreds of millions of dollars change hands and become the property of new owners simply because the course of nature is forced upon mankind. Many prospective heirs often anticipate the receipt of a new fortune. They quickly learn that

their inheritance is not secure, because of taxes, inflation, volatile stock markets, cyclical property values, and property devaluation, caused by decay and aging. Financial advisors, consultants, account managers, investment specialists, attorneys and numerous other professionals are in an ever increasing demand as people turn to them for help with preserving their treasure.

Some are successful for a while, but the passing of time reveals that there is no sure way to preserve wealth. Fortunes are lost every day by millions of people as stock markets rise and fall. Many people spend a lifetime saving and investing only to see all of it lost in a few hours. They are usually helpless to change this event and can only watch as their life's work disappears.

As always, the Bible has some good instruction and guidance on this subject. First, consider the

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6:19-21. He says, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Consider Matthew 6:23-34 and especially 6:33 where Jesus states, *“...Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...”* Concerning real estate investments, read John 14:2,3 where Jesus says, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”*

In 1 Peter 1:3-5 Peter states, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheri-*

tance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation...”

Jesus provides for our inheritance. Peter describes the investment made for us in 1 Peter 1:18,19. He states *“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

Our God is keeping our treasure. Jesus paid the price and it is a perfect investment. We must simply trust in God and his promises and our inheritance will be secure. The Bible is a good investment guide, requiring faith and trust in God. Faith in man is the basis of earthly investments. Who do you trust? Where is your treasure? †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, U.S.A. and is part of the World Evangelism team taking the Gospel throughout the world.



A religion that does nothing, costs nothing, suffers nothing – is worth nothing.

The best thing to save for the future is your soul.

I am a **Christian**

Cecil May, Jr.

I am a disciple of Christ; I seek to learn from Him and follow Him...

...but I am not a Disciple of Christ.

I am methodist; I try to follow the biblical method...

...but I am not a Methodist.

I am baptist; I have been immersed in water for the forgiveness of my sins...

...but I am not a Baptist.

I am catholic; Christ added me to His universal church...

...but I am not a Catholic.

I am part of an assembly of God; we assemble each Lord's day...

...but I am not of the Assemblies of God.

I am presbyterian; my congregation is shepherded by elders

(Gr., presbuteroi)...

...but I am not a Presbyterian.

I am episcopalian; my congregation is overseen by bishops

(Greek, episcopoi)...

...but I am not an Episcopalian.

I am a member of a congregation which is Christian and independent...

...but I am not of the Independent Christian Church.

I am a member of the church of Christ; He built it and purchased it with His blood...

...but I am not Church of Christ.

I am a member of the church of God; He purposed it before the worlds began...

...but I am not Church of God.

By the grace of God, I am a Christian.

†

Cecil May, Jr., for many years the president of Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Mississippi, is now Dean of the V.P. Black School of Biblical Studies at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A.

This Christian Age



John Thiesen

You and I are very blessed people. We live in the grandest period of time. Our ears have heard what saints and angels of all previous ages have desired to know but were not permitted to see or hear. Jesus told his disciples that their eyes and ears were blessed because *“many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them”* (Matthew 13:16,17).

Limited Knowledge in Previous Ages

Although in every period of time there have existed those who knew something about God, the true way to Heaven was not made known to mankind until after Christ was crucified and arose from the

grave. Even the Old Testament prophets who foretold concerning Christ and His mission did not fully understand the revelations they were giving by the power of the Holy Spirit. The mystery of Christ *“in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit”* (Ephesians 3:5).

During the Patriarchal period from Adam to Moses, God spoke to certain individuals such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He did not address all people, but to chosen ones through angels, dreams and visions. In this age, He was laying the groundwork for establishing the Israelite nation through which he planned to send a savior, Jesus Christ, into the world.

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The second age began when Moses led Israel out of Egyptian bondage to the promised land of Canaan. God established these people as his own special nation for some 1,500 years, giving them a law through Moses. This law was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). The period was characterized by animal sacrifices and a service with a Temple and priests. Being a tutoring period, it was a temporary arrangement, like a schoolmaster, to prepare the people for Christ who was coming later. "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:25).

We Are in the Final Age

The final age, the one in which we now live, is the last. In this age,

"the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8). Now God no longer deals just with individual families or with one nation. The gospel is for all mankind, *"to the Jew first and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16). Christ has commanded that this good news be preached to every creature. The times of preparation are past and the full revelation of God's will and knowledge has now been delivered. You and I are blessed above people of all previous ages of the world with the full knowledge of God's plan of salvation available to us. †

John Thiesen is a former missionary to Malawi and now preaches for the Lord's church in Buffalo, Missouri, U.S.A.

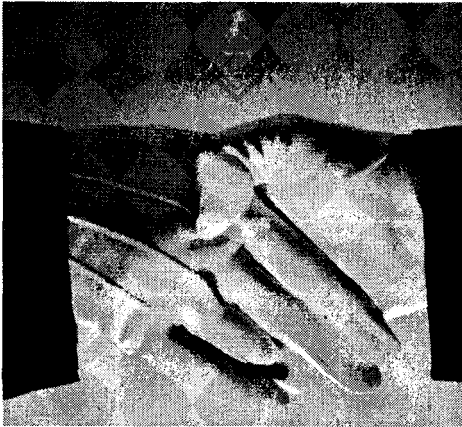
Jesus Knows All Men

All of us grope to have as much knowledge as possible. We spend years studying the behavior of men. Books fill our shelves addressing the psychology of man. We falsely dream of the time when we can predict just what man will do.

Jesus, because He is Jesus, has the ability to know everything about man. "...He had no need that anyone should testify about man, for He Himself knew what was in man" (John 2:25).

With our understanding that the knowledge of Jesus is complete concerning man, we should know better than to try to "sneak anything by Him". His knowledge of us is total!

Our knowledge of Him and His desire for our lives can be complete, too, as we open our hearts to His book, the Bible.



Can a Christian Be a Mason?

Maxie B. Boren

The singular most important thing for every responsible human being is to be saved from sin and its consequence of eternal damnation. To obey the Gospel of Christ, and thus become a Christian, and to remain a Christian are the things which really matter (read Romans 1:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 15:58). These are essential to one's salvation, because there is no other Savior than Jesus Christ, who is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16,17).

In speaking of Christ, the apostle Peter declared, "*Salvation is found in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Jesus is "*the way, the truth, and the life*" and no man can come to God except through Him (read John 14:6).

God highly exalted Jesus and made Him Lord and gave Him all authority and dominion in heaven

and in earth (please read Philippians 2:9-11; Acts 2:36; Matthew 28:18; and Ephesians 1:19-23). Only by abiding faithfully in His Word (truth) can anyone be counted a true disciple of the Lord (John 8:31,32).

The Bible makes it exceedingly clear that those who become Christians are added to the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47). By obeying the Gospel of Christ one becomes a Christian, and this is precisely the way he or she becomes a member of the Lord's church. Both things take place by the same process (see Acts 2:38-41,47; Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Obviously, then, to remain loyal to the Lord, one must be a faithful member of the Lord's spiritual body, which is His church. The church is the "body" of the saved (Ephesians 5:23).

This very concise summary of basic truths stated in the paragraphs

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

above must be kept foremost in a Christian's mind throughout life. Therefore, for a Christian to become a part of another religious organization in addition to the Lord's church is glaringly wrong! In like manner, it is equally wrong for a Christian to become a part of any fraternal organization which claims "a form of religion" itself and teaches things that are in conflict with the truth of the New Testament.

The question is often asked, "Can a Christian be a Mason?" With all my heart I believe the answer is unequivocally NO, absolutely not! Many reasons could be cited, but realizing this article must be brief because of space, I submit the following six reasons why I believe a Christian cannot be a Mason:

1. No one can be a Mason who does not believe in "a god," allowing adherents to have most any concept of Deity imaginable. However, a genuine Christian believes that there is but ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD. Freemasonry presents an abstract god called En Soph, the "infinite, intellectual light" from which all things emanate . . . this is very near to pagan "Sun worship," if not, in fact, the same. This is a crucial point, because Jesus said in prayer to the Father, ". . . *this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even*

Jesus Christ" (John 17:3).

2. To see further Masonry's fixation on the Sun, we need to look no farther than the "symbolism" in Masonry; the **Blazing Star**, actually representing the Sun; the **Point Within a Circle**, representing a "hodgepodge" of the Sun, the Moon, sexual organs and fertility, etc. — pagan to the core. In addition, Masonry has its **Square and Compass**, which, along with any of the "holy books," represents the "Great Lights" of Masonry . . . this would be blasphemous to the informed Christian because **Christ is "the light of the world"** (John 8:12).

3. The use of the Bible or any other "sacred book" in Masonic Lodges is simply symbolic of "the will of God." To Masons of the Islamic persuasion the Koran could be used, or for Hindus, the Veda books. Thus, in Masonry, the Bible is but one book among several to "symbolize" the will of God. How can a Christian, who believes that **the Bible only** is in fact the revealed Word of God, subscribe to such a system?

4. As a Mason advances in the Lodge, he must take oaths that include things that are in conflict with Christianity, accompanied by ceremonies described by ex-Masons as "superstitious." The Bible teaches against "swearing," and the practice of "the doctrines

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of men" that make void the Word (Matthew 5:34; James 5:12; and Matthew 15:6-9).

5. Each Lodge has its "Worshipful Master." Can you imagine an informed Christian calling another man, "Worshipful Master?" The Bible teaches that the Christian has but one Master, and that is Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:10). If there was nothing else to consider about Masonry, this should be more than enough to speak loud and clear . . . A CHRISTIAN CANNOT participate in anything that requires him to call a man "Master." The Christian has but one Master, and that Master is Jesus Christ!

6. In reading the literature available on Masonry, there can be no doubt that the Lodge teaches "a good Mason" is heaven bound. Their plain statements teach this, and the symbolism of the **Lambskin** so indicates. Also, the liturgy at Masonic funerals, along with the **Apron** ceremony, clearly portrays the departed as having gone to the Great Lodge in the sky. I know this is true because I have conducted funerals where the Masons took over for the burial at the cemetery, and I observed what they did and heard what was said. The Bible teaches that only through Christ can salvation be obtained (see the beginning of this article), but Masonry teaches salvation through being a

Mason, regardless of whether one is obedient to Christ or not.

My experience has taught me that a man who is a member both of the Lord's church and the Masonic Lodge is likely to cleave to the Lodge if pressured to choose between them. How sad and how tragic! For a man to so choose is indicative of gross Biblical ignorance, or a lack of true conversion to Christ, because a true Christian would not give Christ up for anything or anybody!

Beloved reader, the Bible teaches that whatever the Christian does, he is to do it "*in the name of the Lord Jesus*: (which means, "by his authority"), "*giving thanks to God through Him*" (Colossians 3:17). The apostle Paul wrote to Christians and taught that God is to receive "*the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen*" (Ephesians 3:21). Notice the importance of Christ and the church that is plainly taught in these passages. That is all that matters to the true Christian. He does not get himself "*entangled in the affairs of this life*" (2 Timothy 2:4), but that is exactly what he does if he becomes a member of the Masonic Lodge. Can a Christian be a Mason? What do you think? †

Maxie B. Boren preaches for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, U.S.A.

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the gospel of John, chapter eighteen, NKJV.

1. After the supper, where did Jesus go with the disciples? (V. 1)
2. "And Judas, _____, also knew the place; for _____." (V.23)
3. Judas received troops, accompanied by officers from the _____ and _____, who came with _____, _____, and _____. (V. 3)
4. What did Jesus know? (V. 4)
5. When Jesus identified Himself as the One they were seeking, what did they do? (V. 5-9)
6. What did Peter do to defend Jesus? (V. 10)
7. To whom was Jesus taken for an illegal night trial? (V. 13)
8. Who followed the mob to see where Jesus was taken? (V. 15)
9. While Peter was waiting, warming at the fire, he was accused of what? How did he answer? (V. 16-18)
10. When Annas asked Jesus about what He had taught, how did He answer? (V. 19-21)
11. What did one of the officers do? (V. 22)
12. From Annas, Jesus went to Caiaphas (V. 24); then where? (V. 28)
13. Taking Jesus to a Roman ruler assured that He would die by _____. (V. 29-32)
14. What question did Pilate ask Jesus concerning His identity? (V. 33)
15. Premillennialists are still looking for an earthly kingdom; however, Jesus said, "_____." (V. 36)
16. What was Pilate's final judgment of Jesus? (V. 38)
17. Pilate, following the custom of leniency on Passover, would have released "the King of the Jews". Who did the rulers demand instead? (V. 39,40)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

From Condemnation To Exaltation

Sunny David

Sin is man's greatest problem. From the time of Adam and Eve, all men have sinned. No, no one is ever born *with* sin. Just as Adam and Eve were created in the beginning without sin, so is everyone born into the world without sin. But all have sinned, says Romans 3:23, and everyone sins *by his own choice* (James 1:14,15). The Bible also says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), because sin separates man from God, and that separation is called death, which is, in fact, the spiritual alienation of man from God.

All accountable beings have sinned in the eyes of God. Wherever there is man, sin is there. We do not have to travel far to see sin. Sin resides in the heart and mind of an individual. Proverbs 4:23 – *“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”* Christ taught, *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man”* (Matthew 15:19). John wrote, *“Whoever hates his brother is a murderer”* (1 John 3:15). *“You have heard,”* said Christ again, *“that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”* (Matthew 5:27,28). When we look at sin from this standpoint, we know that all people who know the difference between right and wrong, except little children, are sinners.

All have sinned with their heart or mind whenever they have entertained any evil thoughts. Therefore, from God's standard, all are under condemnation because of sin. The condemnation that sin brings is hell, the lake of fire and brimstone which burns eternally.

No wonder then that God in heaven was so concerned about humans on earth. It was rather natural, because He had created humans in His *“own image and after His own likeness”* (Genesis 1:26,27). We are the *“offspring of God”* (Acts 17:29). To save and redeem man from sin and its consequences, God sent His Son from heaven to earth. By the power of God, Jesus Christ assumed flesh and became a man (John 1:1,2,14). Through His

SALVATION

death on the cross, He became the propitiation for the sins of the world (1 John 1:1,2; 4:10). The Bible says that when Christ was dying on the cross God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. In fact, the Bible tells us that on the cross God had made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:19,21).

God has done the most wonderful thing — He has put cleansed sinners into Christ! *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1). *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In Christ Jesus the individual becomes a new person; washed of sins, because of the shed blood of Christ for sinners from the cross; sanctified, or set apart, to serve and live for God; justified, whose sins have been forgiven because of the propitiatory death of Christ; preserved, to live undefiled in a sinful world, (1 Corinthians 6:11; Jude 1).

In Christ one does not walk according to the flesh, but according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, which comes from the written Word of God, as one reads, hears, meditates, and follows His will

(Romans 8:1; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21).

Since there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, man's response should be to get into Christ as quickly as possible. How does one do that? For our answer, we should let the Bible speak. We read in Galatians 3:27, *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* When the first gospel meeting was held on earth, in the city of Jerusalem, the listeners asked the preachers, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* Do you know what answer was given to them? They were told to *“Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:37,38). Then we read that those who had gladly received the Word were baptized that day, and they were added to the church by the Lord Himself. This is how the church of Christ had its beginning (Acts 2:41,47).

Everyone is either *in Christ* or *outside of Christ*. Those who are outside of Christ are under condemnation, while those who are in Christ are under no condemnation, but are blessed, not only in this life, but also after this life on earth is over (Revelation 14:13). †

Sunny David lives in New Delhi, India, and is a radio evangelist for much of India.



The Danger Of Religious Traditions

Charles E. Cobb

"Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Many of the Jews in the days of Jesus on earth were traditionalists. Jesus accused them of actually making void the Word of God by their traditions (Mark 7:13). Religious traditions often get in the way of sincere obedience to the will of God among people today.

Tradition is defined as: (2) "an inherited pattern of thought or action (as religious doctrine or practice or a social custom)" (Webster). Men are often prone to hold to tradition instead of accepting the truth of God.

What is truth? Our Savior said in prayer to God, *"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). When one stands before God in judgment (as

all men will) he will be judged by the truth, not by some *religious tradition*.

Men must decide, therefore, to give up any tradition that stands in their way of obeying the truth. Let us be aware that we are to *"prove all things, hold fast that which is good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Holding to some religious tradition that contradicts or nullifies the Word of God is not good.

It matters not how many generations have believed some error that has become traditional, it does not make the tradition good or right.

God wants men to believe and obey the truth. Only the truth can save! Religious traditions cannot save us. †

Charles E. Cobb is editor of Tennessee Valley Christian, and he lives in Scottsboro, Alabama, U.S.A.

A graphic of a spotlight with rays emanating from the top left corner, illuminating the title 'SpotLight' which is written in a large, bold, italicized serif font.

SpotLight

Dale Grissom

It is possible for small-

town congregations to grow. All it takes is a commitment to local evangelism and a lot of hard work. The Dexter Church of Christ showed a renewed interest in personal evangelism about **sixteen years ago** when a program involving *personal Bible studies* and *Christian counseling* was begun. Many have obeyed the gospel and many who were unfaithful have been restored.

Dexter is a small town of about 7500, with approximately 12,000 in the five-mile radius surrounding. The church here has an average attendance of 435 on Sunday mornings. Our steady growth and strength over the past several years can largely be attributed to **an active outreach through personal local evangelism.** In the last *nine months* we have had *48 responses* for baptism or restoration. Most of these have been reached through per-

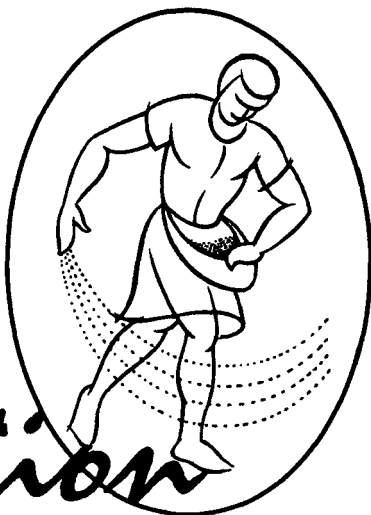
sonal Bible studies and Christian counseling.

Missions, both in the states and abroad, are of vital interest to the Dexter church. Successful evangelism efforts within our own community strengthen our congregation, thus enabling us to extend our mission field. We reach Russia, Africa, South America, South Pacific Islands, and India, either through missionaries we support or by means of Bible correspondence courses. World Bible School and Pacific Islands Bible School are very important tools in the outreach programs of this congregation.

May we never lose sight of the *mission of the Lord's church:* that of **winning souls and restoring the unfaithful** to Christ. This task requires hard work, patience, commitment, and unselfish dedication. But good things usually happen when hard work is being done. If congregations want to grow, the place to start is at home. †

Dale Grissom does personal evangelism for the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, U.S.A.

The Seed of Restoration



Kevin Moore

A number of years ago, an article in *Life* magazine told of the discovery of an ancient canoe near Tokyo, Japan, wherein was found a lotus seed which was approximately 2,000 years old. Dr. Ichiro Ohga, a lotus expert, carefully planted and cultivated the ancient seed, which eventually produced a beautiful pink lotus. Dr. Ohga stated, "It's quite a flower, but not different from lotuses today."

A seed reproducing after its kind is a natural law that God set into motion from the very beginning (Genesis 1:11). Yet God has a spiritual law that is just as dependable. In Luke 8, Jesus told a parable in which different types of soil repre-

sented human hearts, and the seed which was planted represented the word of God (verse 11). What happens when the word of God is "planted" in receptive human hearts? It produces children of God (James 1:18,21; 1 Peter 1:22,23). Today we have access to that same spiritual "seed" which produced Christians nearly 2,000 years ago (1 Peter 1:23-25). This ancient spiritual seed (God's word) will not produce a "different type" of Christian today anymore than an ancient lotus seed will produce a rose bush or a corn stalk. In the first century A.D., when the word of God was preached and obeyed, it produced Christians who were members of

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the church of Christ (Acts 2:37-47; 11:26). What does the word of God produce when it is preached and obeyed today? The same thing!

Restoration involves going back to the original, whether one is restoring an old car, an antique clock, or the New Testament church. When the original pattern is carefully followed and reproduced, restoration occurs. As we obey the same gospel that was obeyed in the first century, will we not be Christians just like they were? When we follow the same pattern that was followed by the early church, will we not be the same church? Contrary to what some are trying to propose, it is possible to restore the 1st century church in the 20th century. If the church of Christ has not been restored, then to what are we added when we obey the gospel? I, along with many others, want only to be members of the church of Christ that we read about in the New Testament.

Maybe those who scoff at the idea of the church being restored do so because they recognize that all congregations of God's people are imperfect. But is perfection necessary for restoration? Were there any infallibly perfect churches of Christ in the New Testament? The Lord's church existed in the first century being comprised of very fallible human beings, and the same is true

today. Neither is perfect (absolute) Bible knowledge necessary to restore Christ's church, because the church existed nearly 2,000 years ago without everyone possessing perfect knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:9). One does not have to be (and very likely cannot be) absolutely perfect in order to be a Christian (cf. 1 John 1:7-10). Would those who deny the restoration of the church conclude that there are no New Testament Christians today? All Christians and all congregations must correct their errors and strive to do better. But if the church of Christ has not been restored, as some contend, then the church of Christ does not exist. Can anyone accept this conclusion in light of God's "seed principle"? (Luke 8:11,15; 1 Peter 1:23-25).

New Testament Christianity, including the Lord's church, can be restored today by genuine truth-seekers reading the Bible, finding what God wants them to do and what He wants the church to be, and obeying it. Members of Christ's church should consider it a blessing and a privilege, *"having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever"* (1 Peter 1:23). †

Kevin Moore works with the church of Christ in Wellington, New Zealand.

The TWO Greatest Problems in the Church

Dan Winkler

Doctrinal impurity? Carnal Priorities? Conformity? Impotent pulpits? Improper styles of leadership? Divorce? Too much “grace”? Not enough “grace”? Dysfunctional families? Disbelief?

What two problems — if properly addressed — would help us correct almost every other challenge we face?

A dedicated Christian once asked a delinquent brother this same question of interest. “What would you say are the two greatest problems in the church?” His friend replied, “I don’t know...and I don’t care!” “You’re absolutely right,” said the faithful Christian, “I don’t know” (**Ignorance**) and “I don’t care” (**Indifference**) are the two greatest.”

1. Ignorance? But, wait! If you and I truly love Jesus, we will take advantage of opportunities (i.e. Bible study, worship, mid-week prayer meeting, etc.) to learn as

much about Him as possible. We will also be blessed by the opportunities we make (daily devotionals, personal readings, our own private times of worship during the week) to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior*” (2 Peter 3:18).

2. Indifference? How could that be possible? “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,*” is what Jesus said (Matthew 22:37). How is it possible to love Him with every fiber of our being and still be lethargic to His wishes? To be *holy* Christians, we must be “wholly” Christian!

Would it not be wonderful if others could say of us, “He/she **knows** the Bible, **knows** God (no more ignorance)...and it **shows** (no more indifference)”? †

Dan Winkler is the preacher for the Crieve Hall congregation in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

The Church, Christ's Beautiful Bride!

Gary C. Hampton



A number of figures are used in the New Testament to help us understand the relationship of the church of our Lord. One that presents strikingly beautiful images is that used by Paul in Ephesians 5:25,26. *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word."*

Reading that passage conjures up images of a beautiful young woman dressed in her white wedding dress and marching down the aisle toward her soon-to-be-husband. It seems, without fail, that each woman is at her most beautiful at that moment. The man whose hand she is about to take would defend her honor against all comers. Let any who would criticize her beware of his potential fury!

How do you suppose Christ reacts to those who would castigate those individuals who are a part of his bride? When some impugn their motives and question their spirituality because they are a little different in their approach to service, how do you think Jesus responds?

The disciples heard Him say, *"But whoever causes one of these little one who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea"* (Matthew 18:6). Saul, who persecuted the early church, heard Jesus say, *"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"* (Acts 9:4). These and other verses seem to warn us to speak cautiously about those who comprise Christ's bride! †

Gary C. Hampton is a preacher and writer in Valdosta, Georgia, U.S.A.

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Gospel (Acts 2:37-47). Those in it are married to Christ (Romans 7:4). He purchased all who belong to it with His blood (Acts 20:28).

It Is His Place of Refuge for Us

Second, those in this church have escaped the wrath of God (Romans 5:9-11). Their past sins have been forgiven, and there is no condemnation, because they walk in Him (Romans 8:1-4). They sit with



THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CHURCH

Ray Hawk

THE CHURCH of my Lord is unique. Its uniqueness makes it special. This uniqueness sets it apart from all others. This uniqueness is explored and explained in your Bible and mine.

It Belongs to Jesus

First, Jesus is the originator of this church. He stated to His apostles, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). He is its builder and chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:20). He is its head (Colossians 1:18,24). It is called His body (1 Corinthians 12:27). Everyone who is a member is so because God added him or her to it after a biblical response to the

Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). They share in a wonderful gift (Romans 6:23). Every spiritual blessing is theirs (Ephesians 1:3). They have been "*washed...sanctified...and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*" (1 Corinthians 6:11). They are kings and priests with Him (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9).

It Is Where His Family Is

Third, those who are in it are called the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15). Christians are His family (Hebrews 3:6). He refers to those who are members as "*children of God*" (Galatians 3:26-29). Members are related to one another as "*brethren*" (Romans 12:1). God

THE CHURCH

is their Father (Romans 1:7). He comforts His children (2 Corinthians 1:3-6). He cares for them (1 Peter 5:7). He loves them (1 John 4:9-11,16,19).

He Identifies It

Fourth, this church was the problem-plagued "*church of God which is at Corinth*" (1 Corinthians 1:2). It was the "*dead*" congregation at Sardis that had a few who walked in white (Revelation 3:1-4). It was the encouraged one that continued to have a little strength in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7,8). It was the appreciated one that was addressed as "*the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). It was those in Crete that needed elders to "*straighten out what was left unfinished*" and to discipline some whose "*mouths must be stopped*" (Titus 1:5,11). The church was imperfect congregations with fallible members who needed to be reminded time and again to trust in and follow Jesus.

He Disciplines It

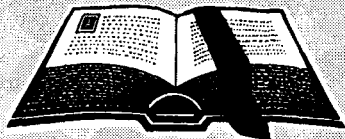
Fifth, because God loves His children, He disciplines them (Hebrews 12:5-9). Some, who forsake Him, are "*delivered...to Satan*" for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved (1 Corinthians 5:5). Those who refuse

to turn back will receive their punishment (Hebrews 10:25-29). It is a sad day when an individual who has received so much forsakes the Father and Jesus and returns to wallowing in the mire (2 Peter 2:20-22). Those who return, by repenting, will again enjoy all the blessings and the unique love, comfort, fellowship, and life that are found in this unique church.

I am grateful and happy that God blessed me by allowing me to obey His Word and be added to this unique church which contains the saved. †

Ray Hawk works with the Campbell Street Church of Christ in Jackson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

*According to the Lord's Word,
The Lord's People
In the Lord's Church
Assemble on the Lord's Day
To Commemorate
The Lord's Death
In the Lord's Supper
Until the Lord's Return.*



Quick Commentary On Crucial Verses

Matthew 6:33

“But” introduces a vast difference between what the worldly mind places first and what a reborn spiritual mind place first in life

Everyone is seeking something. Be extremely careful of your priorities, for you will likely obtain them. (Matt. 7:7)

Christ and his kingdom are first of all or nothing at all. He will not accept second place (Col. 1:18)

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Not an external righteousness (Matt. 5:20) but internal belief that lets it light shine to glory God (Matt. 5:14; Jms. 2:14-19)

God gives his word to bless one with food clothing and shelter if they place unreserved faith in Jesus as his Son. God finances his church by blessing his family (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-15)

All the essential material things ones need will be supplied by our God, if the kingdom is placed first (Mk. 10:28-30)

—Fenter Northen

Note: These thoughts were written from the primary perspective of the Lord's church in the US, but they should be words of wisdom and warning for brethren in mission fields as well. It is imperative that all of us follow the New Testament example of preaching and evangelism if we are to be faithful to the commission entrusted to us. Editor

Clayton Pepper

RE-EVALUATING

The late Batsell Barrett Baxter in a speech a few years prior to his death said, *"Remember, the church has been active in its restoration emphasis in America for nearly 200 years. What has been the total impact of these nearly 200 years of preaching the pure New Testament gospel? We have hardly begun.*

"Congregations are so few in North Central America that the counties without churches outnumber those with congregations...It would be disturbing to most elderships to confront squarely the limited number of people

THE PREACHER'S ROLE

IN EVANGELISM

outside our own families who are brought to Christ each year. Each congregation needs to make a careful self-examination of its own effectiveness in bringing 'outsiders' to the Lord." It appears that little if any improvement has occurred since that time.

Does the result of our work support the claim that we are following the New Testament plan for evangelism? Is the work of the preacher more that of a pastor than an evangelist today? Can you find in the Bible where the

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work of those preachers is paralleled with what a preacher does today?

Is the preacher's role often an infringement on the work of elders? Elders are told to "*feed the flock!*" (1 Peter 5:2). They are to oversee and shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28). They are to "*watch for the souls*" of the members and they must give an account for how they have done it (Hebrews 13:17).

We need to take a careful look

attending the flock, visiting the sick and admonishing the fainthearted."

This view of the preacher's work has its roots in the *priest-flock* relationship of the Middle Ages, a notion powerfully reinforced by the *preacher-as-pastor* view emerging from several centuries of traditional Protestantism.

The late George Benson, former president of Harding University, said: "*There is a difference between teachers and preachers.*

People are largely what they are taught to be. In our schools and colleges we are developing a growing number of preachers desiring to do the work of feeding the flock, but fewer and fewer evangelists.

at the role of the preacher today, comparing our evangelistic efforts with the work set forth in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11,12; 2 Timothy 2:2). Numerous writers and speakers have expressed concern for the diversion of the *preacher* from *evangelism and the training of others* to a role that does little of either.

James O. Baird wrote: "We have defined the preacher's role as that of: *serving a group of Christians making up a given congregation by teaching them and preaching to them; being primary administrator of the church's affairs under the guidance of the elders; doing the work of the shepherds in*

We naturally employ teachers in our formal training programs. These teachers develop teachers, just as preachers would be inclined to develop preachers. Consequently, we are turning out a lot of excellent teachers, who desire to teach in school, or serve in a local church feeding the flock. People are largely what they are taught to be. In our schools and colleges we are developing a growing number of preachers desiring to do the work of feeding the flock, but fewer and fewer evangelists" (Harding Graduate School Lectures, 1971).

We can also be sure that pastoring preachers train pastoring preachers. Someone has said, "One

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of the effects of higher education is that they do not use *practitioners* to teach *practitioners*; they take *theoreticians* to teach people how to be practitioners. **We have got 50 years to show that the model does not work.**"

Numerous preachers tell me that *they were never trained in how to teach the lost*, except through public preaching. A preacher friend of mine said, "I attended one of our well-known Christian schools and am a firm believer in Christian education. I attended chapel services each day and studied the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. *Not one time do I recall any information being taught on how to do personal evangelism*" (*Personal Evangelism* magazine [now *Church Growth*] Fourth Quarter, 1976).

Tom Douglas, while a missionary in Brazil, wrote an article for the *Firm Foundation* under the title, "Training Evangelists." He said:

"At a recent conference of Brazilian church leaders, a young college student asked the question, 'Why do we put emphasis on men being **pulpit speakers** rather than being **soul winners**?' Without realizing it, this young man may have pin-pointed the problem we face in the Lord's kingdom in all parts of the world. **Have we fallen victim to encouraging our young men to be public speakers to the exclu-**

sion of being soul winners?

"Lest we feel that the problem be limited to Brazil, let me state the testimony of an American evangelist. After graduating from a Christian college, he took a preaching job in a large Texas city. His tools for the pulpit and classroom teaching were well prepared. The congregation loved him and his abilities. He is a good public speaker. However, while the weeks passed in preparations, he discovered that the *evangelist is to be a soul winner*. Isn't it odd that this should be **discovered** and not **already known**? The congregation was perfectly happy with his work. The encouragement he received was *to be a preacher*. The work was never defined beyond preaching and teaching at the church building and a few visits to the hospital. Private teaching of non-Christians was done by a few of the congregation who had a special talent for this work. Today? He is still a good pulpit speaker. However, his horizons have been lifted higher than his office desk. He is learning to be an effective fisherman of men. He realized that the fields were ready for his labor.

"The need for extending one's work through others has been made obvious in our work. As the evangelist begins to build relationships and teach others, he soon recognizes

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his limits. There are only so many hours to each day. Often a congregation grows to 50 or 75 and begins to level off. Some are baptized, some are lost. This is a crucial time in the history of a congregation. It can realize the need of all members, especially the men, to be teachers of the Word. Or, it can be comfortable in being served by the fulltime evangelist. The evangelist must train those he teaches to be teachers or be doomed to 'keep house' for a number of years.

"Paul told Timothy to *'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 men who will also be qualified to teach others'* (2 Timothy 2:2). The idea was to find men who would take the message they received to others who would do the same. The emphasis was on the individual.

"There is a lesson for us to learn. This writer maintains that we could have as many preachers as we need and more congregations full of soul winners *if* our emphasis was switched. We need faithful men to take the message to other faithful men. From this work, pulpit men will rise like cream to the top of the milk. The added blessing is that they will already be soul winners.

"Please do not read this as an indictment against preaching. There

are too many biblical examples of strong public speaking (mostly to unsaved people) for anyone to deduce that it is wrong to be a good public speaker. The problem is the manner in which we obtain our pulpit men and the exclusion of evangelism in their work. Even the apostles spent time learning and teaching individuals before they were sent to preach publicly. Public speaking is important. However, we win great *numbers* with a great number of faithful *men* teaching a great number of *individuals*."

I asked a preacher friend to write an article for *Church Growth* magazine describing the preacher's weekly activities, separating them into two categories: "outward focus" and "inward focus." He was afraid to attempt it, because it would reflect that **the preachers' activities are more in line with pastoral duties than evangelistic responsibility**, resulting in criticism of himself. He then told me that while in pursuit of a doctorate, he did much research on the role of the preacher. He concluded that *there is no role described in the scripture for the way the church presently uses preachers*.

It has become increasingly clear to this writer that elders are doing most of their work by proxy — through the man that God intended to do *the work of an evangelist* (2

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Timothy 4:5), **leaving the lost without an evangelist** in such instances. This is not as true in mission churches as it is in established churches. Our schools train men in how to “pastor churches,” by men who have pastored churches, and

is no longer manned by a volunteer crew working for sheer love of the captain, but is steered by a pilot and assistant pilot, while the remainder are paying passengers who are going along for the ride and complaining as they go. Many congre-

The fact is that we are delivering babies who never intend to graduate, enlisting soldiers who never intend to fight, and registering racers who never intend to race.

lead them to believe that this is their primary function. They go forth not as evangelists to equip the church to serve and “*appoint elders*” as Paul told Titus (Titus 1:5) who could teach, preach and shepherd the flock, but rather they serve the church. The church hires the preacher to serve them; most members do not plan to be serving. How much longer will we hold up this plan as being *God’s plan* when it is not?

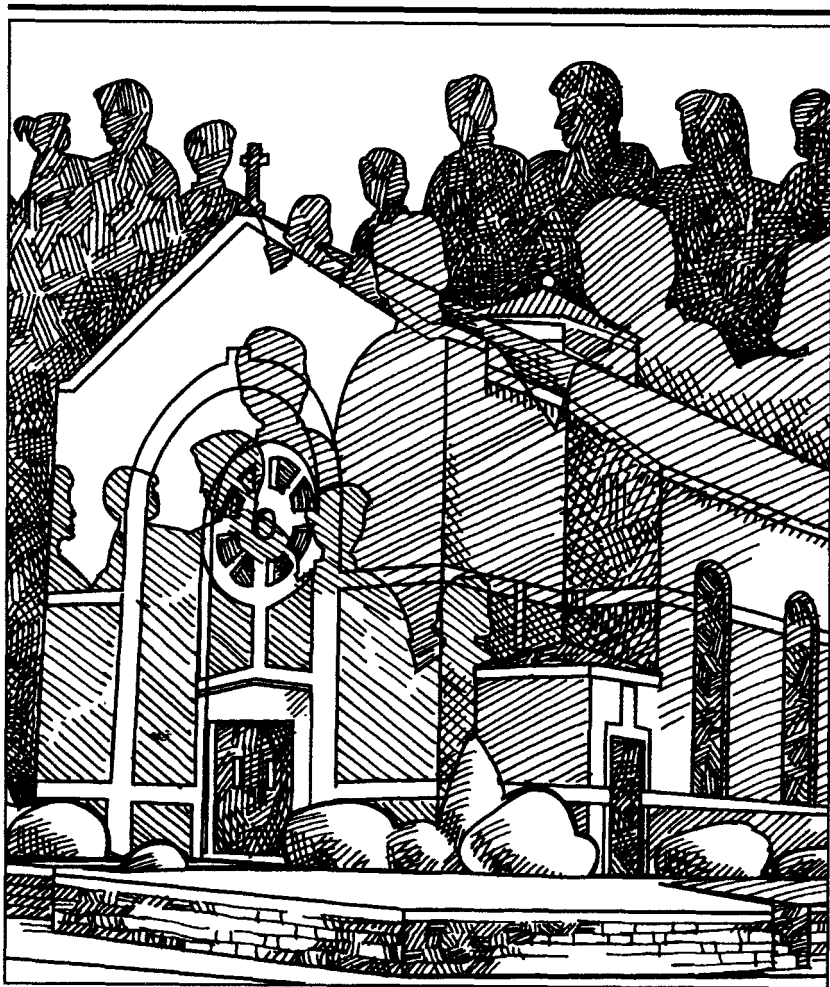
The following statement was made on the front page of the *Firm Foundation* of April 14, 1964, lamenting the results of what we have done:

“Thus the congregation is spoon-fed for years and never learns to feed itself. The fact is that we are delivering babies who never intend to graduate, enlisting soldiers who never intend to fight, and registering racers who never intend to race. Our motto has become, ‘There he is, Lord; send him!!’ The Ship of Zion

gations are made up of half-converted individuals who think that when Jesus said we were to be childlike, He meant ‘childish,’ and they have to be petted and pampered to even keep them coming to the services, much less to minister to others.”

I believe that if our schools — and churches — had trained preachers from the perspective of being truly New Testament evangelists, and if they had trained members like Ephesians 4:11,12 teaches, the church would be several million strong today: “*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and some teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*” †

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Let us go...

Bobby Wheat

*I rejoiced with those who said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord." (Psalm 122:1)*

WORSHIP

I always thrill to the reading of these words from the Psalmist. For the Israelites, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the location of the “house of the Lord,” was a joyous occasion. It just wasn’t often enough that those who lived in the farthest reaches of Israel were able to go to Jerusalem to “*praise the name of the Lord according to the statute given Israel*” (Psalm 122:4). It was a privilege, a rare treat, to be able to worship God in His special place.

Now, you don’t need to point out to me that God doesn’t live in a church building today; it is a fact that God has never been limited to a specific location. But maybe we’ve emphasized this fact to the point that we have lost the sense of “special privilege” that once accompanied a trip to “*praise the name of the Lord.*” I fear that, for many, the Lord’s day and the assembly of the saints are nothing to rejoice about. You can see it when they arrive at the building — those who look grumpy because they wanted to stay in bed (because they stayed up too late on Saturday night). Nothing suits some (from the temperature of the building to the Bible class teacher, from the song leader to the sermon) and they would rather be at the lake anyway. They felt no sense of rejoicing when someone said, “*Let us go...*”

We need, somehow, to restore the joy, to see again the fact that we are *privileged* to be able to worship our God. We must build in ourselves and in our children a keen awareness that there is something special about gathering with God’s people to “*praise the name of the Lord.*” It’s not the frequency of our meetings that makes us lose touch with the joy. It is our *attitude* and our *tendency to forget* exactly how much God has done for us that strips away the delight that ought to be ours when we come together to worship Him.

What should we do? We must begin by reminding ourselves daily that God saved us through the sacrifice of His son, Jesus. By constant exposure to the Word, we must build again within ourselves a longing to hear it taught and expounded. With forethought and careful planning, we must develop in ourselves and in our children a feeling of anticipation about worshipping God. Talk about it on Saturday; plan for it; go to bed early in anticipation of it; get up early and spend the morning in preparation for it; put all else out of mind in order to be able to truly rejoice with those who say, “*Let us go to the house of the Lord.*” †

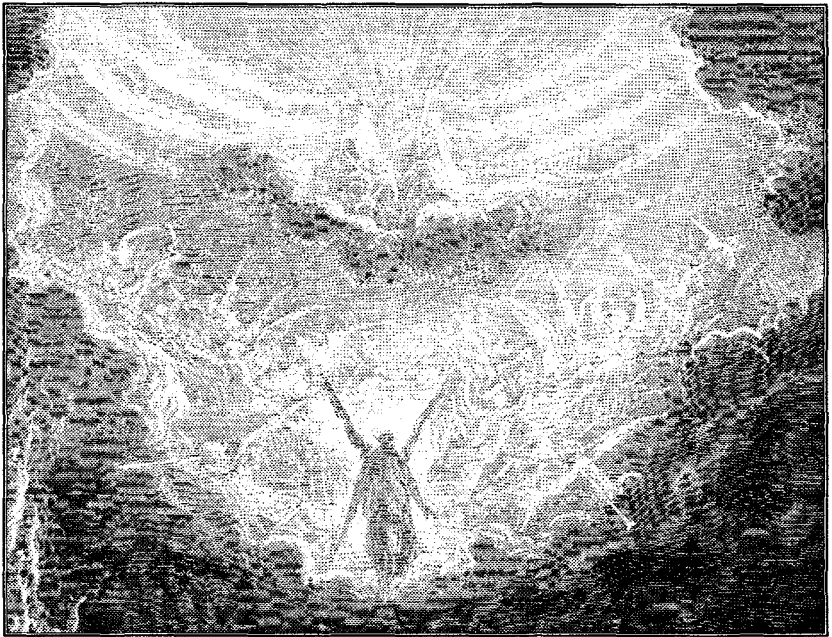
Bobby Wheat is a long-time missionary to Zimbabwe, recently returning to the U.S.A.

WORSHIP

To be true worshipers, it takes much more than just designing a good worship service. Actually, being a true worshiper begins with a true vision of God. Paul spoke of the gentiles who *"exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for images."* Jesus told the Samaritan woman that her people *"worship that which you do not know"* (John 4:24). Paul told the Athenians that

they worshiped God in ignorance. We cannot offer true worship without knowing the God we seek to approach.

The God we worship is a God to be feared. Moses was afraid to speak when he was confronted by God in the burning bush. At Sinai, amid the thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and smoke, the people of Israel were afraid. The God who



A VISION OF GOD

Dan R. Owen

WORSHIP

brought the great flood, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, brought the great plagues against Egypt, destroyed Israel's thousands in the desert, and killed Nadab and Abihu when they took His worship lightly, is a God to be feared. David, a servant of the Lord, said, "*Who knoweth the power of thine anger according to the fear that is due thee?*" (Psalm 90:11). Approach our God in reverent fear.

The God we worship is holy. He is completely separate, completely unique. His nature and will are distinct from anything else. Respecting that holiness means total conformity on our part as God gives us His demands. When God is present, we are standing on the holy ground. The seraphim and cherubim of heaven cry unceasingly, "*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty*" (Isaiah 6:3). Awareness of God's holiness brings stark awareness of our sinfulness and inadequacy. Since our God is holy, approach Him in complete humility and in submission to His holy will.

Our God is awesome in His glory. The visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Moses are truly beautiful beyond description. What they saw was brilliant, glowing, gemlike, dazzling, and powerful in its aspect. When the glory of the Lord filled the temple, the priests could not go in. Beyond the beauty of the actual

visions the prophets saw is the surpassing beauty of God's nature. When Moses stood in the cloud and heard the Lord proclaim His nature and reveal His character, Moses was compelled to worship. The most glorious thing about our awesome God is His righteousness, His mercy, His justice, and the very essence of who God is.

Our God is love. While there is no fire or rainbow or brilliance in the cross, the vision of Jesus hanging there is one of the clearest visions of God. This is the God who loves us, gives Himself unselfishly, and reaches out to us with infinite grace. This is the God who overwhelms us with His kindness and draws us to Himself. Truly, when God became flesh in the person of Jesus and dwelt among us, we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth.

Do we want to be true worshippers? Let us, then, approach God with the fear that is due Him. Let us humble ourselves before His holiness. Let us praise the wonder of His glorious beauty. Let us pour out our hearts in thanksgiving for His boundless love as we gather around the Lord's table. May God help His people to be true worshippers. †

Dan R. Owen preaches for the Broadway congregation in Paducah, Kentucky, U.S.A.

Walking by Faith



Karen Legate

Karen Legate passed from this life in the early morning hours on Saturday, January 17, 1998, at her home in Mayfield, Kentucky. She had been sick for twenty years, having undergone 29 surgeries. Her earthly body was finally overtaken by cancer at the age of 47. I had known Karen for several years and had grown to love and admire her. She will be sadly missed by her family and a host of friends.

During her short life, Karen made a lasting impact on the souls of many people throughout the world. She taught the gospel by mail, having spread the gospel for the last 19 years of her life through the World Bible School program. Thirty-six hundred of her students were baptized into Christ. She regularly had over 3000 students at any given time. She had correspondents in South America, Africa, Japan, China, Russia, and many other countries, as well as in the States.

Karen was a very humble servant of the Lord. Though her health brought her pain, she continued steadfastly in the cause of Christ. She loved the souls of men, and was focused in her commitment to bring the lost to Christ.

Karen was a great example and inspiration to others. Those of us who were privileged to know her as a friend are both encouraged in our commitment to preach the gospel and humbled by the faithfulness of this dear lady. We may never again in our lifetime see such a selfless servant of the Lord, one so willing to sacrifice time and effort to reach the lost as Karen did. Those of us who knew her will never forget her.

— Dale Grissom

Dale Grissom is a Christian who worships and works with the Lord's church in Dexter Missouri, U.S.A.

Me? Cancer?

Sylvia Camp

"Mrs. Camp, can you hear me?"

A muffled "yes" came from the figure on the hospital bed.

"We've finished the colonoscopy. We found cancer. Do you need to go home before you enter the hospital?" the gastroenterologist asked.

"No, I was told to come prepared to stay."

"I'm sorry, but we'll take good care of you."

Soon I rejoined my family in the holding area.

"You know you're entering the hospital, don't you?" my husband asked. "They found cancer."

In surprise, I shook my head negatively.

"The doctor said he told you," one of our children added, puzzled.

"I thought I knew everything that took place," I remarked. "I talked to the doctor and nurses about the lovely border paper in the room, but I don't remember anything about cancer or entering the hospital." How strangely anesthesia affects the memory and the coherency of thought!

After that, events moved so quickly that I didn't have time to think further about what loomed ahead. Yet, the fact that I had cancer came as no real surprise. The symptoms had made it undeniable.

My preacher husband and I had been with many cancer patients throughout the years. We recognized it as a very insidious disease with little hope for a cure.

In the past, I'd wondered how I would react if told I had cancer. Would I be carried through the pearly gates, kicking and screaming, "I don't wanta go," or could I calmly accept it?

After a busy night of blood transfusions and other preparation for surgery, I entered the operating room early the next morning. The cancer in my colon had metastasized into the small intestines and many of the surrounding lymph nodes. The surgeon did much exploratory work. He felt

sure he'd gotten all the cancer, yet the surgeon and oncologist scheduled chemotherapy to begin in a month.

Chemotherapy is not a cure. It attacks all cells, both good and bad. However, it is supposed to check the growth of the cancer cells and their spread in the body.

Mixed thoughts came to me in the dark hours of the night when sleep became impossible. Only one month after my tenth birthday, I began my obedience to the gospel. All my life had been spent in service to my Lord. Could the time of my death be imminent? Had I done all I could to be ready? I'd never have chosen cancer but what would I choose? I decided I didn't need to spend time on this. Some things are not in our hands.

I kept reminding myself of my many blessings. The field of medicine can do far more for cancer victims now than in any previous time. The oncologist stressed the importance of a good attitude. In fact, he said *no known medicine could equal what a good attitude can do.*

When word of my illness became known, calls and cards began to come in. The love and concern did indeed bless our lives.

A fax came from a young church in Russia telling us they prayed daily on our behalf.

A beautiful example of concern came through one of our little great-granddaughters. In the car with her father, she asked "Daddy, can I pray for Grandmother?"

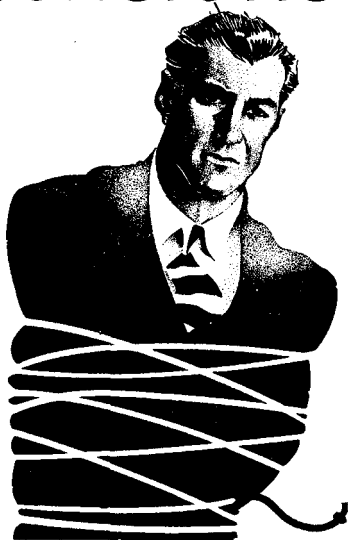
"Yes, Elizabeth. Of course, you may."

Bowing her little blond head and clasping her tiny hands, she prayed, "God, make Grandmother get well. Bye." †

Sylvia Camp is a Christian writer living in Amarillo, Texas, U.S.A.



Life's tensions: CURSE OR BLESSING?



Jerry L. Davidson

We live in a tense world. We read of tensions everywhere and sense them in our daily lives. There are tensions in government, in business, in schools, and in homes. While we generally want to avoid tension in our lives as individuals, it should be recognized that tension can be either negative or positive. When controlled, tension can work for us, thus furnishing the drive and sense of

urgency needed in the Lord's work.

No doubt Paul felt this kind of tension when he wrote: *"Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches"* (2 Corinthians 11:28). Paul bore the sorrows and the troubles of his people on his heart. Had Paul been unwilling to bear this daily strain on behalf of the churches, much of his work would have been lost to an attitude of indifference. In the same way, we all, as committed and deeply concerned Christians, need to be "keyed up" over saving souls and building up the cause of Christ.

On the other hand, there are tensions that can weaken and destroy Christians. This is experienced where there are unresolved conflicts between the Spirit and the flesh, where worry is put before faith, and where brethren fail to work together in unity, but *"bite and devour one another"* (Galatians 5:15). Christians must decide who will be their master, recognizing that God and Satan can't be served at the same time (Matthew 6:24).

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When we sustain the right relationship with God, tensions within ourselves, and tensions between ourselves and others, can be largely eliminated.

Where there are problems that we can't do a great deal about, we must go to God in prayer, "*casting all (our) anxiety upon him, because he careth for (us)*" (1 Peter 5:7). William Barclay commented, "We can be certain that because God cares for us, life is out, not to break us but to make us; and, with that assurance, we can accept any experience which comes to us, knowing that God works everything together for good to them who love him."

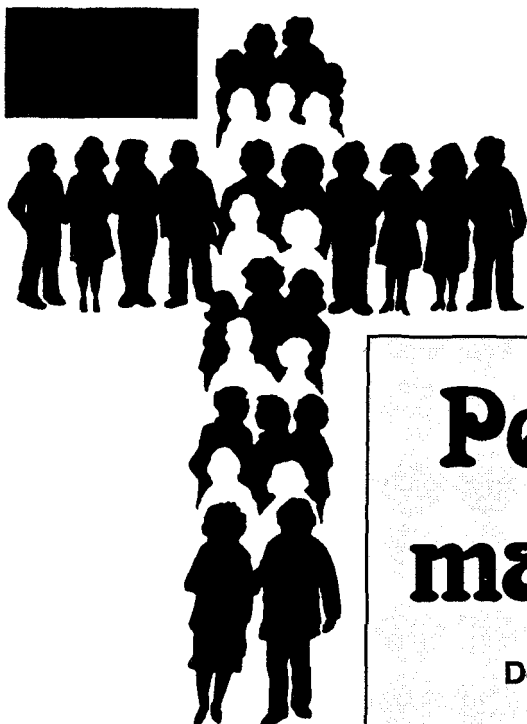
Material concerns need not be burdensome when we "*seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness*" because we have the promise that "*all these things shall be added unto (us)*" (Matthew 6:33). Turning such matters over to the Lord does not preclude personal decision-making, hard work, and good management. It does mean that sustaining faith can be built in the place of fruitless worry, putting trust in God and His providence.

For some, tension and anxiety become an incapacitating and destructive "*thorn in the flesh,*" while for others tensions and anxiety may serve as a spur that drives them to worthwhile achievement. Whether tension works for us or against us will depend on our basic faith and commitment to the God of heaven.

In the book entitled **The Art of Christian Living**, Ralph Heynen gives the following five suggestions:

1. Plan your day, or your week, so that you have a workable plan.
2. Learn to do one thing at a time. A tense person tends to scatter his activities and when he is doing one thing he is worrying about doing something else.
3. Do not take yourself too seriously. Keep a good sense of humor. God gave man the power both to weep and to laugh.
4. Learn the art of relaxation. Each person has to find his own means of relaxing.
5. Learn to live as in the presence of God. God challenges us to live our best, then leave the rest in His hands. The strings of the harp must be drawn tight, so that there may be melody and beautiful harmony. If we are to make music as our Lord intends it, our lives must be drawn to a certain tension. But we must let God do the tuning of us, for it is also His fingers that must pluck the melody from the strings."†

Jerry L. Davidson is an instructor at International Bible College in Florence, Alabama, U.S.A., and he is the director of the French World Bible School.



Isaiah, in prophetic utterance, said, *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting*

Peace- makers

Demar Elam

Father, The Prince of Peace! Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6,7). Please notice the descriptive terms Isaiah used in describing the Christ: “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Jesus is the Prince of Peace! The angel of the Lord closed his announcement of the birth of the Christ child by saying, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). The proclamation of Deity coming in the flesh was proclamation of peace and good will toward man.*

Christians are to be peacemakers, not peacebreakers. In Jesus’ great Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said, *“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). Wrangling, quar-*

relsome, backbiting, and contentious people are going to miss heaven.

Peacemakers are looking for good in everyone and everything. Our troubled world needs peacemakers. It has been said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will never be unemployed."

Jesus has not left us an example of a man who stirred up strife, contention, envy, and hatred but, instead, He has left us an example of meekness, humility, longsuffering, gentleness, kindness, and goodness. Isn't it sad when a Christian devotes all of his or her time looking for what is wrong with people, rather than for what is right with them? The church would be so much better off if everyone operated under an "olive-branch" policy, which is a policy of peace.

Certainly I'm not suggesting that we say, ". . . *Peace, Peace; when there is no peace*" (Jeremiah 6:14). What I am saying is that we be peacemakers, "*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Ephesians 4:3). Peace is such a precious commodity and is essential to the progress of the kingdom. We need to be of one accord. When we speak with one voice and exemplify love for our fellow Christians, we are helping to bring harmony and happiness to the family of God.

Peace is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Paul says, ". . . *against such there is no law*" (Galatians 5:23). Do you possess this fruit? Are you a peacemaker, or a peacebreaker? †

Demar Elam is the Director of World Missions at Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A.

Friendly Fire

Friendly Fire. A euphemism for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. For making a mistake. For inadvertently shooting your own troops. It refers to the blunders which occasionally occur in combat.

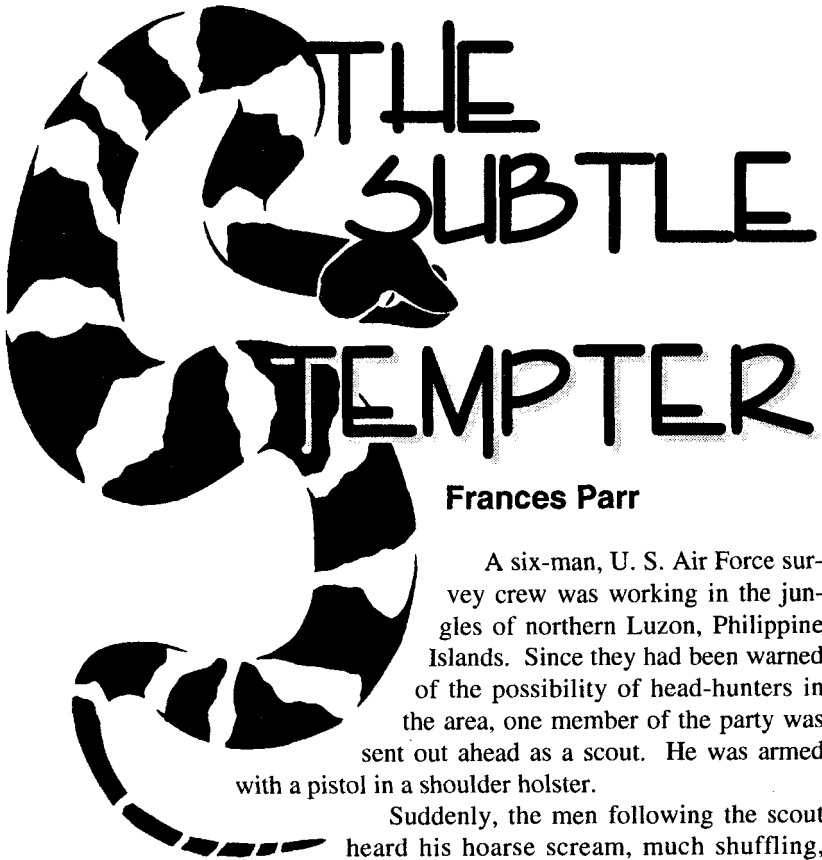
But friendly fire comes in other forms, too. Listen, for example, to these lines:

"But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another" (Galatians 5:15).

And: *"...the tongue is a fire.... With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God"* (James 3:6,9).

Friendly fire or unfriendly fire. What difference does it make? You're just as dead one way as the other. Except . . . except the heartache is deeper — more profound and longer-lasting — when pain is inflicted, intentionally or not, by a familiar face.

— Lonnie Henniger



THE SUBTLE TEMPTER

Frances Parr

A six-man, U. S. Air Force survey crew was working in the jungles of northern Luzon, Philippine Islands. Since they had been warned of the possibility of head-hunters in the area, one member of the party was sent out ahead as a scout. He was armed with a pistol in a shoulder holster.

Suddenly, the men following the scout heard his hoarse scream, much shuffling, and finally a gun shot. Fearing the worst, they ran to help their comrade. They were totally unprepared for the situation they found upon rounding a corner in the trail.

Their scout was on the ground wrestling with a huge python weighing several hundred pounds. As the man passed under a tree, the snake dropped down on him, grabbed his left shoulder in its gigantic mouth for leverage, instantly wrapped itself around the man, and squeezed.

Fortunately, the scout was able to reach the pistol in his shoulder holster. He withdrew it and shot the snake in the head. Even in death, the serpent was still coiled tightly around the man. Though repelled at the thought

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of touching the python, the surveyors put aside their own fears and began unwinding the snake from their friend. It was not easy. By the time they had pulled and lifted the dead weight of the animal and removed it from the man, everyone was exhausted.

Genesis 3:1-6 tells the story of the devil's first appearance on the infant earth. He came in the body of a serpent. Perhaps Eve was innocently near the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Only when the serpent called her attention to it did she notice how beautiful it was or how delicious its fruit looked. Within a very short time of his appearing, the devil had tempted her and she had sinned.

Satan has not changed his tactics since the world began up to this very day. He will find us in our weakest moment and subtly entice us to do wrong. Often we are not even aware we are sinning until it's all over and we reflect on our actions.

The survey party was expecting head-hunters, not pythons. Probably the scout was not looking above his head into the trees, but nevertheless the danger was there, sudden, and it could have been deadly, except for his friends.

None of his fellow surveyors chastised the man for being careless and letting the snake fall on him,

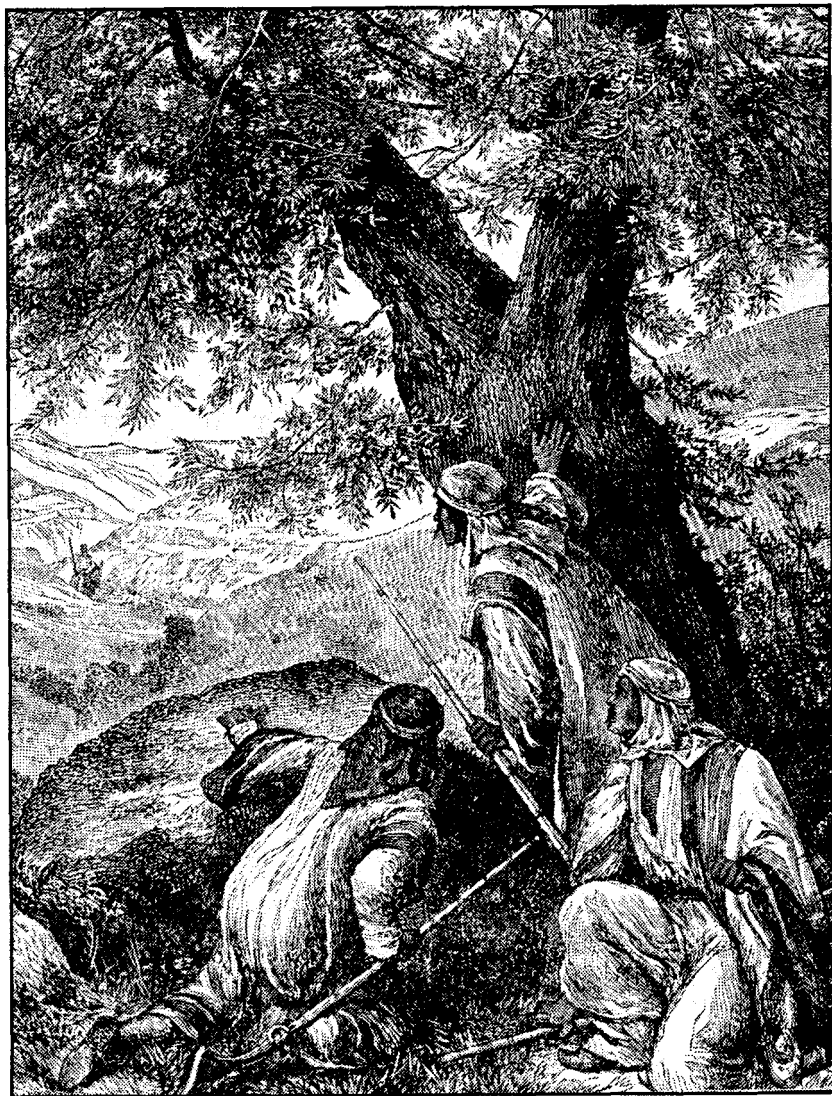
but they went to work immediately to help him with his problem. We also should be willing to come to the aid of a brother or sister who has a problem with sin, without any delay.

Paul says in Galatians 6:1,2, *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."*

The surveyor who suffered the encounter with the python endured a badly bruised shoulder for a while, and the noise from the gun, only inches from his left ear, deafened him for several weeks. The experience left him with the memory and the vow to lift up his eyes the next time he visited a jungle.

Christians who have been rescued from a transgression will be left with a memory of it and the realization of how easily and quickly a person can fall. All of us should remember, too, that Satan is actively pursuing every Christian, and anyone can fall into his trap. Let's be supportive of each other, especially during trying times, and so fulfill the wishes of the One who died for all. †

Francis Parr is a Christian writer who is a member of the church of Christ in Eldon, Missouri, U.S.A.



A Robber In Ambush

Bobby Dockery

Jesus told the story of a certain man who was ambushed by thieves on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho. After robbing him, the thieves fled, leaving him near death (Luke 10:30).

God warned Cain that sin is waiting to ambush and rob those who lower their guard: *"If you do not well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it"* (Genesis 4:7).

In what way is a sin a robber? Consider the following:

Sin Robs Us Of Our Character.

Sin is a destroyer of moral fiber. It can easily change a pillar of virtue into a participant in vice. An old proverb says: "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost."

Sin Robs Us Of Our Judgment.

Sin often takes away our ability to discern good from evil. In Hebrews 3:13, we are warned of *"the deceitfulness of sin."* Sin is a deceiver which can eventually blind us so completely that it renders us incapable of making moral decisions.

Sin Robs Us Of Our Self-Respect.

It is impossible to sin and feel

good about it! Isaiah compared the sinner to *"the troubled sea, when it cannot rest"* (Isaiah 57:20). Instead of fulfillment, sin leaves only shame, humiliation, and loss of self-esteem.

Sin Robs Us Of Our Spiritual Life.

In James 1:15, we read: *"Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."* Paul warned, *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). Ezekiel solemnly cautioned God's people of old that *"the soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezekiel 18:20).

Sin Robs Us Of Our Eternal Reward.

One of the most sobering passages in all of the Bible is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9, where Paul warns that Jesus will one day come back to earth *"in flaming fire"* to take vengeance on those who have defied Him in sin by punishing them with *"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."*

Sin is a robber waiting in ambush to plunder unsuspecting victims. What a fortune in souls sin has looted from this fair earth!! Sin will steal more than we can possibly afford to lose. Therefore, *" . . . these things write I unto you that ye sin not"* (1 John 2:1.) †

Bobby Dockery is a writer and preacher in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

Light Provides; Salt Provokes



Danny Cline

*“Ye are the salt of the earth...
Ye are the light of the world...”*

Light provides opportunity for response.

Salt provokes a response.

Because of light, men are able to see. They don't have to, but they can. Light does not demand or motivate further action; it simply provides the chance. Interestingly, the word provide is from pro (forward, or forth) and videre (to see); literally, to see forth.

Provoke is from two words, meaning to call or summon forth. Salt calls forth. Salt demands saliva from the mouth of the taster. It is influential.

The disciple of Christ enlightens and seasons. He provides illumination for folks to see God, and his saltiness necessarily evokes action toward God.

Light-only folk only show up. Salt-only folk only influence.

But in combination, the light/salt duo enables an enlightened environment to see to make a predesigned reaction to an influential stimulus.

In other words: not only do I see what to do, I am motivated to do it!

Would you turn on the light, please, and pass the salt? †

Danny Cline preaches for the congregation in Blue Ridge, Georgia, U.S.A.

Make of It What You Will

Ancil Jenkins

There are some events that have revolutionized our world. None made greater impact than the printing of the first book with moveable type. *Johann Gutenberg*, about 1450, brought forth the first printed book — the Bible. For the first time God's Word was available in large quantities at fairly reasonable prices. The availability of the Bible was a factor in the Protestant Reformation, and the results are still felt today.

Few probably know that Gutenberg produced another first. On the same press that produced the first Bible he printed the first deck of playing cards. Although not evil within themselves, playing cards have brought heartache, poverty, and pain to many.

This is a dramatic illustration of the principle that we can make whatever we wish of most things. God has given us nothing for our harm. Instead, we have taken His gifts and used them selfishly. This perversion usually results in hurt for man. God gave us wheat which we grind into flour and make bread. One can take the same wheat and ferment it, distill and age it, and make whiskey. We can make of God's blessings what we will.

There are few situations in life in which we can totally blame another for our suffering. Adam began blaming Eve for his sin, and passing the blame continues today. Perhaps we need to learn from Pogo, the comic strip character, who summarized our faults by saying, "We have met the enemy and it is us."

Instead of blaming others, why not examine God's gifts and determine to use them as fully as possible for Him? In urging us to use our gifts, Peter wrote, "*If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen*" (1 Peter 4:11). We may use God's gifts as we will, but in so doing, we are building our life and building for eternity. All of us are builders — but what are we building? †

Ancil Jenkins is a writer and preacher for the Sunset congregation in Miami, Florida, USA.

Blessings Come Back

Betty Tucker

A preacher once paraphrased Ecclesiastes 11:1 to say, "Cast your bread upon the waters, and it will come back buttered."

Listen to God's promise of long ago — ". . . *If thou shalt harken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments . . . and all these blessings shall come upon thee . . .*" (Deuteronomy 28:1,2).

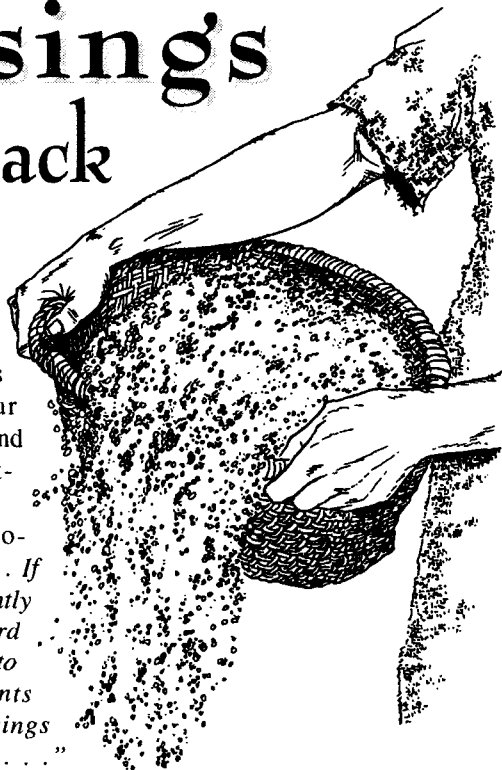
Looking at Proverb 10:6, we see again that "*Blessings are upon the head of the just. . .*" In addition, even "*The memory of the just is blessed. . .*" (verse 7).

Some Who Were Blessed

Esther approached the king, even though she had not been called, in order to save her people. She dared to take a chance with her crown and position for the good of others.

As a result, she was able to expose wicked Haman, and the Jews escaped his vengeful plan. Because Esther took the attitude that "*if I perish, I perish*" (Esther 4:16), she retained her royal throne. Mordecai was second only to the king (10:3), and the entire Jewish nation was blessed.

Rahab hid the two men who were sent to spy out the land of Jericho (Joshua 2:6,15). When Jericho fell, only Rahab and her



family were saved (6:25), because she hid the men of God. Rahab even earned a place in "Faith's Hall of Fame" (Hebrews 11:31).

Job is the prime example of the suffering of men. His book chronicles the problem of human suffering. In the beginning, we see Job faring sumptuously. He had possessions, cattle, sons, and daughters.

The very first verse of Job tells us that Job was "*perfect and upright and one that feared God and eschewed evil.*" But, oh, the perils faced by this just man!

In a twinkling, he lost it all. He was finally reduced to sitting in the ashes, scraping his running sores with a piece of broken pottery (2:8).

Still, we thrill to read, "... *In all this did not Job sin with his lips*" (2:10). Because Job remained true to God and maintained his integrity, "*the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before*" (42:10).

Special Promises to Christians

The Bible is filled with special promises of blessings to those who keep the faith. We call attention to but a few :

✓ Romans 8:28 — "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God . . .*"

✓ Luke 6:38 — "*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*"

✓ Malachi 3:10 — "*. . . prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*"

✓ 1 Corinthians 10:13 — "*. . . but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to*

be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

✓ 1 Peter 3:12 — "*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. . . .*" †

"...Try Me now In this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it" (Ecclesiastes 3:10).

Betty Tucker is the wife of a gospel preacher, and they live in Linden, Tennessee, USA.

Envy and Jealousy

Bill Nicks

Envy is described in the Bible as a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:21) which must be "*laid aside*" if we are to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:1,2). It is a violation of God's law (Galatians 5:26), a deadly sin (Proverbs 27:4), and is "*rotteness to the bones*" (Proverbs 14:30).

But what is envy? It may be defined as pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness in another person. It is the opposite of the command to "*rejoice with those who rejoice*" (Romans 12:15). An envious person does not rejoice at the success or good fortune of another. On the contrary, he might conceive some wicked scheme against him or malign his character in some way.

Jealousy is a twin of envy, though perhaps not as bad in the sense we are using it. Jealousy does have its good side. God is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5), meaning He does not want us to worship idols. In this sense, a husband may be jealous of his wife by rightly

expecting her to be true to him. Jealousy in its bad sense is chagrin or anxiety due to the success of a rival, and resentment of it. It is an unconscious compliment to one who is superior, for we are not jealous of those who are inferior. Shakespeare said, "Jealousy is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on."

Often the peace of home and church is disrupted by envy and jealousy. Humility and modesty are necessary in order to overcome. Love is the forgetfulness of self, whereas envy and jealousy are passionate forms of egotism. The cure for envy and jealousy is to fill the heart with love, then count your own blessings. Follow the example of Jesus, who kept Himself busy with the work of the Father (John 9:4). Learn to appreciate friends, relatives, peers, and especially all brethren. †

Bill Nicks is a former missionary to Africa and is now serving on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies.

My Treasure

Betty Burton Choate

She asked me tonight if it wouldn't be great
Just to have Daddy and me?
Without any children to buy things for
How very rich we would be!

I thought of the picture without my sweet girl,
Without a little boy's kiss —
How empty the world and money would seem;
How useless to struggle for this.

The gold that I treasure can never be spent
But I store it up in my heart
Where it glitters and shines in a happy array
From which I never could part.

All the beauties we share, the moments of joy,
The poems and books that we read,
The places we go and the things that we see,
Solace for hearts that have need;
There are times that we play
Or when work must be done,

Times we share sorrow
And times we have fun —
Yes, the gold that I treasure can never be spent
But I store it up in my heart
Where it glitters and shines in a happy array
From which I never could part.

What good is a house
or riches untold,
What use is the fight
to achieve
If only we two in a
lonely old world
Care if we're happy or
grieved?

Much better by far
to be poorer by far
And to bask in the
sunlight of love!

Thank God for my
children and all that
they mean —

A treasure
from heaven above!



CHOICE:

A CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE

Tunde Akodus

The Issue of Choice in Marriage is of such great importance that if properly taught and applied it will reduce, if not totally eliminate, the various cases of troubled marriages and resulting divorce raising their ugly heads in the Lord's church. Many enter into marriage, and a few months later, realize that they have made a wrong choice. This is the result of neglecting this great aspect of marriage and of choosing to be ignorant of God's will in the selection of a partner.

God recognizes the need for choice within His will (Genesis 24:3,4; 1 Corinthians 9:5). Christ emphasized the need to plan and count the cost before embarking on projects (Luke 14:28). I believe marriage is a serious business which can build up or pull down a Christian. Therefore the *choice* of a partner is a serious business.

Economists regard choice as a concept of human living that arises due to limited resources at man's disposal to satisfy his wants. Therefore he is expected to set his priorities right and choose his most needed items while foregoing others.

As Christians, applying this

concept in the choice of a partner will come in two parts. **First**, a Christian will have to decide and come to terms with God's will that he/she is to choose a partner *in the Lord's church* and forego every other, such as childhood friends, family friends, co-workers, etc. to whom he/she has developed some relative closeness and could have wanted for a marriage partner.

Consider at this point the great blessings and advantages in *marrying only in the Lord* (Deuteronomy 7:3,4; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:15,16). There should be a common faith, goal, hope and unity. Teaching an unbeliever with the intent of marriage is a dangerous venture and should be discouraged as much as possible. The primary aim of preaching is to save souls, not to secure a mate.

Second, since not all unmarried sisters/brothers in the church could be regarded as faithful or suitable for marriage, a Christian is therefore faced with the problem of choice. Is he/she faithful? Is obedience his/her watchword? Is he/she a hypocrite? These are likely questions that arise in the minds of Christians eyeing a

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

brother/sister for marriage.

There are those who would desire a partner who is vocal and bold, or quiet and easy going, responsible and calm, or energetic and forceful. Having such requirements could keep one waiting for a long period.

Some Christians do not consider the spiritual qualities in a potential mate, so long as he has a good profession, a paying job, car, house, etc. and is *called* a Christian. To others it is most important that she be beautiful or that he be handsome (Proverbs 31:30). This, of course, is good, but should not be our priority in the choice of a marriage partner. The attitude of making a choice from one's tribe, village or state only should not be named among us (Galatians 3:26-29).

What matters most is seeking God's help in making our choice. He said we should ask. I believe we shall receive help if we ask for a partner that will prosper our spiritual state and help us attain heaven (Matthew 7:7; 6:33; 1 John 5:14). Christ said if we ask for bread He will not give us a stone. Even if we have a particular Christian in mind, we should go to God in unceasing prayer and fasting, and patiently wait for Him to respond (Isaiah 1:17).

Experience has shown that the partner one has been praying about and looking forward to choosing, proposing to, or expecting to come

forward could suddenly become engaged to, or married to, another Christian. This could be discouraging or painful at first, but one should quickly understand that this person is not his/her approved partner.

Rather than being angry with God and discouraged with the power of prayer, rejoice with the new couple, adjust to the situation, keep praying and be patient. In due time you will see that there is a partner God has kept in store for you.

God's blessings come with no added sorrow. Jonah was angry over God's compassion towards Nineveh, but never realized that it was their own spiritual turning toward God that brought God's mercy on them. In the same way, the Christian to whom your intended partner is engaged or married could have been nearer to God in faith and prayer than you. Be more prayerful and obedient to God (Matthew 7:1).

Above all, after a choice has been made, use God's wisdom, and counsel from the elders, in approaching your choice. The devil will be around, so be vigilant. Or, when your desired choice comes proposing, be self-controlled and grateful to God who answers the prayers of His faithful, for His mercy endureth forever. †

Tunde Akodus works with the Lord's church in Lagos, Nigeria.

PROVERBS 17:22



treatment — the doctor told her it was a sign of old age.



A little child in church service for the first time watched the men pass the offering plates. When they neared the pew where he sat, he piped up so that everyone could hear, "Don't pay for me, Daddy, I'm under five."



One woman says she has a wonderful recipe for goulash. All she has to do is just mention it, and her husband takes her out to dinner.



One day when little Tim was about three years old, he was singing "Beautiful Robes Alright...." His mother explained to him that the words of the song were "Beautiful Robes of White," and that they meant that when we get to Heaven we will wear beautiful white robes. He looked at her and very emphatically said, "I'm not; I'm taking my pajamas!"

Several years ago plans were being drawn up for a new church building for a rural congregation. Included was a nursery. One brother objected, saying, "If you will show me chapter and verse for a nursery, I won't object, but until you do, I can't go for it."

Another brother said, "I have chapter and verse," and quoted 1 Corinthians 15:51: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." The objector said, "That's good enough for me. Let's build the nursery."



There was a woman who was cured of her nervousness in one

A rich man lay dying. He could not bear the thought of leaving all his wealth behind, so He begged

PROVERBS 17:22

God to allow him just one bag filled with his most valuable possessions. Finally God gave permission.

When the rich man got to Heaven's gate, he was stopped. "You can't bring anything in here," the angel said.

"But God Himself allowed me this one bag of my most precious things," the rich man replied.

The angel said, "All right, but first, I have to check it." He reached for the bag and poured out its contents — bricks of gold.

The angel asked, with a puzzled frown: "You brought pavement?"



Bible Bloopers

(Written by actual Bible students, young children; genuine, authentic, and unretouched. Compiled by Richard Lederer for *National Review* magazine.)

- ☆ In the first book of the Bible, Guinnessis, God got tired of creating the world, so He took the Sabbath off.
- ☆ Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree.
- ☆ Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- ☆ Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by

night.

- ☆ Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the apostles.
- ☆ The fifth commandment is to humor thy Father and Mother.
- ☆ David fought with the Finklesteins, a race of people that lived in Biblical times.
- ☆ Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you.
- ☆ The epistles were the wives of the apostles.
- ☆ One of the opossums was St. Matthew who was, by profession, a taximan.
- ☆ Paul cavorted to Christianity.
- ☆ A Christian should have only one wife; this is called monotony.



"Mary," said her mother reprovingly, "every time you disobey, I get another gray hair."

"Aw, Mom," Mary answered, "so it was **you** who gave Grandma all her gray hairs!"



This habit of eating is growing on me!

Prepare to Meet Thy God

E. Claude Gardner

***“Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel:
and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to
meet thy God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12).***

This text has frequently been misunderstood and misapplied. It is often used to encourage men to prepare for death and the judgment. However, the book of Amos and this verse in particular have no reference at all to making ready for the future. Then to what does the text refer? In answer to this, the prophet Amos and his mission must be considered.

Amos, the Herdsman

Jehovah called Amos from his flock and sent him to warn Israel. He lived in **Judah**, but he was sent to cry against the false worship of **Israel** — in particular at the altar of Bethel. For over two centuries God, in His great longsuffering, sought to get Israel to return to true religion. One of His last efforts was to send Amos to issue another warning. This was in about 750 B.C., but in 721 B.C. God allowed the Assyrians

to take the ten tribes, never to return as a nation.

When Amos cried against Bethel, the priest, Amaziah, reported the burden of his preaching to King Jeroboam II. Rather than heed the message, the king urged him to return home. Said he, *“O thou seer, go flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king’s chapel and it is the king’s court”* (Amos 7:12,13).

In reply, Amos stated that he was the mouthpiece of the Lord. *“And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel”* (Amos 7:15). The prophet then reiterated the warning of captivity. *“Therefore thus said the Lord; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy*

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daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land; and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land" (Amos 7:17).

Stubbornness of Israel

The longsuffering of God was met with stubbornness by Israel. Not only did He send His prophets, but He sent chastisements in many forms upon them for the purpose of producing repentance. Amos 4:6-11 recounts how He sent famine, drought, mildew, pestilence, and fire, but the sad refrain, "*Yet have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord*" is repeated five times. How sad this apostasy! The love of God was resisted by hardened hearts. Israel could return to the favor of God, but they would not.

Prepare to Meet God

After prolonged unsuccessful efforts to retrieve Israel from idolatry, God said, "*therefore thus will I do unto thee . . . prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*" Captivity would be their punishment. The Assyrian Captivity is predicted in these words: "*The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise; She is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up. For thus saith the Lord God; The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten, to the*

house of Israel. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts" (Amos 5:2,3,27).

God was able to save as well as to deliver them into the hands of the oppressor. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. After He calls upon them to "*prepare to meet thy God,*" in the next verse He reveals His power in these words: "*For, lo, he that formeth the mountain, and createth the wind (omnipotent), and declareth unto man what is his thought (omniscient), that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth (omnipresent), The Lord, The God of hosts, is his name.*" The Almighty was strong and wise enough to requite Israel for disobedience.

Preparation Is Important

How may we use Amos 4:12? One way is by stressing the importance of obedience and preparation. Having learned the context of the passage under consideration, it is in order to suggest that it reminds us of the essentiality of adequately preparing, both for now and the future. The Bible teaches us that man should prepare for service, for life, for death, and for the judgment.

The church is a vineyard, a place of work (Matthew 20). We must prepare ourselves to be good

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workers. Do you recall the five foolish virgins? Partial preparation was inadequate. *"They that were ready went in"* (Matthew 25:10). How can one be prepared for service to the Lord if he does not attend all Bible classes regularly, study privately, pray earnestly, and live devotedly? Ill-prepared Christians reflect on the precious church of our Lord. We should follow Jesus in His example of service: *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"* (John 9:4).

Prepare for Eternity

Why should one prepare for the future? Because we must die and because we must stand before Christ in judgment. There can be no exceptions, for we read, *"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:10). David, though a mighty king, said, *"I go the way of all the earth"* (1 Kings 2:2). This we must do, and then stand before God and be judged according to our works. *"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another*

book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12).

To be prepared to meet God in eternity we must resign our stubborn wills and evil ways and turn to Him with a heart filled with love and faith, anxious to submit to every requirement of the Lord. The one who has heard Jesus and believes in Him confidently should *"repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins"* (Acts 2:38). The prepared Christian is the one who strives diligently to follow Jesus in every phase of his life, work, and worship. Our earnest prayer for the wayward and erring brother is that he will *"repent and pray"* for forgiveness: *"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee"* (Acts 8:22), and thenceforth let Christ be all in all.

Prepare Now

It is urgent that you make ready now. *"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Corinthians 6:2). †

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Priest For Hire?

Jeril (Polly) Cline

“The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes”
(Judges 17:5,6).

It was like our own times . . . when *“every man did what was right in his own eyes”* (Judges 17:6). Micah, from the hill country of Ephraim, had taken 1100 pieces of silver from his own mother. Upon their return, the mother, who had uttered a curse in her son’s hearing (verse 2), now blesses him and wholly dedicates the money to the Lord . . . for a graven image and a molten image! Does our tongue run sweet and sour? Do we send mixed messages to our children? Do we try to serve God and mammon? Have we ever made our own god . . . or begun to worship the gift rather than the Giver?

Now that Micah has some gods, he needs a shrine and an ephod (symbolic of the priesthood), as well as a priest. So he immediately consecrates one of his sons! Ever tried to make your child holy? Man cannot make holy, only God can

(Leviticus 22:9, 16, 32; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). And no matter how hard we try to circumvent God’s plan for holiness, it comes no other way. Try as we might, we have to go through God to reach it.

Enter a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, who is a Levite. He isn’t particular about where he stays. He’s just wandering, and one place is as good as another. Micah seizes the moment.

“Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your maintenance” (verse 10). The Levite agrees. (Levites were not priests, unless they were from the family of Aaron. The Levites were the priests’ helpers, but were never to touch the holy things on penalty of death — Numbers 2,3,4.)

So Micah consecrated the Levite and said, *“Now I know that*

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the Lord will prosper me, seeing I have a Levite as priest" (verse 13). Ah, prosperity . . . using God for my own selfish ends, and using others to manipulate God. Both Micah and the young Levite were looking after their own interests. Does this hit home (Philippians 2:4,21)?

The tribe of Dan had not yet settled their inheritance, and they came into the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah. While there they recognized the Levite and asked what he was doing in this place. He told them that Micah had "hired" him and he had become his priest.

(You and I are priests, consecrated by God, not man, chosen to be a people for His own possession. Not for hire, but to "*proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light*" (1 Peter 2:9). So we are admonished to live as aliens and sojourners in this world, and keep ourselves unstained by this world, abstaining from the fleshly lusts which wage war in our soul — 1 Peter 2:9,11 and James 1:27.)

But the Danites are far from God, physically and spiritually. So they ask this young man to inquire of the Lord for them . . . "*whether our way on which we are going will be prosperous*" (Judges 18:5). The Levite immediately tells them what they want to hear, "*Go in peace;*

your way in which you are going has the Lord's approval." Ah, a **positive** message. If you're going to be for hire, you had better be sure your employer likes what you're selling. Ever sold out the Lord's message because it just wasn't what your child, family, or church wanted to hear?

Soon the Danites returned . . . with 600 armed men. They came to Micah's house and took his gods, his ephod, and his priest, asking the Levite, ". . . *is it better for you to be a priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?*" (Judges 18:19). Ah, **popularity**. If you're going to sell out, make the most of it.

Now how is it with me? Have I sold out to a religion of prosperity, peace, popularity? Just what is the foundation of my relationship with God?

Micah's last words are telling . . . "*You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and have gone away, and what do I have besides*" (Judges 18:24). If your God and priesthood are in the keeping of someone else, you really don't have anything. But if the living God is your God and you are His priest, nobody can take that from you . . . ever! †

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Faithful To God's Word

Don W. Walker

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go”
(Joshua 1:7)

● Truly, one of the highest pinnacles God's people would ever see was when Joshua was their leader. Dedication and commitment, strength, and courage (Joshua 1:7) are the terms that describe this great hero of faith. Who can read Joshua, chapters 23 and 24, and not understand that one of the greatest sermons ever preached has been read? In that powerful sermon Joshua, among other points, emphasizes:

1. When you turn from God, captivity awaits you.
2. The desire to be like the nations will corrupt you.
3. You cannot lightly serve Jehovah.
4. You must make a choice.
5. Idolatry has corrupted your relationship with God.
6. Jehovah is still a jealous God.
7. He must be Lord of all or not at all.

● The time can be described as one of dedication and fidelity to God and His Word.

● The great significance of Joshua's sermon is seen when we turn the page and enter into the period of the Judges. In contrast, this period was one of the lowest ebbs for God's people.

In Judges 2:11-19, we find a context which very aptly illustrates the sin of the people during this time of the Judges. Notice these verses carefully and you will see these points:

1. Idolatry overwhelmed them.
2. They forsook God.

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3. There was ingratitude for Heaven's guidance.
4. Enemies once subdued now captivated them.
5. They would not hearken to God's appointed leaders.
6. They refused to follow God's commandments.
7. Their stubborn will prevailed.
8. Israel was guilty of spiritual adultery.

Now we walk the course of time and we must choose, just as Joshua called the people to do in Joshua 24:15. May we stand with God with fidelity to His Word. †

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How Idle Can You Afford to Be?

Victorious Rome's Legions, left behind to rule a defeated Spain, built an aqueduct to Segovia in 109 A.D. For 1800 years — sixty generations — that aqueduct carried sparkling water to hot and dusty Segovians.

About the turn of the 20th century, thoughtful Spaniards decided that the aqueduct should be preserved for posterity, and so should be relieved of its age-old labor. They laid modern pipelines and stopped the flow that for years had gushed and gurgled in the aqueduct. Shortly thereafter, the aqueduct began to fall apart! The blazing sun dried the mortar and made it crumble. The stones sagged and fell, and soon the aqueduct lay in ruins. What ages of service could not destroy, idleness rapidly disintegrated.

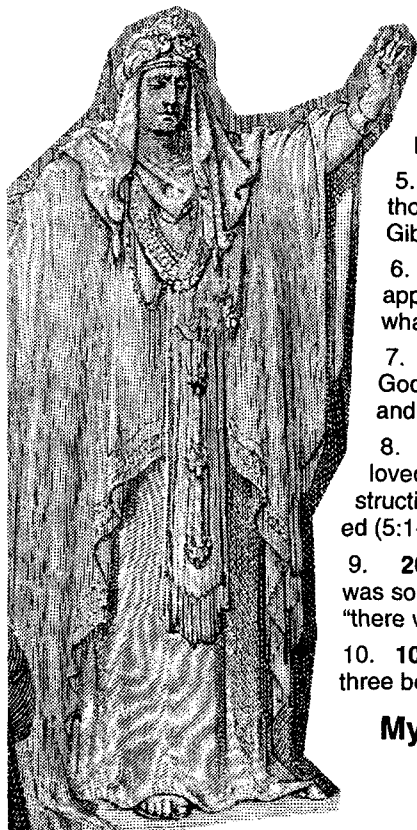
The moral of the story is this: Idleness will do the same for people. Life-long service to your fellowman and for God can never wear you out, but just start to be idle and the decay sets in.

— Selected

Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word. I am an example of one who was sometimes strong but who was influenced greatly by my associates.

1. **100** I was a king of Israel (1 Kings 1:39).
2. **90** Though I was not the firstborn, my father promised my mother that I would rule after him (1:11-17).
3. **80** Zadok was the high priest and Nathan was the prophet when I was annointed king (1:34).
4. **70** I loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of my father, except that I sacrificed and burned incense at the high places (3:3).
5. **60** On one occasion I offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar at Gibeon (3:4).
6. **50** On that occasion, God Himself appeared to me in a dream and asked what He should give me (3:5).
7. **40** Because of the way I answered, God promised me wisdom, riches, honor, and a long life (3:11-15).
8. **30** Because Hiram, king of Tyre, loved my father, he helped me with construction materials and workers as I requested (5:1-10).
9. **20** A great queen visited me, and she was so impressed by all that she saw that "there was no more spirit in her"! (10:5).
10. **10** God inspired me to write more than three books in the Bible.



My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.

Who
Are



"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26.) Those whom Paul addressed in the Galatian epistle were children of God. They were in the church (Galatians 1:2). The church is the family or house of God



the
Children
of
God?

Basil Overton

(1 Timothy 3:15.)

There is nothing that one needs to know that is more important than knowing who God's redeemed children are. They are those in His church, or His family.

Every accountable human being is either a child of God or a child of the devil. The devil does one no good, but only harm. God does one no harm, but only good. It does not make any sense to be a child of the devil, but the most sensible thing a child of the devil can do is to become a child of God! †



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It is evident from the question of the lawyer who asked Jesus in Luke 10:29, "*Who is my neighbor?*" that he knew the word must refer to someone other than the person who lived next door. The question and answer in verses 36 and 37 confirm that, for the Samaritan was certainly not the person who lived across the street. It seems probable that Jesus used the priest and the Levite in contrast with the Samaritan to emphasize the idea that a neighbor was not simply a person from the same tribe or locali-

ty, but any person for whom one can do good.

Inasmuch as it is recorded in three of the Gospel records and by Paul and James, a reference to God's command in Leviticus 19:18, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,*" it is appropriate for us to examine in more detail what is involved in the expression. The importance of it is further emphasized when Jesus says that not only is it the second greatest commandment, but it means more to God than whole burnt offerings and sac-

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rifices (Mark 12:33).

The word "neighbor" in Leviticus 19:18 is from the Hebrew "rea," which is equivalent to the Greek word "plesion," the word used in the Septuagint version in Leviticus, as well as in all the New Testament references. Although the basic meaning of the root word "pelas" refers to one who is *near* or *close by*, anyone familiar even with the English language knows that one may have a friend who is "near and dear" to you, or "close to your heart," even though that person is 10,000 miles away. So we are not surprised when we see Thayer, one of the greatest Greek-English lexicographers, define the term on page 518 as "any other person," or "thy fellow-man." He defines "to be a neighbor" as Jesus does in Luke 10:29, "to perform the office of a friend and companion."

To put it in the simplest manner we can: your neighbor is anyone in the world to whom you can do good. The most good you can do for a person is to lead him to salvation in Christ. Therefore, to love your neighbor as yourself necessarily involves the desire and effort to help save other souls just as you would like to be saved.

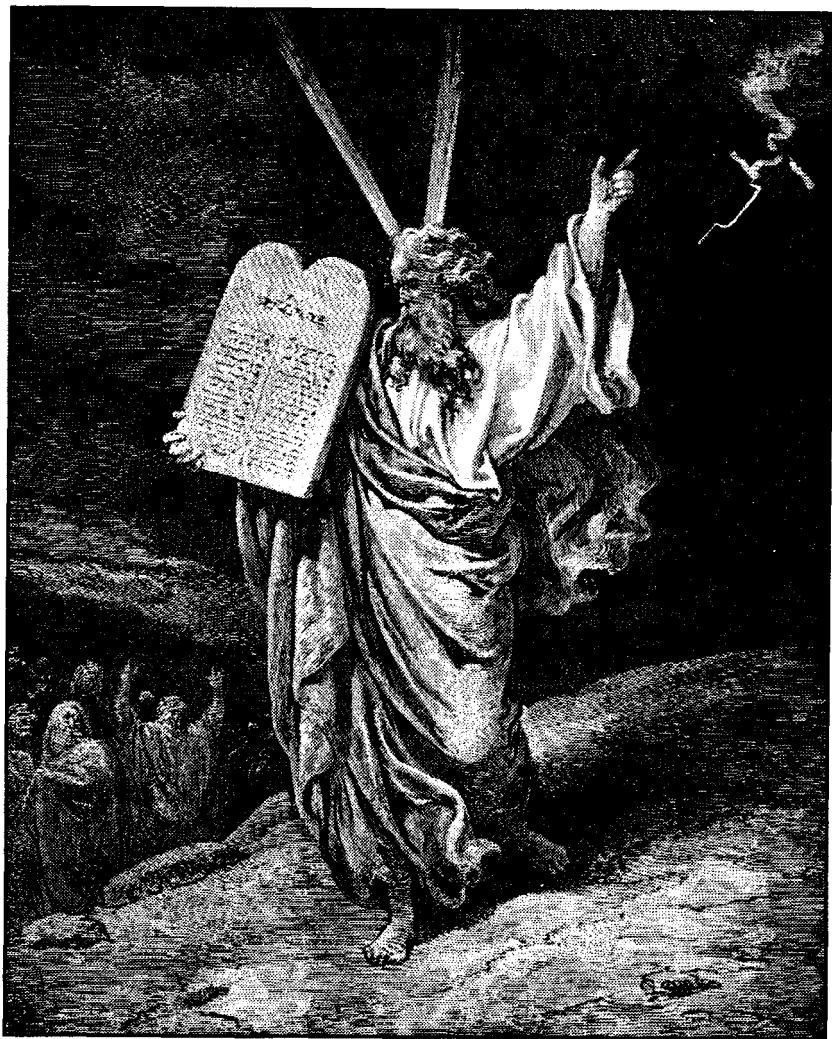
Another point which is incidental to our primary thought is that when Jesus said to love your neighbor as yourself, He did not say to love your neighbor as **much** as you love yourself, but with the **kind** of love you have for yourself. You wish the best for yourself. You would do most anything in the world that was legitimate in order to provide for your welfare. You would never tell a lie on yourself, or do anything to deliberately harm your reputation. You would even die to defend yourself from harm of one sort or another.

Since the word "love" is from "agape" and not "phileo," this means that you should be willing to sacrifice of what you are and have for the welfare and happiness of your neighbor. It is possible to love (agape) a person for whom you do not have any affection (phileo). Although for our brother we are supposed to "*be tenderly affectioned* (philostorgos) *one toward another*" (Romans 12:10), for our neighbor who may be thousands of miles away and unknown unto us, we are to show love (agape). †

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Be gentle and sensitive toward those you meet; you don't know the pain in the heart, or the struggle and endurance required to keep that smile in place.... BBC



Perfect & Weak?

Royce Frederick

BIBLE QUESTIONS

The Old Testament contains the Law of Moses, God's law for Israel. Psalm 19:7 calls that law "*perfect*," but Romans 8:3 calls it "*weak*." How could both be true?

"PERFECT." "*The law of the LORD is perfect . . .*" (Psalm 19:7). It fulfills all of *its purposes* — but not all of *our needs*. The same is true of the human body. It accomplishes everything God *intended*, but not everything *we need*. God designed the human body wonderfully, but only for this physical world. It will fail some day. It cannot serve as the house of our soul forever. It is temporary. After the world ends, all people who have served God will receive a permanent body which cannot be hurt or destroyed (2 Corinthians 5:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50-57).

Likewise, this earth is a marvelous handiwork of God. It accomplishes everything God *intended*, but not everything *we need*. Some day, God will destroy it by fire and replace it with a new earth which will never be destroyed (2 Peter 3:7, 10-13).

The same is true of God's covenant with Israel. It was an "everlasting covenant." God would never end it — if Israel would continue obeying the Law of Moses (Exodus 19:5). That law fulfilled its purposes: it governed Israel, taught many lessons about God, and led

people to Christ (Galatians 2:19; 3:19-25; 1 Corinthians 10:11). It accomplished everything God *intended*, but not everything *man needed*.

"WEAK." The Law of Moses had one weakness — sinful man: ". . . *it was weak through the flesh . . .*" (Romans 8:3). The law *required* man to be righteous, but it could not *transform* any sinner into righteousness. It could *condemn* sin, but it could not *save* sinful man (Romans 7:13; Hebrews 10:4).

Jesus accomplishes what the Law of Moses could not do. He paid the death penalty for our sins (1 Peter 3:18; John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:15). "*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*" (Romans 8:3,4; see Romans 3:21-26).

Consider an example. A priest in Israel could look at leprosy and declare that the person was "unclean" (Leviticus 13), but he had no power to heal. Jesus **healed** lepers (Mark 1; Luke 17). In a similar way, the Law of Moses could declare that a man was a sinner, but could not save him by removing his sin. Jesus can save us from sin and

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give us eternal life.

When Jesus died, God removed the old covenant and replaced it with His new covenant (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:11-16; Hebrews 9:15-17). “. . . *He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, (the people, the human side of the covenant) He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them,*

says the LORD’” (Hebrews 8:6-9). Israel had “. . . *transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant*” (Isaiah 24:5).

No person can enter heaven by perfectly obeying laws (Romans 3:20). All people sin and need God’s grace (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Before He made the world, God knew our need and planned to give His Son (Ephesians 3:3-6,11; 1 Peter 1:18-21). When a sinner is baptized into Christ, he receives the free gift of salvation (Romans 6:3,4; Acts 2:38). “*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (John 1:17). †

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Think it over: When you reach the end of life’s journey, you will not regret one moment you have spent in the study of your Bible. After all other books are laid aside, this Word will still face you in God’s judgment! We plead with you to carefully use this sacred volume in this life! It is God’s message to you. Don’t ignore it or neglect it.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified”
(Acts 20:32).

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

GOD'S SPIRIT

TESTIFIES OF GOD

Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 2:11

SPEAKS BY REVELATION

Neh. 9:30; 2 Pet. 1:20-21
Jno. 16:13; Acts 2:4

SCRIPTURES RELIABLE

Heb. 10:15-17; Heb. 3:7-9
Mt. 24:35; Acts 1:16

MUST BE BORN AGAIN

Jno. 3:3-5; Mk. 16:16
Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16

BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

Eph. 1:3; 2 Cor. 5:17
2 Tim. 2:10; Col. 2:10

FAITHFUL CROWNED

Rev. 2:10; Phil. 2:12
Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Pet. 1:5-7

TESTIFIES OF MAN

Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 2:11

SPEAKS FROM WITHIN

1 Cor. 2:11; Heb. 10:22
Acts 23:1; Acts 24:16

FEELINGS UNRELIABLE

Gen. 37:23-35; 1 Kgs. 13:14-24
Acts 26:9; Jno. 16:2

"I'M BORN AGAIN"

Rom. 6:3-6; Rom. 6:16-18
Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 1:23

"I CAME INTO CHRIST"

Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13
Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17

"I'VE BEEN FAITHFUL"

2 Tim. 4:6-8; Phil. 3:13-14
Tit. 2:11-12; Phil. 1:19-26

MAN'S SPIRIT

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

Human Frailties and the Power Of Faith

Romans 8:38,39

Ron Bryant

Faith does not remove the obstacles of life, nor guarantee the outcome of circumstances.

It furnishes a life perspective (Proverbs 3:5; Matthew 22:37f;
Job 13:15).

It clarifies life's priorities (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 3:8-14).

It provides a real energy and determination for living (1 John 5:4).

It serves to determine purpose in life (Philippians 1:20,21;
Romans 14:7,8).

Faith does not free one from disappointments or sorrows.

It provides the needed courage (Ephesians 6:16; James 1:2-6).

It furnishes consolation (Hebrews 4:14-16; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

It supplies identity (Hebrews 10:39; 1 Peter 2:9-11).

Faith does not eliminate pain.

It enables one to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:12,13; Ephesians 6:10-17).

It enables one to rise above it (Philippians 4:13; Psalm 23:4).

It provides assurance of final victory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:4-7;
2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Suffering and death are indisputable facts. In the human experience they are known by both believers and unbelievers. Jesus experienced both. He endured and conquered both (Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:8-9). God does not explain every trial or every misfortune. Life does not come with explanations of its elements, neither its good nor its bad. But, the believer can be keenly and joyfully aware of God's presence and of His promise for those who walk with Him in faith (James 1:12; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18). †

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THE LORD'S SUPPER



Fenter Dee Northern

1. A proclamation of Christ's death until He returns.

2. Key passages: Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 10:16,17; 11:23-32; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:42; 20:7; Mark 14:22-25; John 6:52-58.

3. Terminology:

- A. The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20).
- B. The Lord's table (1 Corinthians 10:21).
- C. Communion (1 Corinthians 10:16).
- D. Breaking of bread (Acts 2:42).
- E. Cup of blessing (1 Corinthians 10:16).
- F. Cup of the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:21).
- G. Fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:29).
- H. Some have added:
 - (1) Eucharist (Greek *eucharisteo* = to give thanks).
(Matthew 26:27; 1 Corinthians 11:24).
 - (2) The liturgy (Sacred administration = ritual of observing).
 - (3) The mass (Latin *missa* = sent away).
 - (4) Host (Latin *hostea* = sacrifice. Refers to the bread only).
 - (5) Sacrament (Latin *sacramentum* = an oath, sacred thing, mystery).

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

(6) Catholic catechism = “outward sign to bring grace to our souls.”

I. Why not just call Bible things by Bible names?

4. The institution of the Lord's Supper

A. Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; 1 Corinthians 11.

(1) Matthew and Mark omit “*This do in remembrance of me.*”

(2) Luke and Paul add the above, plus “*shed for the remission of sins.*”

(3) The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) include the reunion of the Lord with disciples in Galilee.

(4) Only Paul has “*for as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death til he come.*”

B. Began after the Passover meal on the eve of Jesus' crucifixion.

(1) Synoptics and Paul:

a. Giving of thanks over the bread.

b. Breaking bread.

c. Giving to the disciples to eat.

(2) Matthew and Mark:

a. Gave thanks for the cup.

b. Paul says, “*cup of blessing*” (1 Corinthians 10:16)

(3) Matthew has, “*drink ye all of it.*”

(4) Mark has, “*They all drank of it.*”

(5) Luke has, “*Do this...*”

Conclusion: The Lord's Supper was given by a command from Jesus on the eve of His crucifixion.

5. Elements of the Lord's Supper:

A. The bread.

(1) Unleavened bread of Passover (Exodus 12:19).

Sometimes the Passover was called the feast of the unleavened bread, Matthew 26:17).

(2) Greek *artos* = can mean either unleavened or leavened bread.

(3) Greek Catholics use only ordinary bread.

(4) Roman Catholics use only unleavened bread.

(5) Protestant leaders = matter of indifference.

(6) Jesus used unleavened bread. Why not now?

B. The cup.

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- (1) Means wine, but what kind of wine?
- (2) New Testament never once uses "*oinos*" for wine.
- (3) New Testament uses "*fruit of the vine,*" "*the cup,*" meaning the juice of the grape.
- (4) Fermented wine was prohibited during the feast of the unleavened bread.

6. The early church:

- A. Weekly observance (Acts 20:7).
- B. Justin Martyr, 150 A.D.
- C. Love feast preceded (1 Corinthians 11:17ff; 2 Peter 2:13; Jude 12).
- D. "Supper" gradually gave way to a morning observance.

7. Doctrinal positions:

- A. Catholic = "transubstantiation"
- B. Lutheran = "consubstantiation"
- C. Church of the Brethren = "all acts of the upper room."
- D. Zwingli = "Commemoration"
- E. Restoration = "A memorial"
- F. The Lord's Supper is an expression of grace bestowed, not a means of obtaining grace.

8. Who may partake?

- A. It was first given to His faithful disciples.
- B. A self-examination is to be conducted (1 Corinthians 11:28).
- C. The Lord is the spiritual host, it is His supper. No other can prescribe.

9. Who can serve the Lord's Supper?

- A. Faithful Christian servants eligible to lead in the worship service.

10. How important is the Lord's Supper?

- A. Acts 20:7. It occupied a central place in the weekly service.



Fenter Dee Northern is the retired Academic Dean of Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Mississippi, U.S.A.

Hezekiah Speaks

Ken Tyler

Purpose: To learn from the powerful statements of this great man as he reformed Judah.

I. *My sons, be not now negligent...*” (2 Chronicles 29:11).

- A. It is easy for us to let other things cause us to neglect the Lord and his church.
- B. The gospel places constant emphasis on us keeping our priorities in order (Matthew 6:19-21, 24, 33; Colossians 3:1,2; 1 Corinthians 14:12).

II. *“Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord...”* (2 Chronicles 30:8).

- A. Stephen used similar language in his sermon in Acts 7:51.
- B. To yield is to “give way”

III. *“...and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you”* (2 Chronicles 30:8).

- A. The great need of every generation is to serve the Lord (John 24:14,15; Philippians 1:1).
- B. Hezekiah knew that changes had to be made to turn away God’s wrath. See also Hebrews 10:26-31.

IV. *“Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah”* (2 Chronicles 32:7,8).

- A. Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed and the Lord took care of Sennacherib (2 Chronicles 32:20,21).
- B. *“...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”* (2 Timothy 1:7).

Conclusion: Hezekiah did great things in Judah (2 Chronicles 31:20,21). His words will help us do great things for the Lord in his church today. †

Ken Tyler preaches for the Lord’s church in Arab, Alabama, U.S.A.



Both Hinduism and Buddhism flourished in Indonesia between the eighth and tenth centuries. The huge temple complex of the Borobudur was built during that time, on the island of Java.

Colin McKee

Indonesia is the world's fourth largest nation with a population of over 200,000,000. It is the world's most expansive archipelago with some 17,000 islands which run from specks of rocks to huge islands such

as Sumatra, Borneo, and New Guinea. The five main islands of Indonesia are Sumatra, Borneo (Kalaimantan), Sulawesi, Irian Jaya (western New Guinea), and Java, one of the most densely populated

areas in the world. Most of the country is water; hence the Indonesians refer to their country as "Tanah Air Kita" which means "our land and our water". Indonesia is actually a little less than three times the size of Texas and the arable land is only 8%. Most of the islands are mountainous with volcanoes dominating the skyline in many places. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and torrential rainfall are common events.

Ordinarily Indonesia is a land of plentiful rainfall, however 1997 brought a severe drought resulting in widespread crop failure in almost all the provinces. The year also brought disastrous forest fires to the country which burned thousands of acres of tropical forests, and brought also financial turmoil and near collapse to the economy.

History

It is generally held that the earliest inhabitants of Indonesia came from **India** or **Burma**, while later immigrants known as Malays came from **southern China** or **Indochina**. These early Indonesians were *animists who believed that all animate and inanimate objects have their own life force, or soul*. They worship these objects as well as their ancestors. There are still animists in Indonesia today, especially in the interior forests.

Hinduism came to Indonesia around the third century A.D. Both

Hinduism and **Buddhism** flourished between the 8th and 10th centuries resulting in the vast Buddhist monument of Borobudur and the huge Hindu temple complex of Prambanan which are visited by thousands of tourists each year. **Islam** was first introduced to Indonesia by Arab traders in the later part of the 7th century, and in the 15th and 16th centuries Indonesian rulers turned to Islam, making it the state religion. *Islam, today, in Indonesia is rooted in Hindu-Buddhist custom and animism.*

Catholicism and **Protestantism** came to Indonesia with the colonial era. Missionaries from the Catholic and Protestant churches have only been successful in converting pockets of the Indonesian people: the Bataks of Sumatra; Minahasans and Toraja of Sulawesi; some of the Dayaks of Kalimantan; some Florinese and Ambonese, and some West Javans. *Denominational beliefs are also usually bound up with the traditional religious beliefs and customs.*

The first Europeans to visit Indonesia other than Marco Polo and a few early missionaries were the **Portugese**. Their principal aim in the Indonesian archipelago was the domination of the valuable spice trade in Maluku — the Moluccan islands. These are the islands for which Christopher Columbus was looking when he landed in the Americas.

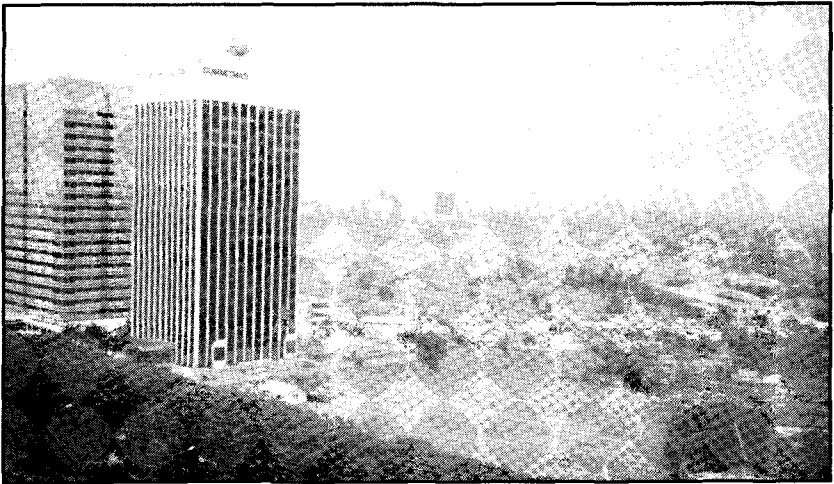
FROM THE HEART OF ...

The **Dutch** came in the late 1500's and were in firm control of many of the islands by the mid 1600's. They ruled Indonesia for 350 years as the Dutch East Indies.

When the **Japanese** invaded Indonesia in 1942 they were hailed by many as liberators. After the Japanese defeat, Indonesia began a

Current Affairs

The last thirty years have brought tremendous progress to Indonesia. The average Indonesian has seen his income and standard of living rise dramatically. However with the recent financial upheaval all across Asia, the stability of the Indonesian economy and the



Indonesia is presently caught in a life-threatening crunch between booming skyline/consumer growth and a monetary crash. Progress made in three decades is being swallowed up.

war of independence which lasted until 1949 when the Dutch transferred their sovereignty over the East Indies to the new **Republic of Indonesia**. Sukarno served as president until 1967. **Suharto** was appointed in March of 1967, was elected in 1968 and has been serving since that time.

lifestyle advances of the populace are in serious danger.

Today around 85% of the Indonesian people are professed *Moslem*, 10% *denominational* adherents, and 5% other, including animist, *Buddhists*, and *Hindus*.

The **church of Christ** began in Indonesia in 1967 when the first

FROM THE HEART OF ...

missionary family moved to the capital city of *Jakarta*. Other families soon followed in the late 60's and early 70's to various parts of **Sumatra** (*Medan, P. Siantar*) and **Java** (*Bandung*). From the Medan work the church also began in the **Karo Highlands** and the island of **Nias**.

The work on Nias has been one of the most fruitful works in Indonesia with more than 40 congregations and around 2500 members. The Nias church began through a Nias brother, **T. Laiya**, who was converted in Medan and went back to his home village area to share the gospel with his kinspeople. He has been a strong influence for the churches in Nias and Medan over the decades since then.

There are three congregations in Medan. There is still one congregation meeting in the Karo Highlands of North Sumatra, one in *Tanah Ja-wa*, and one in *P. Siantar*.

The church in **Sulawesi** also began in the late 60's from contacts made in Java and Jakarta. **Bill and Dee Tuerah** were the initial contacts and converts from that area which

resulted in the establishing of the church in Sulawesi which now numbers around 20 congregations. The church in *Bandung* and *Bogor* began about this same period of time in the late sixties or early 70's

Churches in **South Sumatra** began in the early 80's with congregations now in the cities of **Palembang** and **Lampung** and surrounding areas.

The church in **Irian Jaya** began in the mid 80's and now has at least five congregations. It began on the island of **Batam** in the early 90's and now has two congregations. There are three formal training schools for the church in Indonesia: **Batam, Irian Jaya, and Lampung**,



In Jakarta, the "American church", made up of oil and business people, has been strong. It meets in the same building as the Indonesian church. The property, worth millions, is in a court dispute.



Linda Soehner spent 17 years together in Indonesia doing the Lord's work before Gary died on the field in Nias in May of 1996. Linda had already spent two years in the early seventies helping with the work in Sumatra. There are also a number of dedicated brethren, past resident missionaries, who are making regular trips to Indonesia to conduct workshops, training sessions, and to do evangelism. Of course, the basic thrust of the work must be made by

After an absence of several years, Colin and Ellen McKee have returned to Indonesia. Knowing the language already, they are a tremendous boost to the work.

and at least two informal training schools, with one in **Jakarta** and one in **Nias**.

There are three resident missionary families in the country at the present: **Winston and Lucy Bolt** on **Batam**; **David Buskirk** in **Irian Jaya**; **Colin & Ellen McKee** in **Jakarta**. **Johnny Stovall** is self employed and has been involved in the work in Indonesia for a number of years.

The McKees have just recently returned to Indonesia after several years stateside. They worked in **Medan** in the 60's and 70's and are now residing in **Jakarta**. **Gary and**

the talented Indonesians preaching the word in various areas of the country.

Future plans for the work, especially in **Jakarta**, include outreach to **World Bible School** students; the reinstatement of the **Indonesian Bible Correspondence** course; possible radio programs and outreach; training of local brethren in formal and informal training schools; production of literature (of which **J.C. Choate** has been the main supplier and promoter for many years); and the establishing of new congregations through neighborhood Bible gatherings. †



Recording radio tapes in Jakarta

MY Vision for Indonesia

J.C. Choate

While working in Karachi, Pakistan in the early 1960s, General Sukarno, President of Indonesia, visited Karachi. He came with great pomp and splendor, making quite an impression on the poor people of Pakistan. At that time the church of our Lord did not exist in that very large, overwhelmingly Muslim country, and I had a longing to go there to “spy out the land”.

I was able to get a visa for a few days, and my first entrance into the country was January of 1967. I found Jakarta to be a large, sprawling city, teeming with people and poverty. But there were several church buildings — evidence of belief in Christ in the midst of Islam — so I was confident that there

surely would be some way for preachers of the gospel to enter the country.

The first missionary families had arrived before my second visit in May of 1968, when I conducted the first gospel meeting to be held in the country, to my knowledge. Through the many years since that time I have continued to have a desire to help with the efforts to evangelize the country.

Being already heavily committed to the work in India and other places, with emphasis on radio programs and the printing of literature as follow-up tools, it seemed that this type of work would also be the best way I could aid the church in Indonesia. With the help of local

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

preachers, brother Andrew Banjarnahor of Jakarta, in particular, we arranged for radio programs which have been aired on various stations through the years: Palankarao, Surabaya, Banjarmasin (in Kalamentan); Ujang Pandang (Sulewesi); Jakarta and Solo (Java). Through these we have offered Bible correspondence courses, a monthly magazine, and various radio sermon and study books. These efforts have resulted in numerous conversions and have helped to strengthen the church throughout the country.

Now that Colin and Ellen McKee have returned to Indonesia, we look forward to working with them to expand the radio and litera-

ture programs. Colin is fluent in Bahasa Indonesia, so that he is able to write and/or translate books and other materials for printing. He will also be able to prepare tapes for radio broadcasts, which we hope to expand to cover more of the larger cities.

In a country such as Indonesia, where the church is relatively young, small, and scattered over thousands of miles and many islands, it is a challenge for the few foreign missionaries and the local preachers to provide all the encouragement needed by small struggling and often isolated congregations and individuals. A monthly magazine can be invaluable in filling this gap. Please pray that theirs can be resumed. †



The publications are kept on display for the use of Christians as they enter or leave the building. They are also used in correspondence and in personal work. As the magazine was being printed, bundles were sent to all churches.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 18 (from page 43)

1. To a garden beyond the Brook Kidron.
2. "...who betrayed Him; Jesus often met there with His disciples."
3. Chief priests and Pharisees; lanterns, torches, and weapons.
4. All things that would come upon Him.
5. They drew back and fell to the ground.
6. He drew a sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest.
7. To Annas, father-in-law of the High Priest, Caiaphas (who had already given advice to the Jews that it was better for one man to die for the people than for the Romans to come down and crush the nation).
8. Simon Peter, and another disciple who was known to the high priest [evidently, John].
9. Of being a disciple of Jesus; "I am not."
10. *"I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.... Ask those who heard Me."*
11. Struck Him with the palm of his hand.
12. To the Praetorium, to the Roman governor.
13. Crucifixion; the Jewish method of execution was by stoning (Acts 7:57).
14. *"Are You the King of the Jews?"*
15. *"My kingdom is not of this world...."*
16. *"I find no fault in Him at all."*
17. Barabbas, a robber.



Solomon

**Who
Am
I?**

(from
page
93)

The Book of Philemon

F	O	R	G	I	V	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

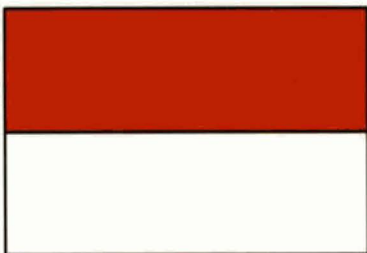
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



Republic of Indonesia

Government: Republic
President: General Suharto



Secular Facts:

Location: Thousands of islands, stretching across the Equator, between Australia and the Malay Peninsula, southwest of the Philippine Islands.

Land Mass: 741,101 Sq. Mi., almost three times the size of Texas.

Population: 200 million, plus.

Major Cities: Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bandung, Samarang, Yogyakarta, Den Passar, Ujung Pandang, Balikpapan.

Language: Bahasa Indonesia, Dutch, English, more than 300 dialects.

Ethnic Groups: Malayan and Papuan, Chinese and Indian.

Literacy: 60%.

Religion: 85% Moslem; 10% denominational; 5% Hindu, animist, other.

Economy: *Industrial Products:* Coffee, tea, petroleum, timber, textiles, cement, fertilizer, rubber. *Natural Resources:* Oil, timber, nickel, natural gas. *Major trading partners:* U.S., Japan, Western Europe and Singapore.

Monetary Unit: Rupiah.

The Church:

Congregations: Presently there are approximately 100 congregations, with a total membership of 3500-4000.

History: The first missionaries entered Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, in 1967. Other families followed, establishing the Lord's church in various cities on the islands of Sumatra and Java. T. Laiya, a man from the island of Nias, was converted in Medan and returned to his home village to teach his people. Forty congregations and about 2500 converts have been the result of his efforts, combined with those of various American missionaries through the decades.

Extensive work has also been done in Irian Jaya, one of the most primitive islands of Indonesia. At least five churches are there.

Personal evangelism, World Bible School, radio programs, a monthly magazine, and study books printed in Bahasa Indonesia are tools being used to reach the massive population.

Three formal training schools have been established in the country, providing the means for obtaining visas: Batam, Irian Jaya, and Lampung. There are also two informal training schools (in Jakarta and Nias).