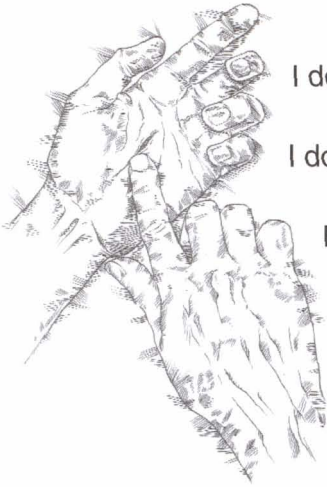


V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

A photograph of two men standing on a grassy hillside. The man on the left is wearing a light-colored jacket and a cap. The man on the right is wearing a white head covering and a light-colored jacket. They appear to be in conversation. In the background, there is a large, multi-story building and a large tree. The sky is clear and blue.

*To Die
For Christ*

Page 103



I Do Not Know

I do not know what next may come
Across my pilgrim's way;
I do not know tomorrow's road,
Nor see beyond today.

But this I know:

my Savior knows

The path I cannot see,
And I can trust
His wounded hand
To guide and care for me.

I do not know what may befall
If sunshine or if rain;

I do not know what may be mine
Of pleasure or of pain.

But this I know: **my Savior knows**

And whatso'er it be,

Still I can trust His love to give
What will be best for me.

I do not know what still awaits
Or what the future brings;
But with the glad salute of faith
I hail its opening wings!

For this I know: that in my Lord
Shall all my needs be met,
And I can trust the heart of Him
Who has not failed me yet.

Author Unknown

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 47 (from page 29)

1. That he would have Paul brought to Jerusalem for trial.
2. They intended to lie in wait and kill him.
3. *next day; judgment seat; Paul.*
4. They laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.
5. *the law; Jews; the temple; Caesar.*
6. He asked if Paul would be willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried; he was wanting to do the Jews a favor.
7. *"I stand; Caesar's judgment seat; judged".*
8. *Offended; death; object; dying; no one; deliver me; them. appeal; Caesar.*
9. *"You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar shall you go!"*
10. King Agrippa and his wife Bernice.
11. That it was not the custom to deliver an accused person to death without bringing him face to face with his accusers and hearing his defense.
12. *Questions; religion; Jesus; died; Paul affirmed; alive.*
13. With great pomp and with the prominent men of the city.
14. That Paul was not fit to live any longer.
15. Nothing worthy of death.
16. Festus needed a statement of "cause" as to why he was sending Paul to Caesar, and he asked Agrippa to hear his case and then to help him decide what should be written and sent along with Paul.



Jonah

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

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Jesus' answer is:

"He who **believes** and is **baptized** will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

But some people ask, "What about the thief on the cross?"

Let's think about that thief:

What did he call Jesus? "Lord".

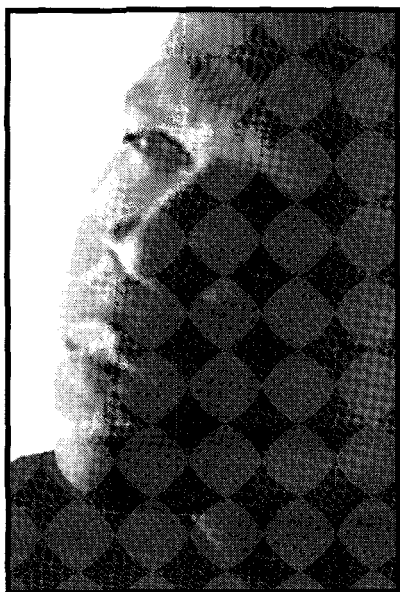
What did he ask Jesus to do? "Remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

How did the thief know enough about Jesus to acknowledge Him as "Lord", even though both he and Jesus were dying?

What did the thief know about Jesus' "kingdom"? Where did he gain the knowledge that even death would not prevent Jesus from beginning His kingdom? Because of weak faith, all the disciples had forsaken Jesus, yet, even in the face of death, the thief confessed his faith in Jesus as Lord and believed that He would "come into his kingdom".

Obviously, the meeting on the cross was not their first! The thief had an astounding knowledge and faith!

And don't forget that Jesus' new law did not come into effect until His death (Colossians 2:14), so He could save the thief any way He chose. Since His death, though, we must obey His will.



*"God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and
will He not do?
Or has He spoken,
and will He not make it good?"*
(Numbers 23:19).

*"...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie,
promised before time began"*
(Titus 1:2).

*"He who rejects Me,
and does not receive My words,
has that which judges him —
the word that I have spoken will judge him
in the last day.
For I have not spoken on My own authority;
but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command,
what I should say and what I should speak.
And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore,
whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak"*
(John 12:48-50).

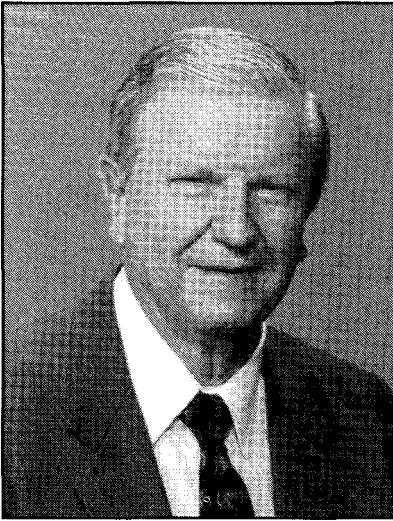
What did Jesus teach...say...do?
He taught about HIS kingdom (Matthew 13).
He said He would build HIS church (Matthew 16:18).
He bought HIS church with HIS blood (Acts 20:28).
He said that HIS church will be HIS glorious bride
(Ephesians 5:27).

*In the New Testament, neither God nor
Jesus authorized many churches,
denominations, cults, creeds, heads of
churches, Gospels, or ways of worship.*

Remember: GOD DOES NOT LIE. When men add to His word or pervert it, HE WILL NOT HONOR WHAT THEY SAY.

JESUS AND THE APOSTLES CONDEMNED RELIGIOUS ERROR

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief



Brethren often grow weary of fighting religious error. They wonder why so much of their preaching and teaching must deal with negative matters. Some even go so far as to rationalize that most people are sincere and want to be saved, so

surely the grace of God will cover their errors just as we expect it to cover our own shortfalls.

As much as we may regret the religious error of our day, and abhor having to deal with it in condemnation, we must realize that false teaching has been a part of the world scene since the Garden of Eden. It will always plague us, and we have no choice but to confront it and condemn it if we are to please the Lord.

How did Jesus deal with the religious error of His day? Did He tolerate it? Did He ignore it? Did He excuse it? Did He rationalize that those people were sincere in their hearts and should be left alone?

Jesus described those who were teaching and practicing religious error as hypocrites (Matthew 6:1-8) when they were giving alms and praying publicly merely to be seen by others.

What did Jesus mean when He said, *“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

In the scenario Jesus created of the judgment, the souls who were protesting seemed to be sincere, religious people who had tried to do the Lord's will, in order to go to heaven. The trouble was that they had never obeyed the Lord, and so He could not recognize them as His, as being a part of His family, the church. In their disobedience (regardless of how sincere they might have been), was the grace of God sufficient to save them?

No! Instead, Jesus said plainly that they were workers of iniquity, and He turned them away from heaven's gate. Do we know of any today who would fit His description? If we have our eyes and ears open, we see many who are religious, who call upon the Lord's name, but who are not living according to the written will of the Father. Therefore, they cannot go to heaven. Any or all of us may disagree with that judgment, but Jesus Himself is the One who has pronounced it.

Christ said, "*For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many*" (Matthew 24:5). Was He pleased with these people, even though they were speaking "*in His name*"? Did He hold out any hope for them under the banner of the grace of God? Did He condemn them plainly? If Jesus condemned false teachers in His day, would He not do the same today? And are we not compelled to follow His example for our time and for our particular brands of deceivers?

The apostle Paul said that we must "*...mark them which cause divisions and offences 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).

Now, why would Paul make such a disagreeable sounding statement as that? Wouldn't the grace of God have covered such people? After all, they were evidently giving the appearance of "*serving our Lord Jesus Christ*", so they were probably members of the church. Did that make their divisive and self-serving spirit tolerable to God? Evidently not. And neither will His grace cover such people today. Paul says, rather, that we should mark them and avoid them because they are not actually serving Christ.

And what happens to us, if we don't obey the command to censure people — even brethren — who are in error? Can God's grace cover us in our disobedience?

Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, "*Now I beseech you, brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Corinthians 1:1). He went on to say that it had been reported to him that there were divisions among them,

that some were saying that they were of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and of Christ. He then asked, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Of course Christ was not divided, Paul had not been crucified for them, and they had not been baptized in the name of Paul. Neither had these things been done in the name of Apollos or Cephas. Therefore, the conclusion was that they should be united in Christ.

In Galatians 1:7-9 Paul wrote to his brethren in Galatia, *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."*

Did you hear what Paul said? He declared emphatically that there was but one gospel, and that he had preached that gospel to them. Then he said that if he should preach another gospel, or even if an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, that they would stand condemned. Would that not be true today?

There is only one gospel (Mark 16:16) today. But what if we preach another gospel, and what about all of those in the religious world who preach other gospels? Will God not condemn all who do that? And does He not expect us today to stand with Him in condemnation of those who are preaching another gospel? But what if we join them instead? If we fellowship them in teaching error, will we not also share in their condemnation by God?

My brethren, do we not realize that **we are engaged in a great war today?** We must oppose and fight Satan and all of his army of unbelievers, false teachers, and worldly people. Therefore, we must *"be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might"* (Ephesians 6:10).

Paul continued with his description of a soldier in the Lord's army: *"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of

salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, Praying always with all prayer, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints..." (Ephesians 6:11-18).

Now those verses sound like we are soldiers in a deadly war, don't they? All around us are well-meaning people who find fault with us for looking on the religious world in such a negative way, but as loving and as kind as we may be, they are not going to be pleased with us as long as we preach the truth and condemn error.

Paul said to Timothy, "*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*" (2 Timothy 4:1-5). Do you know of anyone who fits these descriptions, either of standing for the truth or of having "itching ears" and turning away from the truth? Where do you stand?

The apostle John said, "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: Because many false prophets are gone out into the world*" (1 John 4:1). If there were false prophets even in the days when the apostles were alive to expose them, how can we think that there are no false teachers today? And if they hated and killed the Lord and His apostles, how can we expect them to feel kindly toward us when we teach what they taught?

As you read through the Scriptures, if you will begin to take particular note, you will find that there are hundreds and hundreds of statements which speak of false teachers, and countless warnings against listening to them. Satan is at the root of all such error, intent on confusing people so that they won't recognize truth when they hear it.

In this age of mass communication, when books can be written and printed in the millions, and when radio and television can cover the world, false teachers have more scope than ever before. Their purpose is to lead humanity to follow themselves — to follow the religious lies of which Satan is the father. How sad it is; — but how much sadder, still, that many in the Lord's church have decided they prefer to compromise rather than to stand firmly with the Lord on TRUTH.

Will it be that, instead of standing as sentinels on guard for Truth, we ourselves will be deceived by Satan's lies and false teachers, so that we will lose our souls along with others? God help us to be strong in the faith. †



“THERE IS A FAMINE IN THE LAND”

Byron Nichols

Many centuries ago God spoke through His prophet Hosea and said, “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*” (Hosea 4:6). There is no doubt at all as to what kind of knowledge He had in mind. He became quite specific when He stated that the people had “*forgotten the law of your God*”. Could it also be said by the Lord that His people today are lacking in the knowledge of His law? The answer is painfully obvious.

The church of Christ is currently experiencing much of the same turmoil and unrest that is presently troubling many other religious groups. Instead of the cry — “What does the Bible have to say?” — the frequently-heard call is — “This is what we want. Others are doing this and we want to, too.”

It may well be that if the Great Physician were to examine His patients and consider the symptoms, His diagnosis would be, “You are suffering from spiritual malnutrition. It is no wonder that you weaken and tire so easily — you are not taking in enough spiritual nourishment to provide the strength and vitality necessary for adequate spiritual health.” Without partaking of enough of the “bread of life” (God’s Word) to sustain us, we are going to be susceptible to becoming infected with ailments that we would otherwise be able to withstand if only we had been inoculated with the preventive powers of the inspired Word of our Physician.

However, it isn’t enough to just identify a problem and then forget about it. We must initiate a plan for controlling the problem, if not totally eliminating it.

Every Christian must first of all accept personal responsibility for his or her own spiritual condition. We must acknowledge the fact that we make our own choices, including those choices relative to whether we grow spiritually, whether we develop and mature spiritually. Our diet must give preference to that which is pure and unadulterated, so that we “*may grow thereby unto salvation*” (1 Peter 2:2).

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

The apostle John urged, *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world”* (1 John 4:1). Reflecting upon this admonition causes us to wonder just how we might be able to test or try the “spirits” (teachers, etc.) as to whether they are truly of God. Without any desire to be unkind or insulting, the answer is very simple. It is found in Acts 17:11, where many Jews of Berea *“were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”* There’s the answer. These Bereans were not even Christians yet, but prior to their conversion to Christ, they were “testing” or “trying” the spirits, the spirits in this instance being Paul and Silas (verse 10).

The New Testament contains much teaching that each one of us will be held individually accountable for our life. Notice particularly Paul’s declaration in 2 Corinthians 5:10 — *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it is good or bad.”*

In spite of the truth just stated, those who are elders, or shepherds, or overseers, will have to give an account not only for themselves, but, in addition, they will bear the awesome responsibility of having to give an account for those under their care, as is shown in Hebrews 13:17 — *“Obey those who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account....”* These men are to *“Shepherd the flock”* and serve *“as overseers”* (1 Peter 5:2). They are to *“take care of the church of God”* (1 Timothy 3:5b).

Elders, do you know your teachers and preachers, **really** know them? Do you know what they believe regarding matters of doctrine? Do you know, **really** know what the teachers teach? Do you and your fellow elders frequently attend the various classes to observe both the teachers and students? If a teacher is found to be teaching error, or at least planting questionable ideas in the minds of class members, is this matter dealt with by the elders?

It may well be that there has never been a greater need for conscientious and godly elders than exists today. We need to pray fervently that God will give us mighty men of valor who will *“stand in the gap”* (Ezekiel 22:30) and faithfully feed the flock and constantly guard the flock from any potential danger.

Christians, let’s feed on God’s Word in order that we may be spiritually healthy, and elders, please help us all to be fed appropriately while assembled together for study and worship. †

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THINGS I CANNOT DO

Dan R. Owen

One of the great myths of the scientific age is the infinite ability of man. It is proclaimed that we “boldly go where no man has gone before.” We believe there is no disease which cannot be conquered, no feat of engineering which cannot be accomplished, and no phenomenon which cannot be explained. That we control our own destinies is almost axiomatic in our society, never mind the fact that it isn’t true.

Biblical theology sees man as much more impotent than does modern science. Man is **not** in complete or ultimate control. **God** is in control. Most of the Bible is about the will and the working of God, not the accomplishments of man. Man’s role is to trust and obey God. To put all of this in perspective, it is helpful to reflect on some things man cannot do.

I cannot control life’s circumstances. Though man may temporarily control an environment in a scientific experiment, there are too many variables in the universe for man to maintain control. Life can

change completely in an instant. In spite of our best plans and preparations, we sometimes experience a flood, a fire, a tornado, a hurricane, a deadly disease, the loss or changing of a job, or the death of a loved one. Though I cannot control life’s circumstances, I can depend on God to carry me through them.

I cannot control the behavior of other people. This is why God said, “*each one shall give an account of himself to God*” (Romans 14:12). I cannot make another person live morally or obey the Gospel. I cannot control the way my husband, my wife, or my employer acts. I cannot control fellow church members. I can only make my own choices and trust God to judge me and others according to His truth.

I cannot alter the predetermined will of God. God has an eternal redemptive plan which is realized in Christ. Human choices do not alter God’s plan for redemption, or His moral will, or His religious will. All I can do is seek to conform to God’s will as He has revealed it,

GOD

and then trust Him to keep His promises.

I cannot make myself acceptable in God's sight. This is true because I am sinful. I have sinned and I will sin again. Because of sin I deserve spiritual death. I am hopeless before God without Jesus. No amount of good works can satisfy the guilt of my sin or pay its penalty. All I can do is trust in Christ and obey the Gospel so that I can receive God's free grace. I must trust God's plan of salvation and trust Him to forgive.

I cannot avoid the inevitability of death and decay. There is, according to the wise man of old, a time to die. All the health food I may eat, the exercises I may do, and

the medicines I may take will not change this. I cannot change my mortality, but I can trust God to carry me through death, to accept the payment of Christ's blood for my soul, and to welcome me into His presence for all eternity.

Thinking about what we cannot do makes us feel helpless. But it also reminds us that we have a great Helper. If a person simply trusts God and His Word, and seeks to follow God's will, that person can depend on God to do all the things he/she cannot do. So, trust God, and don't worry about what you cannot do. †

Dan R. Owen is the preacher for the Broadway Church of Christ in Paducah, Kentucky, USA.

BROKEN DREAMS

**AS CHILDREN BRING THEIR BROKEN TOYS
WITH TEARS FOR US TO MEND,
I BROUGHT MY BROKEN DREAMS TO GOD
BECAUSE HE WAS MY FRIEND.
BUT THEN, INSTEAD OF LEAVING HIM
IN PEACE TO WORK ALONE,
I HUNG AROUND AND TRIED TO HELP
WITH WAYS THAT WERE MY OWN.
AT LAST I SNATCHED THEM BACK AND CRIED,
"HOW COULD YOU BE SO SLOW?"
"MY CHILD," HE SAID, "WHAT COULD I DO?
YOU NEVER DID LET GO."**

—BEN HILDNER



"For this is God, Our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death" (Psalm 48:14). Each person must have a saving knowledge of God. An unknown God will never be loved, trusted, served, nor worshipped. The foundation of our faith is belief in Him *"...for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

Understanding some *attributes* of God should deepen our *faith* in Him. *"Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you"* (Job 22:21).

GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT: *"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself"* (John 5:26). God is not a created being. He is Creator (Genesis 1:31). He has no beginning and no ending. He is the great *"I AM"* of Exodus 3:14.

GOD

GOD IS ETERNAL: “*But the Lord shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment*” (Psalm 9:7). God has always existed and always will exist. He is the everlasting Father and He offers to mankind eternal life (Hebrews 5:8-9).

GOD IS INFINITE: God is the all-knowing, ever-present, all powerful ruler of heaven and earth! He is omnipresent (ever-present) (Psalm 139). He is omniscient (knows everything) (Daniel 2:22). He is omnipotent (all powerful) (Matthew 19:26). Serve Him!

GOD IS IMMUTABLE (UNCHANGABLE): “*For I am the Lord, I do not change*” (Malachi 3:6). Neither God’s essence, attributes nor His counsel is changeable. He remains forever the same true One, unchangeable in His goodness and truth.

“There is beyond the azure blue, a God, concealed from human sight, He tinted skies with heav’nly hue — and framed the worlds with His great might. There was, a long, long time ago, a God whose voice the prophets heard, He is the God that we should know, who speaks from His inspired word. Secure is life from mortal mind, God holds the germ within His hand, Tho’ men may search, they cannot find, for God alone does understand. Our God, whose Son upon a tree, a life was willing there to give, That He from sin might set men free, and evermore with Him could live. There is a God, He is alive, in Him we live, and we survive; From dust our God created man, He is our God, the great I AM!”

Because God is God it makes sense to obey Him. To become a Christian you must hear His word, the Gospel in the New Testament (Romans 10:17); believe that Jesus is His Son (Hebrews 11:6); repent of your sins (Luke 13:3); confess your faith in Christ (Matthew 10:32); and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 22:16).

There is a God in heaven. Why not obey Him? †

Charles Box works with the Walnut Street Church of Christ, in Greenville, Alabama, USA.

Treasures in Heaven

Someone has figured out that if the “widow’s mite” had been invested in a savings account it would now be worth \$4,800,000,000, 000,000,000,000. Think of what can be done by God if we invest ourselves in the lives of those who need us. God pays much better dividends than 4% compounded semi-annually. “...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20).

Quick to Forgive

Jack W. Carter

Being godly means having godly qualities. We can never be all that God is, but we are expected to be like Him to the best of our ability. Godliness manifests itself in human conduct. This is because He indwells us when we keep His commandments (see John 14:23).

I love John's revelation about love in the fourth chapter of his first epistle: "*No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us*" (verse 12). Loving the way God loves is elevated much higher than we may realize. To capture the height and depth of God's love, we must study Him carefully as He is revealed through His word.

The prophet Micah was contemporary with Isaiah. Both prophesied about the inevitable punishment in store for God's people because they stubbornly refused to turn from their sins. In the final chapter of the book of Micah, we read about a renewal for God's people once the punishment had taken

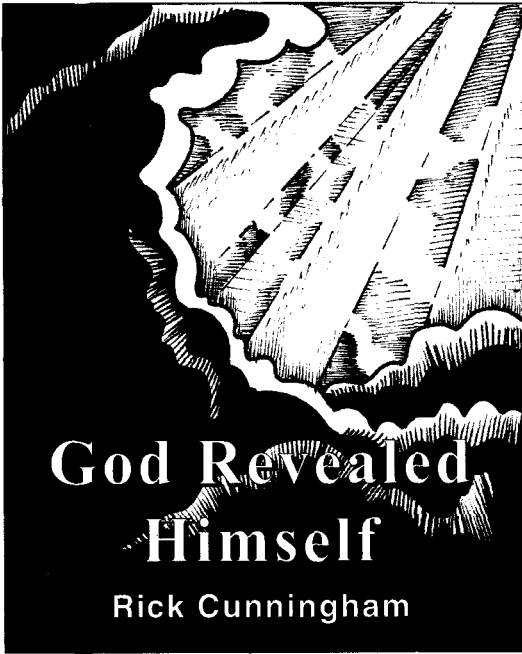
place. I find great comfort in the way Micah reveals God to us: "*Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea*" (Micah 7:18,19).

I am glad that our God is so quick to forgive. Actually, that is our only hope. Then, to forgive in the way God forgives is an additional blessing to us. He doesn't partially forgive, hanging on to resentment and wallowing in residual hard feelings. He "*treads our sins underfoot*" and "*hurls all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.*"

We have a lot to learn about loving and forgiving the way God does. Being godly is quite a challenge, isn't it? †

Jack W. Carter is a preacher living in Castle Rock, Colorado, USA.

Forgiveness saves the expense of anger, the high cost of hatred, and the waste of energy.



God Revealed Himself

Rick Cunningham

At the end of his life, Moses tried to get the people to reflect on all the things God had done for them. He said, *“Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand*

and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? You were shown all these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other” (Deuteronomy 4:32-35).

But Moses did not know the whole story. In time, God would become flesh and live among men. Jesus, God incarnate, would speak for the Father. He would draw a spiritual, eternal kingdom out of the world, by

testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by conflicts, by a gentle hand and an outstretched arm, and by a great and awesome sacrifice on a Roman cross.

God, through Moses, did some amazing things to garner men’s faith. But through Jesus, He made it clear once and for all that He loves us, that He is willing to forgive us, and that He will save us eternally if we will put our faith in Him. *“The Lord is God! Besides Him there is no other.”* †

Rick Cunningham preaches for the 14th & Main Church of Christ in Big Spring, Texas, USA.

NASA and Evolution

Bill Dillon

NASA's latest interplanetary probe was to Mars, and a host of pictures showing us the red planet close up was the result. The name of the unmanned lander was Beagle II. For those who do not know, the original Beagle was the name of Charles Darwin's ship which carried him to the Galapagos Islands in search of a way to explain the origin of the world without using the Bible version of creation. After Darwin's journey he wrote **Origin of the Species** (1859), which suggested "natural selection" as the explanation for earth's life forms, instead of God.

The point is, modern day NASA is going to Mars with the same motive that Charles Darwin had in sailing to the Galapagos Islands. NASA is trying to confirm evolution! Why else call the Mars lander Beagle II? It is unfortunate that NASA is using multiplied millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars to try and prove the unprovable.

The dilemma for NASA evolutionists is obvious. If they accept the Bible account of creation, they must also accept the moral code found in the same Bible! It seems NASA evolutionists are willing to go to extreme lengths to avoid accepting the truth of Holy Scripture; that truth was stated long ago:

*"By the word of the Lord
were the heavens made;
and all the host of them
by the breath of his mouth.
For he spake, and it was
done; he commanded,
and it stood fast"
(Psalm 33:6,9)*

Bill Dillon is the editor of *Gospel Gleaner* and preaches for the Lord's church in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, USA.

**You can buy education,
but wisdom is a gift from God.**

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W. F. Albright and the Bible

Hershel Dyer

William F. Albright remains to this day among the greatest of all scholars in the field of oriental archeology. He was Professor of Semitic Philology at Johns Hopkins University and was the Director of Oriental research in Jerusalem. The work of Albright in the special field of Biblical Archeology has made his name to be endeared by all believers in the Holy Scriptures.

From the standpoint of scientific inquiry, Albright showed an unbiased investigation for truth. Perhaps no scientist ever considered a proposition or hypothesis more cautiously than did Albright in his archeological studies and conclusions. Here are a few of his observations on the Scriptures.

Concerning his work and that of others in the study of persons and places connected with Biblical events, he wrote:

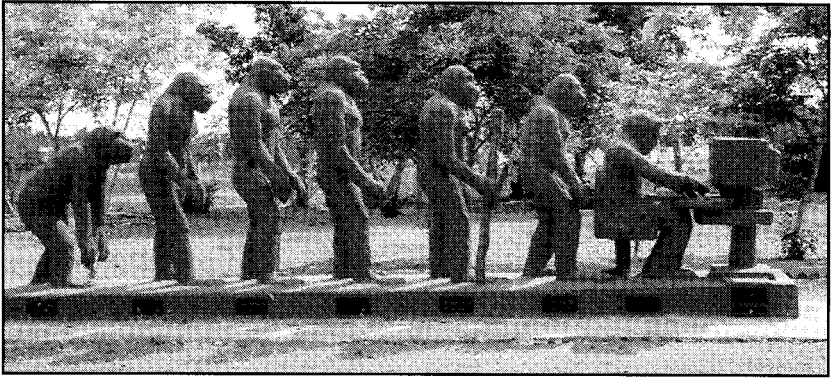
“It is only when we begin to appreciate the Bible adequately in its human side that we can fully appreciate its greatness as the inspired revelation of the Eternal Spirit of the universe.”

Though he spent much time in critical observation of the pottery and vestiges of very ancient civilizations, his discerning scrutiny of the New Testament period is of extreme value. While many of his scholarly peers sought to date the New Testament writings after the first century, Albright was quite adamant in acknowledging their first century origin. “We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80.”

In an article which appeared in *Christianity Today* (1-18-63) he gave his explicit view of this matter. “In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and eighties of the first century A.D.”

While our faith in the Bible as the Word of God does not rest upon the stated judgment of any man, scholar or not, the support of this view by such a man as William F. Albright cannot help but be encouraging. †

Hershel Dyer is a gospel preacher living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.



Does It Make Any Difference?

Ralph Hunter

Many ask the question, “Does it make any difference?” about the length of the “days” spoken of in Genesis 1.

There are three distinct areas of thought that come to mind as we consider this question. The first is the thinking of the “Evolutionist” who simply says that there is no God. We will not concern ourselves with this idea in our present study.

The next is the thinking of the “Theistic Evolutionist” who believes that, indeed, there is a God but that the days of Genesis 1 were extremely long periods of time which He used to accomplish creation through an evolutionary process. Unfortunately, we have

some very well-known brethren who hold this idea.

The third group is called “Creationist” which holds strongly to the belief that the days of Genesis 1 were 24-hour periods of time.

Does it really make any difference which view one takes, as long as one accepts that there is God?

Consider the following thoughts carefully. First, both the Theistic Evolutionist and the Creationist believe that there is a Creator. This being the case, we would logically want to go to that Creator’s message to learn about Him. The apostle Peter writes, *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private*

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interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20,21). Just before this statement, Peter, in verse 3, made it plain that everything pertaining to life and Godliness has been given to mankind by the very power of the Divine. Was there something left out of the scriptures that would have to be filled in by man’s thinking? If there was, Peter’s statement in verse 3 is wrong, because he declared that we have **all** things that we need in order to be right before the Father in heaven.

any section of scripture contradict another section.

With these points in mind, consider the following: By the same inspiration from God, the prophet Moses wrote the creation story (Genesis 1:14,15); and it was by the same inspiration from God that the prophet Jeremiah declared that the promise of God for a new covenant would be assured as long as the ordinances of days and nights existed (Jeremiah 31:31-36).

Jeremiah also called upon the same logic concerning the promise to King David: *“If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant*

We dare not add to or subtract anything from God’s word, or make any section of scripture contradict another section.

The Apostle Paul (his writings are noted as being scripture in 2 Peter 3:15,16) states in 2 Timothy 3:16,17 *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* In chapter 2 and verse 15 of that same book he points out that “study” (giving diligence, NKJV) is the way we come to approval as a workman in the word. We dare not add to or subtract anything from God’s word, or make

of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.”[KJV] *“If my covenant of day and night stand not, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant”*[ASV] Jeremiah 33:20,-21,25,26a).

In the New Testament book of Hebrews, chapter 8, the writer says the promise of Jeremiah 31 was

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kept in Christ. In Luke 1:32,33, that promise (made in 2 Samuel 7:5-17) concerning the throne of David was kept in Christ. Did Jeremiah leave any doubt that the “day and night” was anything but that which you and I understand to be a 24-hour period? Did the writers of Hebrews and Luke not have the same concept of a day as the prophet Moses?

Let’s turn our attention to some words of Christ as we consider the length of “day” as mentioned in Genesis 1. Jesus is quoted by Matthew in chapter 19:4 as saying, *“Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female?”* Of course our Lord was calling His listeners back to Genesis 1:27. Was there a male for several thousand years without a female around? Was there a long period of time in which it was right to put away the wife or was the very “beginning” (mentioned in Matthew 19:8) the same beginning as in verse 4? Was the Word (that is, God made flesh) so confused as to leave His listeners with a false concept about the time it took for mankind to be made?

Again, in Matthew 12:40, our Lord is quoted as saying that as Jonah (Jonah 1:17) was in the belly of the fish for three days, so would the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for the same period of time. If the Savior was able to use the writ-

ings of old in an accurate way to teach about His time in the tomb, would He be so careless or uninformed as to mislead His followers about the time involved in creation?

And if the message of Jehovah as written by his “holy apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 3:5) was not accurate concerning those things of creation, how can we be certain of the events that are written about the end of the world? We need to remember that Jesus commanded his apostles to teach those things that He had taught them (Matthew 28:20). Are we sure of the writing of Peter and Paul when statements are made, such as, “... *day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*” (2 Peter 3:10), and “*Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump*” (1 Corinthians 1:51,52a)?

We must ask the question, “Did the Lord of heaven and earth give these apostles an accurate description about the end of the world, but not about the beginning?” Is it in the power of the Almighty to bring all the physical creation (heaven and earth) to an abrupt end, but not in

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His power to create it in the short time that is declared by Moses?

Beloved, the important question

Christ” (Romans 14:10b) and “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one

If all that is written is not accurately inspired, recorded and understood, how can we have any assurance about our salvation?

is not simply concerning the length of days of creation, but **the accuracy of all that has been made known to us by God!** We read in Genesis 1:26,27 of mankind being made in the image of the divine (“*let us make man in our image ...So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them*”). We are told in 3:6 of the transgression of man (“*...she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat*”), and then in 3:15 of the hope (“*...it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel*”) to overcome the result of that sin. **If all that is written is not accurately inspired, recorded and understood, how can we have any assurance about our salvation?**

If I cannot be sure of the great story of redemption and the salvation from my sins, can I be sure of the consequences of coming before the Divine in judgment. Paul stated by inspiration, “*For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of*

may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Another thought that must be considered: if one cannot accept that the Lord accomplished His creation in six-24 hour periods, how do we understand His description of the destruction of His creation. Do the passages that deal with the end of the world really mean a **sudden destruction, as the words say**, (1 Corinthians 15:51,52 and 2 Peter 3:10-12), or will the Lord use billions of years to complete this?

Indeed it does make a difference how we understand the scheme of redemption, and how the Lord carried it out and how this old world will end. In the same way, what we believe concerning the Biblical record of God’s creation of the world makes a tremendous difference.

The ultimate question is: Do I accept the Lord’s revelation, or do I not? †

Ralph Hunter preaches the Gospel in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

Tribute to the Bible

A.Z. Conrad

Century follows century — there it stands.

Empires rise and fall — there it stands.

Dynasty follows dynasty — there it stands.

Kings are crowned and uncrowned — there it stands.

Despised and torn to pieces — there it stands.

Storms of hate swirl about it — there it stands.

Atheists rail against it — there it stands.

Agnostics smile cynically — there it stands.

Profane punsters caricature it — there it stands.

Unbelief abandons it — there it stands.

Higher critics deny its inspiration — there it stands.

Thunderbolts of wrath smite it — there it stands.

The flames are kindled about it — there it stands.

The arrows of hate are discharged against it —
there it stands.

Radicalism rants and raves against it — there it stands.

Infidels predict its abandonment — there it stands.

The tooth of time gnaws but makes no dent in it —
there it stands.

Modernism tries to explain it away —
there it stands.

Well did Moncrief say:

“The Book of God will stand secure

When the sun and stars decline:

Its ageless truths will still endure

To prove its Source divine.”

The Only Safe Guide

John Thiesen

What is the safe guide for our life? There are several on which people depend to get to Heaven, but there is only one that will actually get them there. Sadly, many are duped into following false guides along the way.

Some Follow Their Heart

Many say, "If I just feel right in my heart, I'm all right." But the Bible teaches that one's own heart cannot be trusted! The prophet Jeremiah said, "*The heart is deceitful above all things...*" (Jeremiah 17:9). Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived said, "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool*" (Proverbs 28:26). From these statements we learn that the heart left to itself as a guide will lead a person in the wrong direction.

"Inner Light" as a Guide

Others say, "Just follow your inner light." This supposes that God has placed spiritual understanding within each of us and that all we have to do is plumb its depths, like miners digging for gold. But again, Jeremiah said, "*The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jeremiah 10:23). This was why an external revelation from heaven was needed. The light was not in man

already and he required a lamp to show the pathway to heaven for him.

The Conscience as Guide

"Let your conscience be your guide" is a popular saying. Saul of Tarsus was living in all good conscience before God when he was persecuting Christians, because he thought in his heart that he was doing it for God's sake (Acts 23:1; 26:9). But his conscience was ignorant, and he was actually opposing God while thinking he was doing right (1 Timothy 1:13,15).

God's Word the Only Safe Guide

The only safe, infallible guide for living for God and preparing for heaven is the Bible. "*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Timothy 3:15). This is the divine revelation sent down from the God of heaven containing His will for us and the light from above which can illuminate our minds, guide our feet into paths of righteousness, and see us safely through this dark world to the City of Light on high. †

John Thiesen is involved with the Spanish translation of *The Voice of Truth International* and preaches for the church of Christ in Buffalo, Missouri, USA.

THE WORD OF GOD

The subject of the authority of the Bible is one of the most important issues of this or of any day and age. Which way that question is decided will ultimately be the key factor in the spiritual existence of any person or group of people. This is not simply a grandiose statement. If the Bible is God's **authority**, then the matter is settled as to what influence will guide and direct one's life. It is true that questions of interpretation and application will follow, yet that is another, though closely related, subject. But if the Bible is **not authority**, then what it says is unimportant. It becomes nothing more than a curiosity, and an ancient one at that.

The authority of the Scriptures needs to be understood within the larger context of "**God's Word**". That Word has been historically manifested in three significant ways. **First, it has been revealed in His direct, spoken word.** This is nowhere better illustrated than in creation itself. "*God said... and there was...*" is a formula repeated for each of the six creative days.

The absolute authority of God's spo-



THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

David Deffenbaugh

THE WORD OF GOD

ken word is irrefutable, as demonstrated in His ability to bring into existence that which was previously nonexistent, by merely speaking the words.

Second, God's Word was manifested in the flesh. So John affirms, "*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...*" (John 1:14). Jesus, as that Word, also exemplified **absolute authority**.

delve into the *proofs* of inspiration, the assertion stands that there is more than adequate evidence to establish the truthfulness of Scripture's claim to be inspired by God. The point is this, *if* (and in reality, *since*) the Bible can be established as being the **written Word** of God, it carries equal authority as God's **audibly spoken word** and as God's **Word mani-**

First, God's Word has been revealed as His spoken word.

Second, God's Word was manifested in the flesh, in the form of Jesus Christ.

Third, God has given us His word in written form, the Bible.

That demonstration came in numerous remarkable forms: He spoke, and nature obeyed (Mark 4:41); He spoke, and the dead heard and obeyed (John 11:43); He spoke, and spirit-beings obeyed (Mark 1:27). And, of course, near the end of His time on earth, He proclaimed, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth*" (Matthew 28:18).

Third, God's Word has been manifested in written form. At this point the critical question becomes that of **the inspiration of Scripture**. The issue of inspiration is all about where the Bible came from: is it from God or from man? While this article is too brief to

fested in the flesh as Jesus Christ.

The only question that remains is, **when will man submit to the Bible's absolute authority?** That submission *can* come now as people choose to obey God's revealed will, thus laying hold of His great promise of salvation. Or, they may decide to wait until the judgment of the last day (John 12:48). Regardless of *when* we acknowledge Him, the Scriptures state in emphatic terms that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess to God's Lordship and authority (Romans 14:11). †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the South College congregation in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, USA.



Satan Attacks the Bible

Maxie B. Boren

“The deceiver of the whole world” (i.e., Satan, Revelation 12:9), the one who is *“the father of lies”* (John 8:44), has employed every cunning device to undermine and attack the Bible through the years. The devil is relentless in so doing because he knows the crux of the whole matter revolves around how people view the Scriptures.

Satan, through false teachers, has convinced millions that there is no absolute standard of truth. What our forefathers understood to be either black or white has in recent times been painted gray. People are told that there are no clearly defined lines of right and wrong. Morality, and religious doctrine also, have been relegated in the minds of most to be a “gray zone” of relativity. People believe what they want to believe and do what they want to do. It is as in the days of the Judges when *“every man did that which*

was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6).

The tragedy is that so many gullibly swallow Satan’s deceiving poison through his pawns that feed it to them. Thus, they are without a spiritual anchor, being tossed to and fro on perilous seas, and battered from reef to reef of doctrinal untruths. They drift into deep and dangerous waters of doubt and skepticism. They walk in the darkness, having been deluded by Satan into thinking that they have greater spiritual insight. How sad!

To all who will listen, I cry out, “There is a standard of truth given by God — the Bible is His Word (2 Timothy 3:16,17)! And the Word of the Lord will judge all men in the last day (John 12:48)! Please, please believe it, because it is so!” †

Maxie B. Boren is a gospel preacher living in Bedford, Texas, USA.

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter twenty-five, NKJV.

1. When Festus, the new Roman governor, went up to Jerusalem, what favor did the high priest and chief priests ask of him? (Vs. 1-3).
2. What was their plot? (V. 3).
3. When Festus returned to Caesarea, "the _____, sitting on the _____, he commanded _____ to be brought." (V. 6).
4. What did the Jews do? (V. 7).
5. Paul answered, "Neither against _____ of the _____, nor against _____, nor against _____ have I offended in anything at all." (V. 8).
6. What question did Festus ask Paul, and why? (V. 9).
7. Paul answered, "_____ at _____, where I ought to be _____." (V. 10).
8. He explained further, "For if I am an _____, or have committed anything deserving of _____, I do not _____ to _____; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, _____ can _____ to _____. I _____ to _____." (V. 11).
9. How did Festus answer Paul? (V. 12).
10. What other notable ruler heard Paul's case? (Vs. 13,14).
11. What did Festus say about the custom of the Roman government regarding an accused person? (V. 16).
12. Festus said that the accusers had "some _____ against him about their own _____, and about one, _____, who had _____, whom _____ to be _____" (V. 19).
13. How did Agrippa and Bernice enter the court? (V. 23).
14. What had the Jewish leaders cried out? (V. 24).
15. Festus said that he had found _____. (V. 25).
16. What did Festus ask King Agrippa to help him do? (Vs. 26,27).

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

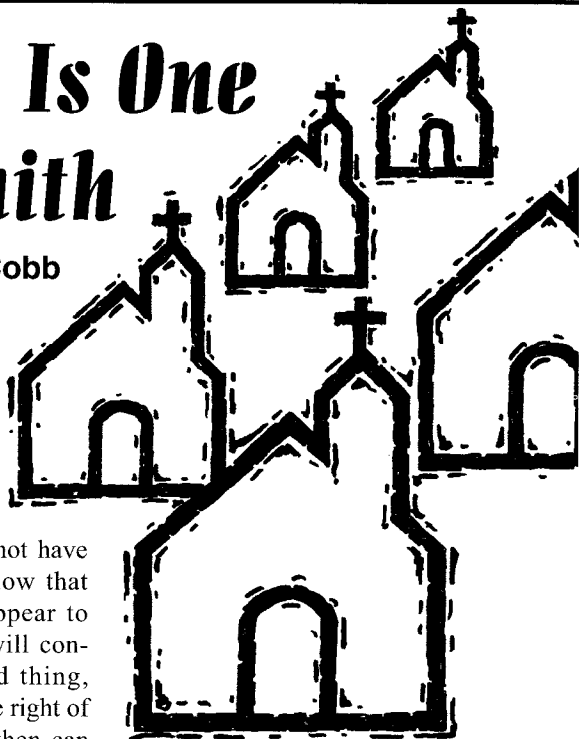
There Is One Faith

Charles E. Cobb

“There is ... one faith” (Ephesians 4:5).

The world is terribly confused in its religious views and ideas. One does not have to be very wise to know that this is true. Some appear to like it this way and will contend that it is a good thing, because it gives one the right of multiple choice. He then can choose, they argue, whatever may satisfy his conscience or please him most.

The question, however, is not that of pleasing *man* — it is rather a matter of pleasing *God*. We must keep in mind that *God has made His choice*. We are to be interested in God’s choice. The Scripture now before us teaches *“one faith”*. It is singular. It does not allow a multiple choice that is acceptable to God. The *“one faith”* is the same thing as *“the faith”*. *“The faith”*, as it is



used in the New Testament, encompasses the entire Christian system. In writing of this to the church, Jude says, *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once (or once for all) delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3).

Please examine with care the statement, *“contend for the faith”*.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

It is not suggested that one should contend for *many faiths*. To do so would be confusing, contradictory, and absurd. Yet, this is the very thing that is done by multitudes today when they insist that “one is just as good as another”. Timothy is urged to “*Fight the good fight of faith*” (1 Timothy 6:12), not the good fight of **many faiths**. Paul wrote that he had “*kept the faith*” (2 Timothy 4:7). With dedication, devotion, and zeal, the apostle to the Gentiles renounced the old law and embraced the New Covenant, and thus was completely loyal to “*the faith*” for which he eventually gave his life (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

same text, “*There is one faith.*” This is also true! There is just one! Proper interpretation demands that we understand there is “*one faith*” just as we understand there is “*one Spirit*”.

Our Savior said, as He met with His disturbed and uncertain disciples shortly before His death, “*Ye believe in God, believe also in Me...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*” (John 14:1,6).

If indeed Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, how could there possibly be more than one faith acceptable in the eyes of the Lord? Why *should* there be more than one

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all...

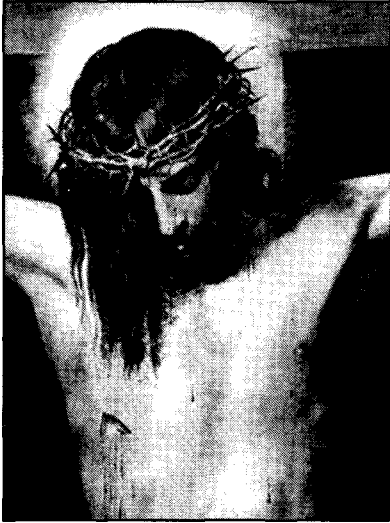
It is surely beyond debate that God intends that there should be only one faith — one great system, plan, program of redemption and salvation. It is not of man’s creation or of man’s design. It did not come from the councils of men or the minds of men. The faith, the one faith, had its origin in the mind of God, and it is designed by Him for man’s good and God’s glory.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. We take note that Paul had said, “*There is one Spirit.*” This is true and arouses little, if any argument from any quarter. From the

faith? The world has often been shocked and moved to disbelief because of the divisiveness of many faiths. Families have been divided, communities have been “at war”, and even nations have been rocked to their very roots by such division. All of the world has been injured spiritually by man’s disregard of the plain teaching of God’s Word.

As there is one body, one hope, one Spirit, one Lord, one baptism, and one God, so there is one faith. †

Charles E. Cobb was editor of *Tennessee Valley Christian*, and is now deceased.



Jesus Christ, the Eternal Sacrifice

Betty Burton Choate

Our Response

In a thorough reading of the Scriptures we see the continual preparation, built layer on layer, providing finally the open way for man to be reconciled to God. The **physical penalty** for sin has been paid in the death of Jesus; the **spiritual commitment** has been made, binding Him with mankind and making possible our sonship with God through His Sonship.

It is all there, laid out before us and sufficient to cover our every need. But, on the other hand, the blanket of forgiveness doesn't cover every human. How do we appropriate it for ourselves? **How do we, individually, respond to God?** John 6:45 says,

"...everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me."

Among the world's population, not all really learn from the Father's message. 2 Thessalonians 2:14 teaches,

"He called you by our gospel...."

So, the Father's message — the gospel — calls to our hearts. What is the gospel? It is defined in 1 Corinthians 15:3,4 as:

"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures...."

The Commitment

Some people hear the message and reject it.

Others hear, and its call cuts their hearts. Their response is an outpour-

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

ing of emotional love toward God, accompanied by the desire to submit their will to His. They have reached a turning point in their lives, and they know it.

Sadly, many mistakenly believe that *their* change of heart and the happiness they feel because of their new love for God are *evidences that they have experienced forgiveness of their sins* and have been born spiritually into the family of God.

Does a change of heart, in the sinner, mean that he is forgiven by God? Does God require that he do more?

No doubt, the turning point, the moment of commitment, is a crucial part of the process of salvation. When, in our study of the Scriptures, can we see a parallel event? Is it not in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus reached the point of ultimate commitment to man, when He struggled to submit to the will of God even though it meant the horror of being made sin?

Just as He had to face that decision, and either choose us or reject us, just as He had to submit completely to God's will, each of us has to face that decision. We must choose God as our Father or reject Him. We must bring our human wills under submission to Him. As Christ chose to bear our sins, we must choose to allow Him to take them from us, with the desire not to

serve sin any longer.

But, suppose Christ had stopped with the mental commitment in the garden. Reflect back to that time: His struggle was over; He was at peace with Himself. Does this not describe many hearts today when they turn to Him in love, with the desire to be a forgiven child of God? If He had stopped then, there would have been **no cross, no shed blood, no atoning price paid for**

sin, no way made possible for us to become the children of God.

In the same manner, those who stop at the point of their own personal commitment never go through the process of dying to sin and being buried with Christ and then being resurrected with Him.

Dying with Christ

How do we emulate Christ in His death for us? Romans 6:17,18 tells us:

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

Thus, we hear God's message, which is the death, burial and res-

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

urrection of Christ. The power of His love calls to our hearts as we learn and understand its meaning, bringing us to turn away from sin and to commit our souls to Him. **Then we obey from the heart a form of that doctrine.** What form does the gospel — the death, burial, and resurrection — take in our own lives? Romans 6:3-11 answers this question:

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

So, if we want to appropriate to our individual souls **the sonship** made possible through the death of Jesus, we must **die** to sin in a pattern of His death, **be buried** with Him in baptism, and then **be resurrected** or raised from baptism to walk a new life as a new person in God’s family. It is of paramount importance that we, as individuals before God, understand that **there can be no new life without this death and new birth.**

The Birth of the “New Man”

What has happened in this process? In the death of the “old man” there has been a new birth. As Jesus taught,

“...unless one is born [again] of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:3-5).

Being born anew, a man is described in this way:

“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). †

Betty Burton Choate is the author of the study, Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice. This lesson, and the following six lessons by sister Choate, will be taken from that book.



**“I NO LONGER
BELIEVE IN
HELL”**

A. L. Franks

The reality of a never-ending burning place of punishment is generally rejected by the wicked world. Hardened sinners don't want to believe in Hell. *This is easy to understand.*

But, what is far more disturbing is to hear former faithful preachers publicly proclaim, “I no longer believe in a place called ‘Hell’ with its ‘flaming fire’ that torments forever.” *That’s hard to understand.*

Has God’s

Word changed? Did Jesus make a mistake? Did He deliberately mislead His followers in His teachings about Hell? It seems to me that either (1) Jesus was mistaken in His teachings about Hell, or (2) His teachings are misleading — *if* there is no eternal place of conscious punishment for the unrepentant wicked.

Our inability to understand fully the place called “Hell” in God’s plan may be due, in part, to the deficiencies of human reasoning compared to divine reasoning. God’s thoughts and ways are unlike those of mankind.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

They are far apart. Scripture states, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."* He continued, *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8,9). Paul wrote about the vast gap in the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man, saying, *"The foolishness of God is wiser than man..."* (1 Corinthians 1:25). However, the failure of frail man to understand, appreciate, or to comprehend does not nullify the reality of what God says or does.

Is Hell real? What did Jesus have to say about Hell? Read prayerfully His plea and His warnings in the "Sermon on the Mount" (see Matthew 5:22,29,30). (a) *"...whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (the hell of fire — ASV)."* (b) *"...profitable that one of thy members (an eye) should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."* (c) *"...profitable for thee that one of thy members (a hand) perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."*

Jesus also taught, as recorded in Matthew 10:28, *"...Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* In Matthew 13:42, He said, *"...cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."* He continued in

13:49,50 with these words: *"...sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."* In 18:8,9: *"...it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire... to be cast into hell fire."* The Lord also said, *"...there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"* (Matthew 24:51). Finally, Jesus spoke about the separation of the evil from the righteous in the day of judgment, saying, *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment..."* (25:46)

To say, "I don't understand Hell" is one thing. But to say, "I no longer believe in a never-ending, burning Hell" is another matter — a serious matter. Jesus taught the reality of consciousness after death, involving continuous pain (torment) in a place called "Hell". (Study also Luke 16:19ff.) How can I — how can any one — reject the plain teachings of our Lord?

God's Word has not changed. Hell is real. It is eternal. It is a place of suffering. Jesus said so. We may not fully understand, but may God help us to believe...to truly believe. †

A. L. Franks is the editor of *Magnolia Messenger* and lives in Kosciusko, Mississippi, USA.



How do you measure up?

And when you pray,
you shall not be like the hypocrites.
For they love to pray standing in the synagogues
and on the corners of the streets,
that they may be seen by men.
Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
But you, when you pray, go into your room,
and when you have shut your door,
pray to your Father who is in the secret place;
and your Father who sees in secret
will reward you openly.

And when you pray,
do not use vain repetitions as the heathen
do. For they think that they will be heard
for their many words.

Therefore do not be like them.
For your Father knows the things
you have need of before you ask Him.

Matthew 6:5-8





Agents in Scriptural Conversion

W. Douglass Harris

SALVATION

Conversion is “a change from one state to another, a spiritual or moral change which accompanies the turning of a sinner from his sins to God” (Webster). This is a very controversial subject. One theory says that conversion is wholly an act of God (Calvinism); another says it is entirely the work of man. As is generally the case, the truth lies in between these two extremes.

As our topic suggests, there are five agents involved in every scriptural conversion, which we will discuss later. First, though, we will note some other scriptural facts about conversion.

Necessity of Conversion

Jesus replied to a question asked by His disciples, “*Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 18:3). How could the necessity of conversion be made clearer? No one should deceive himself into thinking that God will take him home to glory without his being converted. Other passages verify the same truth (see Acts 3:19; James 5:19,20). Man’s departure from God by his own transgression (Isaiah 59:1,2) makes repentance and the return to God necessary. If man had not gone away from his Creator, there would be no need of talking about his being brought back to God.

Object of Conversion: Spiritual Truth

Numerous passages affirm that that to which we must be converted is the **truth** of God’s Word. Jesus said, “*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free*” (John 8:32). For further proof of this see John 14:6; James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15; and John 17:17. (**Note:** Hopefully the reader will check all these passages to determine if we have made the right application.)

The truth of God’s Word is the instrument used by the Holy Spirit in conversion (Ephesians 6:17). Everything that is said to be done by the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of alien sinners and the sanctification of Christians is also said to be done by the Word. What is the harmony? Answer: Ephesians 6:17. God’s revealed Word is the instrument or tool that the Holy Spirit uses in conversion, and He does not operate independently of it.

Agents in Scriptural Conversion

The Holy Spirit, who revealed the truth to inspired men (John 14:26;16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13), has given us the Scriptures, which the sinner can read and understand (Ephesians 3:1-7). The Spirit does not bypass His Word to bring about conversion in some mysterious way.

The Apostles of Christ confirmed the Word by miraculous signs done through the power of the

SALVATION

Holy Spirit (Hebrews 2:1-4; Mark 16:17-20; 2 Corinthians 12:12). This Word was fully proved to be of God by those miraculous signs in the first century and it needs no further confirmation. Thus, there is no further need for miracles.

The preacher proclaims the truth (Word) revealed by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by the apostles (Romans 10:14-17). Human agency in the proclamation of saving truth cannot be bypassed in scriptural conversion. In every example of conversion recorded in the book of Acts (the book of conversions), human agency was involved in proclaiming the saving Word. There is not an exception. Can one read the Bible and learn the truth? Of course, but the apostles and other inspired men would still be involved, through the power of their written message.

The church (another agent) supports the preaching of the truth (1 Timothy 3:14,15; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Acts 11:22). A plurality of congregations can do this by working together, without destroying the autonomy of any congregation. If one congregation can send a preacher to assist another congregation in evangelism (Acts 11:22), what is the difference in principle than that of sending money?

Alien sinners obey the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit, con-

firmed by the apostles, **proclaimed** by human agency, and **supported** by the church (1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Romans 6:16,17). This involves more than mental assent and saying, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart."

Unless all of these agents are involved in conversion, there has been no scriptural conversion. God has provided this checklist by which we can verify the genuineness of our conversion.

A Threefold Change Involved

Confusion is caused by a failure to analyze the process by which we are saved. Conversion involves a three-fold change — **the heart, the life, and the state.**

Faith changes the heart from loving sin to loving God (Acts 15:7-9); **repentance changes the life** (2 Corinthians 7:10). Many mistake repentance for conversion, but repentance is only an attitude that leads one to *complete* the ultimate re-making of his life. The final step — **baptism**, upon the proper prerequisites — **changes the state or relationship** (Matthew 28:19 ASV; Acts 2:38). All of this is accomplished by the five agents discussed in the earlier portion of this article. There is nothing that is miraculous or mysterious about scriptural conversion. †

W. Douglass Harris, a faithful preacher of the Gospel, is now deceased.

Life Is in the Son

Joe C. Magee

“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:11-13).

Among those who claim to be followers of Christ there are two extremes of thought. There are those who affirm that once a person believes in Christ and “receives Him into their heart” that there is nothing they can do to jeopardize that relationship. On the other hand, there are those who believe and serve diligently the God of grace, and yet do so with a nagging uncertainty as to their security in Christ. Both are afraid to move toward a middle ground; one for fear that they may be guilty of failing to trust in the grace of God and the other for fear that they may move too close to the “once saved always saved” position.

Why can't we just take the Holy Spirit at His word? When John, guided by the Holy Spirit, has written that God has given us eternal life, we should accept it as fact without trying to relegate it to the prospective future. We are eternal beings. We begin our

eternal relationship with God upon our obedience; and, while our present realm is temporary, our present relationship is not without eternal connection. Do we not have the present earnest of the Spirit that we are God's children? Do we not have the advocacy of Christ in our prayers? Why are we instructed to pray to an eternal God through an eternal Savior if we ourselves are not in an eternal relationship with the Him?

We must remember, however, that this relationship is not without condition. John reminds us that this eternal life is in God's Son. We must not only get *into His Son* through baptism (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27), but we must *continue an obedient life in Him*. To be saved from our past sins by baptism (1 Peter 3:21) and then flit through life like some irresponsible firefly is absurd. Equally absurd is to go through life quaking in our boots, wondering if we measure up to God's grace. **If we measured up, grace wouldn't be grace!**

The purpose for John's letter in the first place is that, *“And these things we write to you that your joy may be full”* (1 John 1:4).

So be it.



Joe Magee is a preacher of the church of Christ in Shawnee, Oklahoma, USA.

A Servant of the Church

David Tarbet

of its mission in the world, and work hard to see it enjoy the unity, peace, and spirituality it deserves.

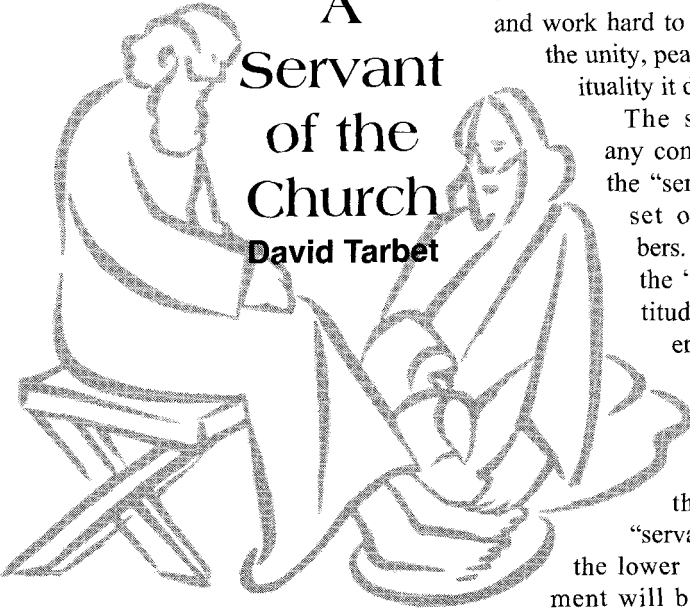
The strength of any congregation is the "servant" mindset of its members. The greater the "servant" attitude, the greater the good to be accomplished.

On the other hand, the lower the "servant" attitude, the lower the commitment will be to see the

church do well and make progress in the world. Churches composed of people with a high level of "servant" loyalty will have fewer internal squabbles and more peace; fewer people asking, "What's in it for me?" and more people asking, "How can the Lord be glorified in my life?"

Ultimately, each of us needs to ask ourself this question: "Am I truly a servant of God's church which meets in this place? What am I doing each day to serve my brothers and sisters?" †

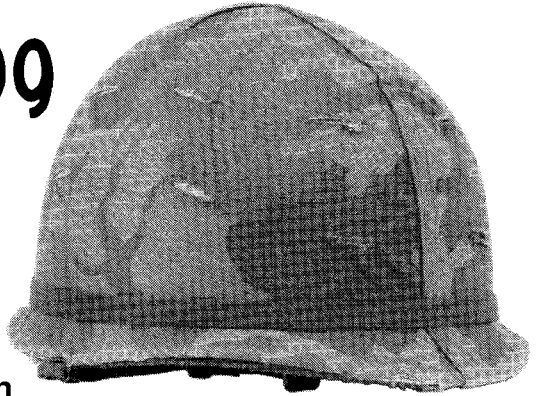
David Tarbet preaches for the White Rock congregation in Dallas, Texas, USA.



Paul said he was a "servant of the church" (Colossians 1:25). This is a very interesting figure of speech. A "servant" does not belong to himself, but to his master. His will is to do his master's will. He wants to please his master. He has a sense of responsibility in accomplishing his tasks, a sense of accountability for the way he approaches his duties. A servant is a humble man.

We, too, are servants of the church. We seek its best interests, make sacrifices to extend its borders, pray diligently for the success

Reaching forth



Allan E. Flaxman

When Adolph Hitler's mighty armies drove all before them to the beaches of Dunkirk, England, the British Empire faced what they probably still regard as their "darkest hour". The land forces were stranded on the beaches, with the ocean in front of them and the German hoards bearing down on them from behind.

It is true that those British soldiers were rescued by a flotilla of little, privately-owned boats, but the nation was now threatened with a German invasion, and ill equipped to repel it. Winston Churchill was then Prime Minister of England, and had he come "on air" with a doleful, pessimistic message, all might have truly been lost. Fortunately for all of us, he did **not** do that. Rather, he said, with a firm and courageous voice, "We will fight them on the beaches, we will fight them in the streets, we

will never surrender." His stirring, inspiring, motivating message gave encouragement and hope to a nation on its knees, and brought them forward to final victory.

In the days of the church's infancy, despite remarkable growth, there was much reason to expect despondency and even pessimism. Think of it. On numerous occasions the apostles were imprisoned (Acts 5:18), Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7), James was beheaded (Acts 12:2), the Jerusalem church was scattered abroad, leaving only the apostles there to begin all over again (Acts 8:1).

But pessimism and despondency did **not** prevail. Though Christians were scattered far and wide, they, with amazing courage, "*went everywhere preaching the gospel*" (Acts 8:4). Amongst all this persecution, Paul and Barnabas

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set off on their missionary journey (Acts 13). What a positive, optimistic, courageous attitude in the face of enormous opposition! Later, the apostle Paul wrote with great conviction, *"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark..."* (Philippians 3:13,14).

What should our attitude be in this 21st century? There is much to discourage us. The Lord's church is showing serious signs of weakening. Far too often there appears to be an all-too-frail defense of the truth. How often, these days, do we hear the cry of "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where

the Bible is silent," and/or "For us, the Bible alone is final and binding," and/or "No book but the Bible, no creed but Christ," and other such words of determination to stand firmly on the Will of God? Not nearly enough!

Let's take the courageous attitude of the infant church. We rub shoulders with the lost every day. May God give us the courage we need to mount a real effort to reach these lost with the gospel message which alone can snatch them from the flames of hell before it is forever too late. †

Allan E. Flaxman is a gospel preacher in New South Wales, Australia.

A Word to Change the World

**Give us a watch word for the hour —
A thrilling word, a word of power;
A battle cry, a flaming breath,
A call to conquest or to death;
A word to rouse the church from rest,
To heed the Master's high behest.
The call is given, ye hosts arise,
The watch word is **EVANGELIZE!****

**To fallen men, a dying race,
Make known the gift of Gospel grace.
The world that now in darkness lies,
O church of Christ, **EVANGELIZE!****

— Author Unknown

Editor's Note:

We would like to continue with the account brother Grimm wrote concerning the existence of Christians in many places throughout the centuries following the establishment of the church in Jerusalem in AD 33. Because true Christians have always been in the minority, their history has often been ignored, even while many were dying martyrs' deaths as "heretics" at the hands of religious people.



Persecution and Endurance

Dr. Hans Grimm

The story continues...

In Zurich in 1521 two followers of Zwingli, Felix Manz and Konrad Grebel, announced the following thesis:

"It is necessary to separate oneself from the evil way and found a pure church and communion of the genuine children of God, who have the spirit, and are ruled and led by him."

The church of the Lord, they said, must now, after it has run wild, be gathered completely anew according to the pattern of the New Testament. The true Christian life, continued they, begins with baptism, but only that one who believes can be baptized. Infants cannot believe, therefore cannot be baptized.

A bookdealer in Zurich, Andreas auf der Stuelze, called their attention to the remains of churches of secret believers in the Bernese Highlands from whose lineage he had sprung. Those religious leaders made contact with these worshippers — even though hesitatingly since there was a suspicion that some of them were friends of the mutinous fanatical preacher, Thomas Muenzer — but as they became convinced that the sober people who relied only on the Word of God and accepted the Word as the only standard for the

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truth, and that they did not have the slightest thing to do with the mystic pre-millennialism of the prophet from Zwingli, they joyfully opened their hearts to their influence.

On January 25, 1525, Manz baptized in Lake Zurich Georg Majakob-Blaurock, former monk of Grisons. Two years later, almost to the day, at the recommendation of Zwingli and at the instruction of the Great Council, Manz was drowned in the Limmat River.

The small number of believers scattered. In the upper Black Forest Mountains area, in the mountain regions on both sides of the Rhine between Constance and Basel, in the imperial cities of Regensburg, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Memmingen, Linden, and Strasbourg, in Tyrol, Stiermark, Salzburg, in Austria, Moravia and Slovakia they found comrades of nearer and more distant ways of thinking religiously, with whom they could pray but with whom also they had to come to agreement, for the Anabaptists, as their adversaries called them, but as a whole hardly to be considered as a direct continuation of the pre-reformation churches of Christ; more than that, these united too many mutually contradicting elements in their ranks.

The 500,000 and more baptized believers (Anabaptists) in Central Europe did have in common with the churches of Christ the rejection of infant baptism, the union of church and the state, the rejection of the oath and the refusal to serve as judge; their rejection of the worship of images, and the organization of their churches; nevertheless they differed sharply in some other matters. Their opinion, for example, that all men, Christians and non-Christians, were endowed with a certain quantity of the Holy Spirit, which they usually named the "inner Light," and that this inner Light was a real voice of God which could lead to salvation to all who listened to it — this idea led them to fanatical "revelations" and to dangerous "visions," and finally this resulted in their belief that the Holy Scriptures still needed the complement through personal messages of the Spirit of God to sinful men.

The Anabaptists' feverish expectation of the thousand years kingdom of Christ on earth standing immediately before them, and their fiery wish to help realize this empire by restoration of the falsely so-called apostolic communism brought them into close union with the Dutch Baptists who in 1533 and 1535 in Muenster undertook to put an end to the evil one through the power of weapons, and to bring to reality the New Zion under almost complete rejection of all New Testament teachings, but under all the stronger approach to the Old Testament ideas.

With this state of things it is not surprising that the imperial parliament

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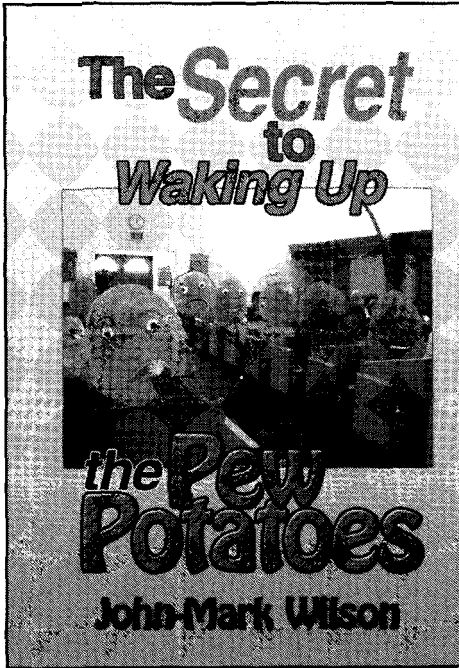
took the sharpest measures against all sects which spoke against infant sprinkling and for baptism only upon faith. They were declared “dangerous enemies of all spiritual and secular rule,” and were condemned to death all together. The result of this decree was the complete eradication not only of the Anabaptists who assented to the use of the sword and were fanatically premillennialists, but also of the sternly scriptural churches of God in Central Europe.

Among the approximately 100,000 executed as Anabaptists and opponents of church-statism of all shades, some 42,000 primitive evangelicals were executed, tortured to death, or died from hunger in prisons in the Netherlands, Friesland, Westphalia, in the Mountainland, in Thuringen, in Rheingau, the Palatinate, in Alsace, Mainfranken, Upper Bavaria, Austria, Salzburg, Carinthia, Carniola, Hauenstein, Tyrol, and Switzerland, just to mention some of the most important centers of persecutions of Christians. The “Little Flock” in Bohemia was just about completely annihilated, and the same fate befell the defenseless Christians in the Palatinate and in Alsace. Only in Hesse and in the Free Imperial City of Strasbourg no funeral piles blazed. Here the first Hessian reformer, the former Franciscan Lambert of Avignon — who on his mother’s side descended from Catharist circles — and in Strasbourg the great Mountain-and-Water Pilgrim Marbeck of Tyrol, who had joined the primitive evangelicals, these two had exercised such restraining influence that procedures against Baptists and New Testament Christians were “only” imprisonment (in some cases, imprisonment for life), confiscation of property and banishment.

It is not superfluous to point out that by no means was it the Roman church alone which poured out in streams “heretic” blood. The new reformation churches of Lutheran and Zwinglian or Calvinistic stamp vied with the Roman church in the rooting out of the disturbers of graveyard quiet. These churches, under the protection of the basic principle *Cuius regio, eius religio* (The sovereign decides about the religion), had begun to expand in the “Holy Empire of German Nations.” Even Melanchthon, who was praised as the gentle Lutheran man of God, gave out for his sovereign ruler theological decisions which were intended to justify the execution of defenseless advocates of baptism. †

Excerpt from Tradition and History of the Early Churches of Christ in Central Europe by Dr. Hans Grimm, translated by Dr. H.L. Schug, and printed by Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 210876, Bedford, Texas, 76095-7876, USA.

Note: The Bibliography will be given at the conclusion of the series of articles. Editor.



How to Develop Your "Recapturing the Vision" Program

Part Four: Changing the Pulpit Potato into a Motivator

A preacher has the choice of being an office preacher or a community preacher. The office preacher is one who stays primarily in his office. He reads, writes, works on the computer and occasionally pursues souls outside the building. The community preacher is much more mobile. He travels throughout the city looking for opportunities to befriend people. He searches for needs that the church can meet and friendships that he can cultivate. In order for a church to see great growth, the Pulpit Potato must exit the potato bin and mingle among the people. There are a number of ways to accomplish this which will be discussed later on.

As the visitors begin to fill the building, the lessons should be written and delivered with them in mind. The morning lesson should be geared toward the un-churched, with an emphasis on basic Bible truths. It should have a comfortable, motivational style, which when delivered in love, will effect great change in the lives of the listeners.

Another thing that can be tried is to have one Sunday each month when the preacher delivers a "How To" message. Topics could be

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addressed such as family, Christian marriages, teenagers, the power of prayer, etc. Choose topics that can be used to draw a large crowd. Print some handouts and have the members who are interested in growth invite everyone in the community that they come across to attend.

During the beginning of the Recapturing the Vision program, the preacher needs to prepare lessons for Sunday evening that will excite the pew potatoes about evangelism. They need to be reminded in every Sunday service that all members need to work together if they want to succeed.

The following pages contain a small compilation of possible sermon outlines:

Waking Up from Our Sleep of Deception

Ephesians 5:14

I. James 1:22

- A. We must be doers, being deceived no longer.
- B. Must once again be people of the Book.
- C. Must change focus outward.
- D. Expand emphasis from simply assembling.

II. 1 John 3:17

- A. Must have hearts of compassion.
- B. The world is in dire need of salvation!
- C. God loves the needy (Psalm 146:5-10).
- D. Proverbs 11:30; Matthew 7:24-27; Mark 1:41.

III. Acts 5:42

- A. Must be faithful to inherit heaven.
- B. Can't be faithful without evangelism (Acts 5:42).
- C. Teach publicly and house-to-house (Acts 20:20).
- D. Commanded to teach everywhere (Acts 8:4).

Conclusion:

We need to wake up! We need to reach our community by teaching both publicly and house-to-house! There are two important reasons why: One — because that is what Jesus commands (Matthew 28:19-20). Two — because we want others, as well as ourselves, to inherit heaven (John 2:48; Romans 2:6; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 22:14).

Improving on the Adult Class

Luke 16:8

I. 1 John 2:3

- A. We know Jesus only if we keep His commandments.
- B. We are commanded to teach (Matthew 28:20).
- C. We pass out meat and forget babes in Christ.
- D. Most will not win one soul to Christ this year.

II. Acts 2:42

- A. Disciples continued teaching “steadfastly”.
- B. Basic Bible verses must be taught and learned.
- C. Time is of great importance (Revelation 22:12).
- D. Must follow pattern (Hebrews 8:5; 2 Timothy 1:13).

III. Hosea 4:6

- A. God’s people destroyed for lack of knowledge.
- B. People need the light of knowledge (Psalm 119:105).
- C. Knowledge brings understanding (Ephesians 3:3,4).
- D. Bible class must be balanced, i.e., Milk and Meat.

Conclusion:

Our Bible classes need to be modified. They need to not only be concerned with teaching Bible texts, but also how to put them into practice! If we don’t know how to use knowledge, it is useless. We

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will never grow toward making new disciples (Matthew 28:19) until we empower members with how and why saving souls is Christ's goal (Luke 19:10)!

On Fire for the Lord

Ecclesiastes 9:10

I. Colossians 3:23

- A. Must obey as if Christ were standing next to us.
- B. Excitement builds only after we begin!
- C. Explosion of fire draws more attention than a candle.
- D. Be zealous to build up the church (1 Corinthians 14:12).

II. Colossians 1:23

- A. Gospel was preached to all of humanity.
- B. Early disciples ran to teach the lost (Acts 8:30).
- C. Not just from a pulpit (Acts 20:20; Romans 16:5).
- D. All members are preachers (Acts 8:4).

III. Galatians 6:9

- A. Do not give up on people or yourself!
- B. We must find the good ground (Luke 8:9,10).
- C. Through patience and perseverance, souls are won.
- D. Some will not obey Christ, but we must plant.

Conclusion:

Fire is something that moves very rapidly through dead fields of brush. Anything in its path is soon conquered. We can learn a great deal from fire. Our spiritual fire should burn even more brightly! We should be zealous to spread throughout our community, reaching those who are dead in sin! We should let nothing stop us from our purpose. We can conquer and overcome (Romans 8:28)!

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Teaching One-on-One

Acts 20:20

I. Example of Individual Evangelism:

- A. Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3; Mark 16:15; Luke 19:1-10; John 4; John 8:1-11; John 9; Acts 5:42; Acts 8:4; Acts 20:20; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Philippians 1:14; and Philippians 2:14-16.
- B. Should we not follow these examples?

II. John 15:2,8

- A. Teach one-on-one if we want to reach heaven.
- B. God wants all men saved (1 Timothy 2:3,4).
- C. God uses us to carry out His desire (2 Corinthians 4:7).
- D. If we don't carry the message, who will?

III. Philippians 4:1

- A. There is great joy in soul-winning!
- B. There is no greater joy (3 John 3,4).
- C. Shows God we are like Christ (Matthew 10:25).
- D. It helps make our calling and election sure!

Conclusion:

People must be won to Christ, one soul at a time. With millions of people lost all around us, we should be motivated to begin. A sobering fact is that another person dies outside of Christ every 12 seconds. In a 30-minute lesson 150 people are now unteachable, doomed to an eternity in Hell. And yet our air is cool, our pews are soft and our hammock is prepared. We are wasting time! God's and our's! We must Wake Up for Christ!

Overcoming Our Excuses

Romans 8:28

I. Some Excuse-Makers from the Bible

- A. Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:12,13).

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- B. Aaron (Exodus 32:22).
- C. Saul (2 Samuel 15:24).
- D. One-Talent Man (Matthew 25:24).

II. Some Excuses We Use

- A. We pay a preacher to work for us.
All are to evangelize (Acts 8:4).
- B. I don't have enough time.
Must make time (Hebrews 5:12).
- C. My education level is too low.
Christ chose fishermen (Matthew 4:18,19).
- D. I am just too old.
Can't start after death. So when?

III. James 2:17,18

- A. Faith without works is dead and profits nothing.
- B. There are many examples of faith plus works:
 - 1. Andrew (John 1:34-42).
 - 2. Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 15:35-40).
 - 3. Philip (Acts 8).

Conclusion:

We must be reminded that God will not accept excuses. He does not make deals. He is no respecter of persons.

Along with these types of messages, the preacher should keep the area colorful within the building. Everything should be as bright and exciting as possible. He should wear bright ties and put a smile on his face. He should always walk around before every service and shake the hand of each visitor present. As this is done, he should introduce himself and show just how excited he is to see them!

Worship sheets should be passed out every Sunday. The worship sheet should have the topic of the lesson for that service, questions which will be answered during the preaching and the current goal. This paper will function to encourage everyone to listen and take

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notes. It also gives the member something to take with him to give to anyone he thinks might need the information later on in the week.

Pew Potato Power Points

We should be zealous to spread like fire throughout our community, reaching those who are dead in sin! We should let nothing stop us from our purpose. We can conquer and overcome (Romans 8:28)!

Review Questions

1. What are the two types of preachers?

2. Which type is more effective in evangelism?

3. What type of lessons should be delivered on Sunday mornings?

4. Why should everything be bright and colorful?

5. Are smiles contagious?

(Chapter five of John-Mark Wilson's study book and work-guide, **The Secret to Waking Up the Pew Potatoes.**)

John-Mark Wilson works with the Apple Hill Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

An Evangelistic



Church

Dwight Fuqua

Our Lord had a mission on earth. He came *“to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10). He went to sinners and called them to repentance (Luke 5:31,32). He gave His life to save us.

As His disciples, we share the same mission. We are to *“go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in”* to the Father’s house (Luke 14:23). The Gospel is to be preached to *“all the*

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nations" and to "every creature" (Matthew 28:18,19; Mark 16:15, 16). We must devote our lives to saving the lost!

Early Christians accepted and met the challenge of world evangelism. Beginning at Jerusalem, the Gospel spread to "*all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). In about thirty-five years the Gospel was preached to "*every creature under heaven*" (Colossians 1:23). It happened because Christians "*went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:4).

There was a great evangelistic thrust during the Restoration Movement in this country. People were urged to lay aside denominational partisanship and to unite in Christ. The church became the fastest growing religious movement in America. It happened because neighbor taught neighbor the simple truths of the Gospel.

In recent years, the flame of evangelistic fervor has all but gone out. We have second-guessed our motives, criticized our methods, and surrendered our distinctiveness. We now preach only to ourselves. We have imprisoned ourselves within our own walls. We are a cloister in the community and a chameleon in the world. The emphasis is upon convenience and entertainment, not conviction and evangelism. We are not growing — at least the way we

should be growing!

What can we do? What must we do? We must become evangelistic! How do we do it? Here are some suggestions:

We must restore the joy of our salvation (Psalm 51:12,13). It is only when we know the joy of salvation that we reach out to others.

We must place greater emphasis on winning souls (Proverbs 11:30). It must become a priority.

We must employ a total approach in evangelism; teaching the lost, ministering to spiritual needs, keeping those converted, restoring the erring, and teaching faithful men to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

We must utilize every means of evangelism; mass media, Bible school, pulpit, campaigns, meetings, seminars, workshops, correspondence, etc. Yet, the emphasis must be upon the personal teaching of our friends.

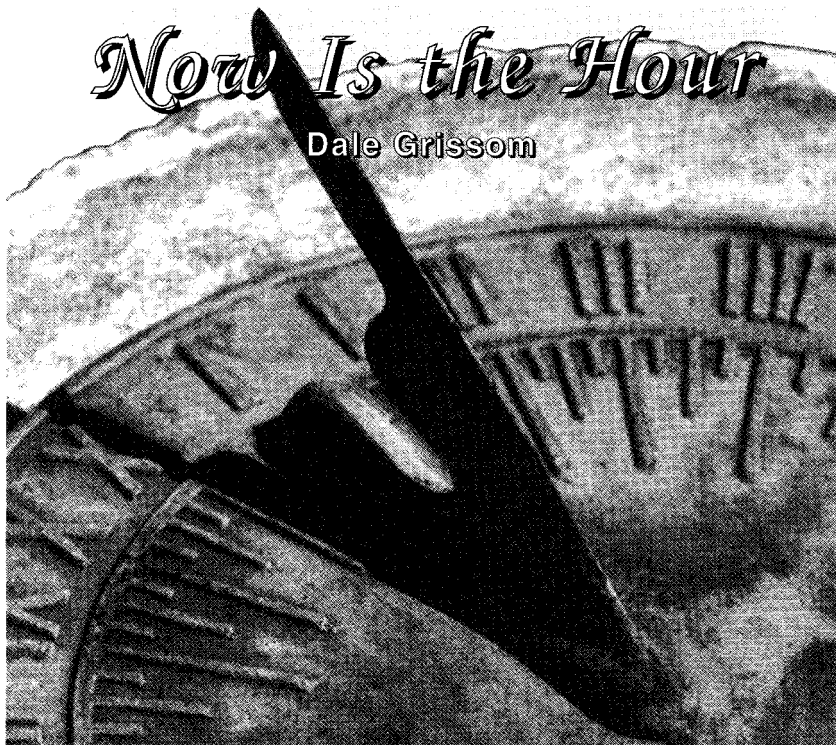
In his book, **Winning Through Caring**, Matthew Prince wrote, "The Great Commission is Christ's purpose for us, His main business, His heartbeat," and "every child of God is a directly commissioned representative of Jesus Christ."

My brothers, let us rise up and build a great evangelistic church! †

Dwight Fuqua preaches for the Findlay congregation in Sparta, Tennessee, USA.

Now Is the Hour

Dale Grissom



We are filled with joy and enthusiasm when we obey the Gospel of Christ, ready and determined to give our all to Him. As time passes, however, that zeal dwindles. We may find ourselves drifting along and becoming lukewarm. Jesus told the church of the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:15,16: *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."* We must never lose sight

of our responsibility to give of our time and talents to the Lord.

It is so easy to get caught up in the activities of day-to-day living. We intend to give more time to the Lord, but days pass and we fail to put the Lord first. We allow the cares of this world to come before the Lord. The excuse is often made, "Just as soon as I can regain control of my life, I will give more time to serving the Lord." When will we learn that we must *give the Lord control* in order to know the inner peace for which we all long?

God paid the greatest price, made the supreme sacrifice, in order to save mankind — He gave the life of His precious Son. The home He has prepared for all His faithful children after judgment (Hebrews 9:27) is a prize we cannot earn, but will be given to those who are faithful in doing His will. The apostle Paul spoke concerning this in the second recorded letter to Timothy, his “*son in the faith*”: “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at the last day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*” (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

God requires us to be totally committed to Him: “*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*” (Deuteronomy 6:5). Nothing short of putting the Lord first in our lives will satisfy Him.

May we strive to use ourselves up in service to the Lord. There is hard work to be done if we are to convert the lost in our community and reach out to the rest of the world. Every soul is precious; each one we win to Christ will have the opportunity of spending eternity in heaven. Now is the hour! †

Dale Grissom works with the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.

So Little Time

So little time to say the things
You'd really like to say —
Before you even find the words,
The time just slips away.

So little time to do the things
You feel that you must do.
So treasure, like the purest gold
The time God's given you.

So little time to dream your dreams,
For youth has passed its prime,
And all too soon you realize
That there's ... so little time.

So little time to reach the height
To which you're bound to climb,
For swiftly pass the waning years,
And there's ... so little time.

So little time for past regrets,
And less, to make amends.
Yet God can heal the deepest wounds
In chosen, cherished friends.

So little time to share God's love
And beauty here on earth,
And know, before His endless time,
Their meaning and true worth.

Oh, yes, there is so little time
To seek the hidden door
That opens up to heaven's gate
Where time's forevermore.

— Miriam Barker



Two-thirds of the people in our nation now live in or near big cities. The other third are on the expressways looking for the right exit.



The doctor called the elderly farmer aside and told him that he was afraid that his wife's mind was completely gone.

The farmer answered, "I'm not surprised. She has been giving me a piece of it daily for forty years!"



The Sunday School teacher had told her class the story of Joseph and Mary's flight to Egypt with the baby Jesus. She asked them to draw a picture representing that. She was slightly puzzled when one little fellow gave her a picture of three adults and a baby in an airplane on

the way to Egypt. She explained to him that she understood two of the adults were Mary and Joseph, but asked who the third adult was. His answer "Oh, that Pontius the pilot."



A husband read an article to his wife about how many words women use a day — 30,000 to a man's 15,000. The wife replied, "The reason has to be because we have to repeat everything to men. The husband then turned to his wife and asked, "What?"



Creative signs

On a septic tank truck: "Yesterday's meals on wheels."

On a plumber's truck: "We repair what your husband fixed."

On a towing company truck: "We don't charge an arm and a leg. We want tows."

In the yard of a funeral home: "Drive carefully. We'll wait."

On a fence: "Salesmen welcome! Dog food is expensive."



Don't let worries get the best of you. Remember, Moses started out as a basket case.

PROVERBS 17:22

A man and his wife were having an argument about who should brew the coffee each morning. The wife said he should do it, and of course the husband said that the wife should do it. He explained, "You are in charge of cooking around here and you should do it, because that is your job."

The wife replied, "No, you should do it, and besides, it is in the Bible that the an should brew the coffee. The man indigently demanded that she show him where in the Bible such a thing was even suggested! She fetched the Bible, and opened the New Testament and showed him at the top of several pages, that it indeed says, **HEBREWS.**



When a Bible salesman was asked how he consistently sold more Bibles than anyone else, he replied: "I jjust aaasked eeeach pprospect if he wwanted to bbbuy a Bbbible, or hhhave me rrrread it to hhhim."



People are funny. They want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church building.

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older. Then it dawned on me — they were cramming for their finals. Others are just hoping God grades on the curve.



A boy who loved to go fishing with his dad was reciting the 23rd Psalm in Sunday School. When he got to the fourth verse, he said, "Thy rod and Thy reel, they comfort me."



Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited — until you try to sit in their pews.



God didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close.



Helping his wife wash the dishes, a minister protested, "This isn't a man's job." "Oh yes it is", his wife retorted, quoting 2 Kings 21:13: "*I will wipe Jerusalem as a MAN wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.*"

Put On and Put Off

Francis David

When a person believes in Jesus and accepts Him as his saviour through obedience to the commands of the gospel, the Bible tells us that he becomes a new creature. Paul says, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation"* (2 Corinthians 5:17,18).

Now, when you are a Christian, you must know how to walk and live in this world. But we must know that we are *different from the world*. The Bible says, *"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise"* (Ephesians 5:15).

When you become a follower of Christ, He says, *"You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives*

light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:13). A Christian is like salt and light, and he or she must know how to behave.

We are *in the world*, but we are **not of the world** (John 15:19). A Christian does not love the world. John writes, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever"* (1 John 2:15-17).

Today, the world is going through some very difficult times. Religion is taken lightly. Spirituality is no longer considered important. Sin is tolerated and accepted as the norm. Morals have no value. The bad things or the ugly things, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, are taken lightly. In some places, living together outside of marriage is considered the style.

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Drunkenness is counted as an evening's entertainment. Children don't honor their parents. Senior citizens are not viewed with respect.

The Bible condemns these attitudes and sins. Long ago, the apostle Paul foretold, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that in the latter days such things would take place. He said, *"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away"* (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Being a child of God, you must set your mind on things above, not on the things on earth. When you obeyed Christ and you were baptized in the watery grave, you died to your old sinful life (Colossians 3:2,3; Romans 6). Therefore, the Bible says, *"You must put to death your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which once*

you walked when you lived among them." (Colossians 3:5,6).

He further says that *"as children of God you must **put off** all these things such as anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another since you have **put off** the old man with his deeds and have **put on** the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. Since you are the children of God, you must as elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, bearing with one another, forgiving one another...But above all these things, **put on** love, which is the bond of perfection"* (Colossians 3:5-14).

Dear friend, where are you today? Have you put off your old sinful life? You can do it today. If you want to be a new creation in Jesus, then come to Him, believe in Him, repent of your old sinful life, and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27). You can begin a new life in Jesus, and I am sure you will not regret it. In fact, I am sure you will be glad you did. How wonderful it is to become dead to sin and alive in Christ Jesus! †

Francis David is a Gospel preacher in New Delhi, India.

WHERE ARE THE ATHEISTS?

Mike Benson

During times of disaster and emergency, our collective conscience focuses on the great losses of life and property...The state of Florida in the USA was recently devastated by a series of powerful hurricanes. The cumulative effects of Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne prompted President Bush to ask Congress for \$7.1 billion in Federal funding for repairs and clean-up.

It has been interesting to note all of the religious groups that have also stepped up to help with the recovery. Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, Lutherans, Catholics and churches of Christ are just a few of the religious bodies that have mobilized volunteers to assist. These church-related groups work in concert with the federal government (i.e., FEMA) in an effort to relieve the hurting masses. They donate goods and clothing, provide child care, offer stress-management counseling services, provide temporary shelter, repair housing, set up food kitchens and shower facilities, furnish laundry details, provide hot meals, distribute cleaning supplies, send out chain-saw crews, and render other humanitarian aid.

While we commend those who

give of their time, effort and monies to disaster victims, I think we need to ask a question: **“Where are all of the atheists during this crucial time?”** Really... where are they? Thousands of humble people pledge their hands and hearts to storm relief, but not the atheists. Why not? How many meals do they serve? How many homes do they repair? How do they help carry the financial burden in the storm-stricken south? Where is their organizational structure for lifting the hurting wherever they may be?

You see, according to skeptics, religion is a *farce*. Faith is nothing but a *crutch* for the weak. Belief in God is a tragic *waste of time and energy*.

But, ironically, whenever fellow citizens cry out for support and care, the atheists are nowhere to be found. They look at the ravages of the storm and say, “There is no God. If there was, he wouldn’t allow such evil.” But religionists roll up their sleeves and ask, “How can we honor God in service?”

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and

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He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

“And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me,

sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

“Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord [at the judgment, there will be no atheists; all will acknowledge Him as Lord], when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’

“Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matthew 25:31-46).

Isn't that an enlightening account of the attitudes and behavior of the two groups? Unbelief has no redeeming value. It never wipes away a tear, it never rescues the fallen, it never renders loving assistance. It never does anything. It is selfish and self-serving. It lacks compassion.

I now think I understand David a little bit better when he said, *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’”* (Psalm 14:1a; cf. 10:4). Atheists can neither give, nor receive; all they can do is suffer and watch others do the same. How sad (1 John 3:17). †

Mike Benson is a Christian writer living in Eavnsville, Indiana, USA.

Robbers of Joy

Jerry L. Davidson



In the book of Philippians Paul uses the word “joy”, or some form of it, 19 times. In fact, “The Joyful Christian Mind” would be a good title for the book.

Paul would not be robbed of the joy he had in Christ. Neither should we be robbed of our joy in Him.

Paul would not allow **circumstances** to deprive him of his joy. He was in prison, but he rejoiced that the Gospel could be preached “*to the whole palace guard*” (1:13). Also, he would not allow insincere brethren to keep him from rejoicing in Christ. He said, “*whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice*” (verse 18).

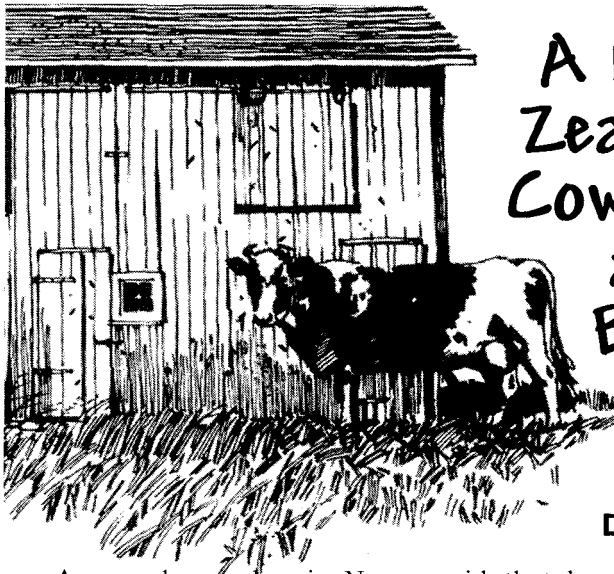
Paul would not allow **people problems** to rob him of his joy. He urged the brethren to “*fulfill (his) joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*” As Christians, we must not allow “*selfish ambition or conceit*” to rob us of our joy, “*but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*” (2:3).

Paul would not allow his **past and present position** to rob him of his joy. He wrote: “*We are the circumcision, who worship God in spirit, rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh*” (3:3). He could have boasted of his past life and accomplishments, but he said, “*What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ*” (3:7).

Paul would not allow **worry** to rob him of his joy. He admonishes us by saying, “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*” (4:4-6). We must not allow worry or anxiety to rob us of our valuable time, energy, and joy.

If anyone has reason to rejoice, it is the Christian, who is saved by the blood of Christ and lives in hope of heaven. †

Jerry L. Davidson is a teacher at Heritage Christian University in Florence, Alabama, USA.



A New Zealand Cowshed and Broken Cows Tails

Demar Elam

A gospel preacher in New Zealand who was a dairy farmer for years told the Bible class he was teaching about his "cowshed" temper and unforgiving spirit prior to becoming a Christian. He described how incredibly impatient he had been. As an example, he said that when he used to milk the cows they would invariably swish their tails around, flinging their tails and associated debris right in his face.

Now, anyone who knows much about cows knows that the reason they swish their tails back and forth is to chase away flies. The poor animals are doing only what comes naturally. They are not being vindictive in hitting anyone in the face with their tails.

But my New Zealand brother

said that he was angered and enraged at the cows. He wanted to punish them and show them who was boss. So, before he became a Christian, he would jump up and hit them, holler at them, slap them, curse them, and often he would grab their tails and twist them, and occasionally the tails would break!

Of course, all of this commotion caused the other cows to become nervous and jittery, and nothing went well after that. My friend was totally unforgiving towards the cows, and they were afraid of him.

However, after becoming a Christian he was determined to apply the principles of Christianity even in the cow shed. So, he started treating the cows differently. He

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said that when a cow would slap him across the face with its tail, he would get up and start gently petting the animal and speaking softly to it. In response, the cow would settle down and stop swishing its tail, and he noticed that the other cows seemed to quieten down, too, rather than becoming nervous and jittery as before. An attitude of patience and forgiveness worked wonders!

After hearing this story, I told him the cows must have been happy the day he was converted to Christ! He found that there are great lessons to be learned in a cowshed.

There are great lessons to be learned in a New Zealand cowshed concerning twisted and broken cow tails!

1. Temper is destructive of good, and wrath leads to sin. *“A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of wicked intentions is hated”* (Proverbs 14:17). *“A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention”* (Proverbs 15:18). *“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city”* (Proverbs 16:32). *“Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools”* (Ecclesiastes 7:9). *“Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath”* (Ephesians 4:26).

2. The tongue is “...a fire; a world of iniquity.” The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and *“sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”* (James 3:6). *“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit”* (Proverbs 15:4). *“...And he who has a perverse tongue falls into evil”* (Proverbs 17:20).

3. Speaking softly to people works the same as speaking softly to those cows. God’s word states, *“A soft answer turns away wrath. But a harsh word stirs up anger”* (Proverbs 15:1). Our Kiwi friend learned that by treating cows with gentleness and kindness he received a better response from them than by twisting their tails. When we use acts and words of gentleness and kindness to our fellows, they will respond to us in the same way. Paul told the Colossians that, as the elect of God, they were to put on the character of the new man, which included kindness.

4. Finally, this brother told us he learned to forgive in a New Zealand cowshed. He said he started forgiving the cows for slapping him in the face with their tails. He put on the new man, and from his studies of the Bible he learned the character of the new man in Christ meant that, *"as the elect of God, holy beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection"* (Colossians 3:12-14).

Who would have thought that so much could be learned in a New Zealand cowshed? This brother first practiced his Christianity on cows and he found that the fruit of the Spirit which is **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control** works, even in a cow shed with cows!

And he has learned in his Christian life how much more effectively they work in dealing with human beings! †

Dr. Demar Elam is Director of Open Door Ministry, President of Alpha Bible College, Director of Mission Studies at Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

HOW DO I WORSHIP GOD? I Sing Praises to Him.

In the Bible, in Revelation 5:9-14, a scene of heavenly worship is described. Before the throne of God, a host of angels and all living beings sing what is called a new song, praising and honoring God and His Son, Jesus: *"Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever."*

The heart that is overjoyed will burst into exultant singing, while sadness brings quiet and introspective songs to the lips. Since singing is such an integral part of the make-up of humans, and since it is described as continuing even in the heavenly scene, it is only fitting that it also be a part of our worship of God while in this world.

Colossians 3:16 says: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

Note: Singing can be done only with a human instrument. "Playing" is done on a mechanical instrument. The two are not the same.

Next: I PRAY TO HIM.



Advice
for
Preachers and Teachers
Tim Nichols

If you convince other folks
to believe as you do
By the force of your
personal charm,
They may come for a time,
But they'll turn on a dime,
And take a sweeter seducer's
frail arm.

If you use humor and wit to get them to sit
And listen with passionate ardor,
The jokes will grow stale,
They'll be ready to bail,
When another one tickles them harder.

If you impress them with wealth
And your place in this world,
And you think the impression will stay,
Know that a greater will soon come along,
Who will swiftly impress them away.

If you draw them with wisdom that you have acquired
Through trials that made you believe,
Beware lest some other,
Who's older and wiser,
Gives them reason to think you're naive.

If you draft them with talent,
And prove you're the best,
Who can sing, play, and juggle at once,
Recall there's a master of some other art
Who is yearning to prove you're a dunce.

If you teach them the TRUTH,
And show why it's so
By giving them Scripture and reason,
They'll have a firm footing for faith that is real,
And able to stand any season.

If more truth they should find,
Once they've opened the mind,
You haven't a reason to fret.
That's the goal of it all, for men great and small,
To give what you've got and go get.

So be who you are while doing your best.
If you have talent, wit, wisdom, or fame,
Be grateful, and yet,
Please never let
These be the tools of the game.

When you're baiting your hook,
Use the truth of God's book.
Fake lures never work in the end.
Just teach it and live it and teach it some more,
When for the Master you're fishing for men.

Tim Nichols preaches for the Lord's church in Keyser, West Virginia, USA.

"Till Death Do Us Part"

Dalton Key

I remember hearing once about a preacher who, in the course of an otherwise normal marriage ceremony, had come to the point of saying, "Will you take this woman for better or for worse, in sickness or in health, for richer or for poorer?" The nervous groom, thinking it must be multiple choice, stammered, "I'll take better, healthy, and richer!"

Too many spouses look upon marriage as did this addled groom — fine, so long as everything goes well. But when problems come, when the new wears off and the honeymoon is over, when there are dirty dishes in the sink and a crying baby in the crib, then, sadly, the back door seems the best way out.

When marriages become as disposable as diapers, something has gone terribly wrong.

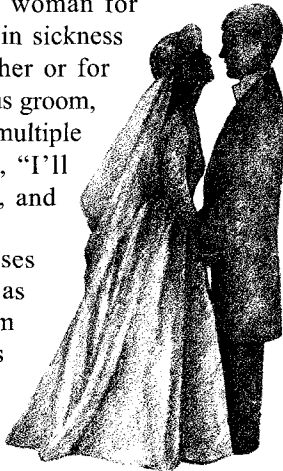
God intends marriage to be cel-

ebrated by one man and one woman for a lifetime, "till death do us part". While discussing marriage and divorce, Jesus referred back to

Eden's garden, when, *"He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh."* Building upon this foundation of scriptural, historical fact, He continued, *"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Matthew 19:4-6).

Husbands, wives, listen closely: the vows we have made before God and to each other have been made for life. †

Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the North Amarillo congregation in Amarillo, Texas, USA.

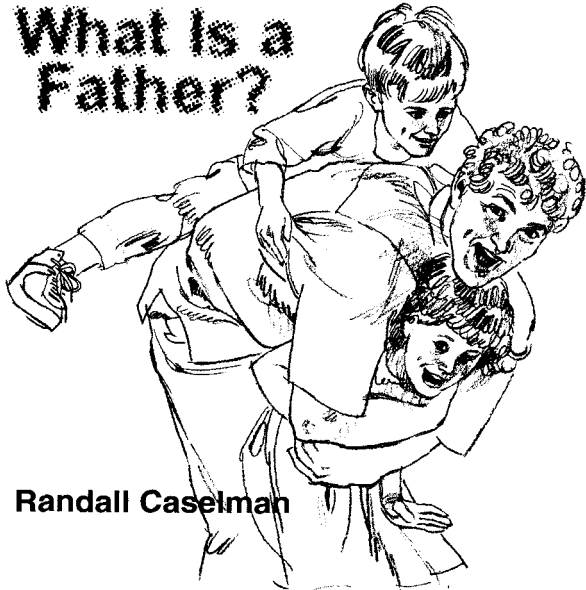


No one — no one! — will have more influence upon our children's future than we parents. Our children and grandchildren know what it takes to make good parents and grandparents. They are smarter than we give them credit for. They know the attitudes we should hold, they know how we ought to behave; they see our faults and our sins.

No, they do not expect us to be perfect, but they do expect us to admit our faults and try to become more the person we should be. They are watching... Waiting... Wishing....

F...is for friend. A father is one who is ready to enjoy life with his children. A father is always willing to take whatever time is necessary. Nothing in this life is more important than time spent with our children. Charlie Shedd gives us "*Ten Traits of One Neat Dad*"...He takes time for me...He listens to me...He plays with me...He invites me to go places with him...He lets me help him...He treats my mother well...He lets me say what I think...He's nice to my friends...He

What Is a Father?



Randall Caselman

only punishes me when I deserve it...He isn't afraid to admit when he is wrong. One day our children will be grown, and we will regret the times we thought we were too busy to be a neat dad...**right?**

A...is for ally. My father is the best, the strongest, the greatest. That's what our children thought when they were young. No one was a better dad than mine. But as our children grow up, does their attitude change? Are we still the biggest man in their life? When the storms of life come, will we stand beside them, hold their hand, support them with the same strength they thought we had when they were little? I hope we will. Scripture tells us that

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

the fatherhood of God is about always being with us, never leaving us, and His working all things out to our good and benefit. This is what makes Him and us great fathers...**right?**

T...is for trainer. This responsibility belongs to fathers, not the government, the school system, or the church. Paul says, "*Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up on the training and instruction of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4). Solomon advised, "*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*" (Proverbs 22:6). This training must come through more than mere words; it involves the life we live. Our children are watching, listening. They will be influenced by the attitudes we hold and the way we behave...**right?**

H...is for helper and healer. When our spirit was wounded and our heart broken, there was no healing like dad's tender touch. A father is one who helps us over the rough spots. He is the one who taught us to ride a bicycle, skate, ski, fish, and hunt. And when life treated us cruelly, he picked us up, brushed us off, and set us back on the straight and narrow. And he still does... And he still does... **right?**

E...is for encourager. The greatest encouragement any of us

will receive is that given by our fathers. His voice can still be heard over others at the ballpark, in the Sunday school class, and on graduation day. For some reason, we want our father to be proud of us and to wish us well. And when he does, it makes our day, our life. Nothing encourages me more than to have my father say, "That was a good sermon." He is the one we strive to please...**right?**

R...is for responsibility and role model. What an awesome responsibility to have a child wanting to be just like you, his father. I suppose that no one is copied early in life any more than fathers...**awesome!** Regardless of all the other responsibilities we may have, none weighs as heavily upon us fathers than this one voiced by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "*Follow me and follow Christ*" ...**right?**

Today, our challenge as fathers and grandfathers is to become more like Abraham. May it be said of us as it was said of him in Genesis 18:19, "*I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him*" ...**right?** †

Randall Caselman preaches for the church in Bella Vista, Arkansas, USA.

**“Our
Happiness Is
Largely Bound
Up in the
Fortunes of
Our Children”**

Jack Harriman

When I heard the above statement recently, I was skeptical. But the more I think about it, the more I am in agreement. We are all deeply concerned about the well-being of our children. We so much want them to be everything God would have them be. We are elated when our children do well and we are crushed when they do not.

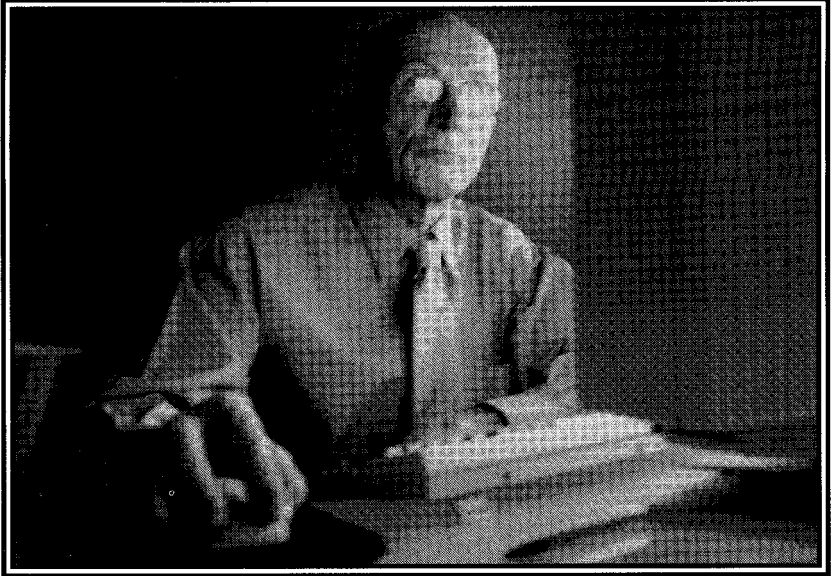
Solomon said, *“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:6). And Solomon could have added, *“And if you don’t, you will regret it the rest of your life.”* The child’s happiness is at stake, and so is the parent’s.



John said, *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth”* (3 John 3). John was talking about spiritual offspring, but it is just as true of physical offspring.

Thank God for every individual and activity that has a positive influence on the person our child becomes. His or her well-being is, in a great measure, our own well-being. †

Jack Harriman is a gospel preacher living in the USA.



Any one theory would be inadequate to explain it, for sure. We are in the information age, which means that secrets are harder to keep. Victims are more prone to “blow the whistle” on their offenders, which sometimes makes the predator more apt to take extreme measures. Too, we are in an age that greatly objectifies people, which dehumanizes them in the eyes of these predators.

Of course, I am talking about the seeming spike in sexual crimes

against children. It is not just a Florida problem, though they seem to be most frequently under the

brightest lights of the media of late. Children, eight to fourteen, are being increasingly brutalized and murdered. One of the scandals of the Tsunami disaster was the sexual enslaving of newly orphaned children.

Highly placed UN officials allegedly abused their power to misuse children. The papers just today broke a sex scandal concerning minors in Mexico.

What's Happening Here?

Neal Pollard

One of our nation's biggest stories involved alleged abuse by Michael Jackson, once again accused of molesting little boys.

A compelling, important question to ask is, "What is behind this?" **The obvious answer is sin.** James 1:13-15 maps out the process that leads from enticement to spiritual demise. Yet, there may be some circumstantial evidence explaining how everyone from police officers to doctors to preachers to soldiers — normally heroes and role models — have among them perverted pedophiles.

Dr. Victor Cline, clinical psychologist at the University of Utah, works with many clients involved in pornography. He notes that there is a four-stage syndrome common to almost all of them.

First, is the addiction phase. The viewer of pornography sees powerful imagery that can be recalled. There is an "aphrodisiac effect" that slowly begins to rule their lives, and they view it even at the risk of negative consequences.

Second, says Cline, is the escalation phase. More and more stimulation is needed to reach the "high". For those addicted to pornography, this means more graphic material is sought.

Third is the desensitization phase. In this stage, material once thought unthinkable, shocking, ille-

gal, repulsive and immoral becomes acceptable to the viewer. It may surprise you that the fastest growing sector of this dark industry is... child pornography! It is appalling, but it makes sense. Pornography wears away at accepted norms and eats away at one's sensitivity until nothing is "out of bounds".

Finally, according to Cline, is the phase of acting out sexually. Viewing is no longer enough to reach the high. A heart, blighted and blackened by sin, longs to move from passivity to activity. Internet pornography has been called "the new crack cocaine".

Pornography is a pervasive and global evil. Add to that the tepid measures of restraint against most forms of it, and you can see Cline's predictions coming true. How do individuals in society recreate the abomination of Sodom and Gomorrah? Jesus said that it is a matter of the heart (Matthew 15:18-20). We cannot hope to violate God's will on this or any other matter without seeing the consequences of it play out in our hearts, lives, and souls. Unless tougher laws are passed against the production and viewing of pornography in all its forms, I fear that we are only looking at the top of the tip of an iceberg of heartache and destruction. †

Neal Pollard preaches the gospel in Mechanicsville, West Virginia, USA.

With the onset of the epidemic of AIDS, a new strain of gonorrhea, and other sexually related diseases that plague America and the world, society has resorted to a new gimmick to fool the ignorant and destroy the simple. Government and public officials, supported by some from the medical profession, have urged the widespread use of prophylactics to lessen the spread of these dreaded maladies.

This is a tacit admission that people are going to engage in promiscuous sexual encounters regardless of the risks involved or the consequences suffered. The real tragedy is that already countless millions have fallen for the deception of Satan and many more will be slain by their arch enemy. But let us look at this deception more closely:

First, the assumption that sex relationships outside of the Divine marriage arrangement are acceptable is a folly of the greatest magnitude.

The Bible states the true picture in honest, forthright language. *"Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who*

sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:6,7).

Homosexuality is a sin (Leviticus 20:13). **Adultery is a sin** (Exodus 20:14) and whoever commits the same has no sense and destroys himself (Proverbs 6:32).

Fornication is a sin (Galatians 5:19).

Besituality is a sin (Leviticus 20:15, 16). **Rape is a sin** (Deuteronomy 22: 25 - 27) .

Prostitution

is a sin (1 Corinthians 6:15-18). **Incest is a sin** (1 Corinthians 5). Those who persist in these sins shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21). They shall suffer the second death graphically portrayed in Revelation 21:8.

Second, the concept that one can break the commandments of God with impunity is also a folly of the highest order. No one has ever broken the commandments of God and escaped the guilt and consequences of his or her sin. The Bible records many instances of the punishments of nations and of individuals. **Sodom** was destroyed by

Safer Sex!
Stephen D. Eckstein, Jr.

the cataclysm of heavenly fire for its many sins (Genesis 19). **Israel** engaged in immorality in Moab and saw 24,000 swept away by a plague (Numbers 25:1-9). **David** committed adultery and followed it with murder. He and Israel suffered many consequences as a result (2 Samuel 12:7-14). **Amnon** raped Tamar and was later murdered by Absalom (2 Samuel 13).

ple to recluses who retire within themselves, hoping no one will discover them.

Others try to put on a front that they are the "real" people of society. But the camouflage is too artificial. Those who are unmarried and have been promiscuous do not know what to do. If they tell a prospective marriage partner about their past life, they risk rejection; if they don't tell

Actually, no one has ever broken God's commands!

Actually, no one has ever **broken God's commands**. Men simply **BREAK THEMSELVES ON GOD'S COMMANDS!** All the commandments are still here, and intact, centuries and millenniums after those who did their own thing lie in marked and unmarked tombs around the world.

Third, the so-called momentary pleasures of these illicit sexual forays are offset by a life-long sense of a lack of fulfillment. Who can measure the sorrow, heartache, and inner misery that wrenches the souls of the guilty? Who can relate the consequences suffered in every area of life? Those who are honest and bare their souls freely admit that the fear of disease haunts them continually. Such fear often turns them from being happy, open peo-

ple to recluses who retire within themselves, hoping no one will discover them.

Fourth, those who contract disease suffer far more and longer in the body for the illegal momentary gratification of the flesh. Gonorrhea is rampant in our society. Syphilis has quadrupled in one decade. Only the persons who experience the horrors of sexual diseases know the misery of the guilty. Disease knows no boundaries, attacking the single and married alike, when they practice promiscuity. Fornicators get the diseases. Adulterous mates can and do infect their unsuspecting wives and husbands. Guilt and consequences rage; families are divided and often the tragedies end in homicides.

Those who contract AIDS begin the slow death of the body which houses the anguished soul. The gospel of Jesus Christ can cleanse the soul of the penitent believer who is born again of water and the Spirit, but the body of death must claim its victim before the threescore and ten years that were promised. Even repentance cannot erase the consequences of sin, especially of immorality.

Innumerable additional cases could be cited of humans being ravaged by fear, pain, sorrow and death. Sin, as it cloaks our bodies and lives with its inherent consequences, is an insidious monster

The crass stupidity of sinful man sanctioning and advocating "safer sex" is a paradox of the late 20th century. How utterly incomprehensible is the great emphasis on eliminating smoking from commercial aircraft and public buildings, prohibition of nuclear waste and radiation, reduction of pollution of air and water, and an all-out war on drugs while simultaneously accelerating the foolish into sexual wreck and ruin. How blind are those who will not see!

The Solution

We must be lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Philippians 2:15). Husbands and wives must hold marriage in

high esteem before our observing youth. We must portray that which is beautiful, attractive and pure. We must be models or examples who stand out in direct contrast to the sleazy, corrupt and deviant behavior blatantly set forth in society and in many aspects of the media.

Let us challenge our youth to become a modern generation of Josephs who do not succumb to the peer pressures of a pagan world, but who will stand in God's strength and the power of His might. May their number increase and become legion.

Remember, you and God are a majority! As my father said many times, "**Do something TODAY you can rejoice about TOMORROW.**"

The only sex is the sex of God's arrangement — holy, pure, beautiful — the physical sexual bond between husband and wife with its emotional, intellectual and moral components based on the great spiritual foundation of Jesus Christ. This is the divine way — safe sex, true sex, joyful sex, real sex, meaningful sex. Experience Proverbs 5:18,19 whether you have been married one day or fifty years. All else is fool's gold! †

Stephen D. Eckstein, Jr., Ph.D wrote this tract. Garrison Graphics, Inc. is the publisher, at P.O. Box 103, Farmington, NM 87499. Additional copies can be obtained at \$10.00 per 100 plus \$4.00 P&H.

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Matthew 5:38-44

38 You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

43 You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

This actually was the legal penalty for crimes under the **Old Testament law**, which was the **civil law** governing the nation of Israel.

The contrast Jesus gave would become **the law** for citizens in **His spiritual kingdom**. Sometimes people confuse *civil law* and *spiritual law*, wondering if Christians can be supportive of the civil government going to war or enacting the death penalty for heinous crimes. Romans 13 shows that God expects governments to keep "law and order" and to punish the evildoers. **Not only are Christians to obey the civil law, they are to recognize that its power is granted by God Himself.**

Two points of psychology and health protection are used by Jesus in these verses:

1. Goodness and kindness can turn an enemy into a brother.
2. If the Christian practices anger, hatred, and a begrudging attitude about things unjustly demanded of him, harboring these emotional poisons will injure his physical as well as spiritual health. Practicing the responses Jesus requires removes the anger and protects the health and soul of the Christian.

God's dealings with humanity are not according to what we deserve. In learning to be "partakers of divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), we are asked to follow His example of grace. We need and expect God's grace toward us. **God asks us to practice His grace toward others.**

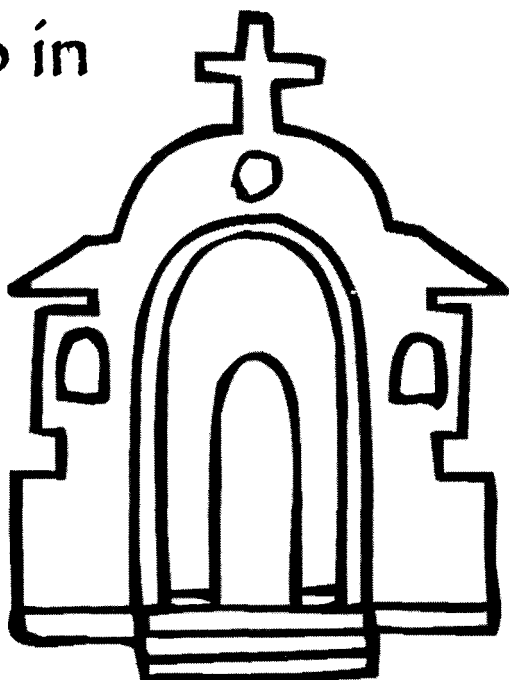
Worship in Spirit and Truth

Jimmy Jividen

Jesus said God wants worship that is “*in spirit and truth*” (John 4:24). But what does that mean?

To “worship in spirit” is to worship in the spiritual realm. God is Spirit. Man is also a spiritual being. The spirit of man is that inner part of man that can will and worship. In this spiritual realm God and man meet, and worship takes place. Worship is more than external physical forms — it is internal spiritual devotion from the sincere heart.

To “worship in truth” can be understood as “genuine” — not false or form worship. It can also be understood to mean worship that is according to the revealed truth of God in Scripture. Both are true. The emphasis of the statement Jesus



made to the Samaritan woman in John 4:24 was in response to her question concerning “where” men should worship.

Jesus’ response suggests the place to worship, according to the truth revealed in Scripture, was at Jerusalem. But the time was coming in which the place would not be important. True worship would not be confined to time and place; rather, it was to be “*in spirit and truth.*” †

Jimmy Jividen is a writer and preacher in Abilene, Texas, USA.

Shine the Backs of Your Shoes

Bob Cruse



In the late 1940's, brother Charles H. Roberson was a favorite Bible professor among students at the old, faithful Abilene Christian College. His former students will remember his penchant for using "one liners" to teach spiritual lessons. Among the most memorable of these sayings was this one: "Before you go to the house of God, polish the backs of your shoes." On at least one occasion when this particular aphorism was used, the kindly old professor noted questioning glances among his students. The exact wording of his clarification cannot be brought to mind, but the essence of it is clearly recalled. "Look your best when you meet around the Lord's Table! These services are dedicated to the memory of the Savior who died for us! Show Him proper respect!"

This once universal view in the church of Christ has sharply declined in recent years. Men officiating at the Lord's Supper on Sunday mornings a few decades ago almost always wore coats and ties.

Now we are likely to see men leading our congregations in knit shirts hanging sloppily over blue jeans.

Informality of this kind is seldom seen at gatherings in memory of friends and loved ones who have passed from this life into eternity. How can we possibly show less respect for our crucified Savior who instituted this solemn feast with these words, "*This do in remembrance of Me*"?

God does not prescribe a dress code for His children as they gather to commemorate Christ's cruel death for our sins. We cannot say that worshipping in blue jeans and knit shirts is unacceptable to Him. But we must guard against informality among our leaders that could influence weak Christians toward tight jeans, mini skirts, and shorts in our assemblies. God does look on the heart rather than on appearance, but His abhorrence of immodesty is clear in Scripture. †

Bob Cruse is a member of the church of Christ in Ovilla, Texas, USA.

Preparation for Worship — The Preparation of the Heart

Ronald D. Bryant

How well do we understand the nature of worship? How many of us are possessed by an awareness of the greatness of the Lord God Almighty? That we tend to be casual, less than attentive, and are quick to resist even the concept of bowing down to another, is easily observed. That our assemblies are controlled by our preferences is readily evident. Consider the following: How much actual preparation for worship do we individually make?

How much actual spiritual preparation is being made by those of us who are to lead in the spiritual aspects of our assemblies? What are our habits as regards the times of worship, the place, and the other obvious aspects of worship? Is it dull duty, or fervent devotion? How much of it is mechanical and perfunctory?

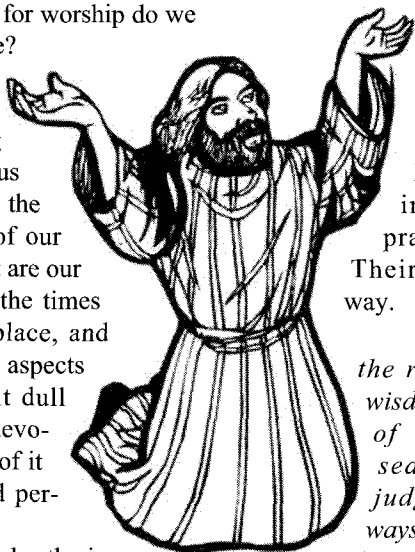
Worship includes the joy-

ful and wholehearted ascription of praise to God for who He is and what He is in Himself. It is a loving response to God for His mercy and grace, and for His providential dealings. It is also the bowing down of an earnest and devoted heart, in deepest humility and reverence.

Worship flows from a source, and that source is love. Where love is meager, worship will be scant.

Where love is deep, worship will overflow. God's servants often poured out their love and adoration in an overflow of praise and devotion. Their words point the way.

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"
(Romans 11:33).



WORSHIP

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20,21).

However, worship is more than words. David spoke of his soul waiting for God, *“My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him”* (Psalm 62:5). There is often a powerful, yet comforting silence between loved ones when words are unnecessary. In our communion with God, to be awed into silence in His presence is also worship.

Long ago a puritan, Thomas Goodwin, said, “I have known men who came to God for nothing else but just to come to Him, they so loved Him. They scorned to soil Him and themselves with any other errand than just purely to be alone with Him and in His presence.” While Goodwin’s thoughts may be regarded as extreme by some, he

does speak of an intimacy with God and a desire for fellowship with Him that we would do well to cultivate. Too many of us seldom or never devote full concentration to the experience of simply being in the presence of God. †

Ronald D. Bryant preaches for the church of Christ in Hollister, Missouri, USA.

Life's a Part of God in Heaven

**Men so often become enchanted,
Seeking peace in worldly strife;
They disdain what God has planted
And thus rob Him of a life.**

**Life by breath Divine was given,
'Tis no child of nature's whim;
Life's a part of God in Heaven,
So we all belong to Him.**

**Sent to earth for just a season,
Spirit clothed upon with sod,
Truly life must have a reason,
And that reason must be God.**

**There is purpose then in living,
Though in coats of dust we plod,
If the service we are giving
Is acceptable to God.**

— Harry Presley

Living in View of the Coming

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Guy Orbison, Jr.

Introduction:

- A. In this section, Paul continues his discussion of the Second Coming of Christ, from 4:13-18.
 - 1. He has previously discussed what was to happen to those Christians who had already passed on before the Lord returns.
 - 2. In this passage, he exhorts us to be alert and ready for the Lord's return.
 - B. There is a progression of thought that may be seen in these verses:
 - 1. First, Paul suggests that Christians know some things that people of the world do not know.
 - 2. Second, he advocates that this knowledge should lead Christians to live their earthly lives differently than people of the world.
 - 3. Third, he implies that living different from the world puts us on a different "destiny track" than the world.
- I. Christian Knowledge — is different than the world's (vs. 1-3).**
- A. Christians know about "times" and "epochs" (vs. 1,2).
 - 1. "Times" comes from the Greek, "kronos", from which we get such terms as "chronology".
 - a. It refers to "time" as sequence...it has to do with "time marching on".
 - b. What we know about time is that it moves toward an end...there will be a day of judgment and every Christian knows we are moving closer to it.
 - 2. "Epochs" may be translated "seasons" and speaks of "quality" regarding time.
 - a. It has to do with the kind of events within time frames...periods of time that are influenced by human decision.
 - b. As Christians we have insight into what each generation will do...we know that "*difficult times will come*" (2 Timothy 3:1-13).

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- B. The world does not have this knowledge.
 - 1. People of the world do not believe in the Lord's return, nor anticipate the judgment.
 - 2. The expression, "while they are saying peace and safety" reflects the consensus of the world.
 - 3. Paul uses the imagery of child birth (vs. 3) to show how "*suddenly*" the end will come upon the world. Just as the birthing process cannot be stopped, so these will "not escape".

II. The Christian Life — is different than the world's (vs. 4-8).

- A. We respond to what we know by living as "*sons of light*" (vs. 4-7).
 - 1. "Darkness" has the sense of willful ignorance...but we are "*sons of light*".
 - 2. Since we are "of day" and not "of the night", we must be "alert" and "sober".
- B. We prepare for what we know is coming by wearing armor (vs. 8).
 - 1. Armor is protective gear, worn to defend ourselves from opposition. Our enemy is darkness...the allurements of the world that might cause us to lose sight of what's coming.
 - 2. Just as physical armor protects vital organs, spiritual armor protects the vital qualities of our life with God.
 - a. Faith is the ability to see the unseen and the means by which we focus on what is to come.
 - b. Love for Christ enables us to do what He desires of us rather than what the world wants.
 - c. Hope of salvation speaks of our assurance.

III. The Christian Destiny — is different than the world's (vs. 9,10).

- A. We are motivated to live as we do by knowing our destiny (vs. 9).
- B. Our destiny is dependent on Christ and our relationship with Him (vs. 10).

Conclusion:

- A. The days of waiting for the Lord's return can become long...we need to encourage one another.
- B. This life is not our ultimate goal...we are looking for something better.



Now That I Am a Christian, What Am I to Do?

Ken Tyler

Purpose: To help each Christian stay true to the Lord.

1. Walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3,4).
2. Desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow (1 Peter 2:1,2).
3. Glorify the name Christian (1 Peter 4:16).
4. Continue steadfastly (Acts 2:42).
5. Edify (the act of building) the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:12).
6. Seek the things which are above (Colossians 3:1,2).
7. Tell others about the Saviour (Acts 8:4).
8. Add the Christian graces (2 Peter 1:5-11).
9. Attend worship faithfully (Hebrews 10:25).
10. Give as you have been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1,2).
11. Do not forsake the Lord (2 Timothy 4:10).
12. Be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).

Conclusion: The sad fact is that many Christians have quit being Christians. *Have you?* †

Ken Tyler preaches for the church in Arab, Alabama, USA.

Paul Stopped the Truth From Being Told!

T. Pierce Brown

In Acts 16:16-18 there is a story of a girl who was telling the truth about Paul and his companions, and yet it grieved Paul. Is there any lesson that might have value for us in this story? We think there is.

Since the Bible does not reveal what her motive was in telling these truths, we must assume from what we know of the Devil that his purpose was to subvert the truth of the Gospel. The people in the area knew that she had this spirit of divination. If Satan could get people to believe that the message of the apostles was the kind of message that was approved by persons like her and her masters, he would gain a great victory. We think Satan is using the same tactics today. We have an increasing number of men who claim to be preachers of the Gospel who are encouraging us to have fellowship with the false

teachers in the religious world. Their reasoning seems to go something like this: "They are teaching the truth about Jesus being the Son of God and that salvation is found in following Him, so we should join hands with them."

Paul's response to the situation should be ours. He refused to allow even the true testimony from a false teacher under the control of an evil spirit to hinder the saving message of the pure Gospel of Christ. There is no place for compromise with the forces of Satan, even when they tell the truth. We might say, *especially* when they are telling the truth, for then the damage is likely to be far greater than if they were only dealing in lies that could easily be shown to be such. **A partial truth is sometimes more dangerous than a total lie.** †

T. Pierce Brown lives and preaches in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.

**Ignorance of the untruthfulness of a tale
neither justifies nor sanctifies
the tale-bearer.**

A Challenge from Paul's Greetings to the Brethren at Rome

Gary C. Hampton

Introducing Paul

Typical letters of the first century would begin, "X to Y, Greetings." In Romans 1:1, Paul takes that approach, but adds some things which make his beginning distinctly Christian. Among the unique features of his greeting is a special introduction of himself.

He calls himself a *servant*, from the Greek word meaning *bondservant* and *slave*. All Christians need to recognize Christ as their owner because He gave His blood to purchase them from the bondage of sin (1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18,19). The words "to be" are supplied by the translators to help readers understand. Here, it would be better to leave them out, which would leave, "called an apostle". Apostle means "one sent" and this passage tells of one of thirteen commissioned specially by Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1,2; Acts 9:1-22, particularly 15). Paul was specifically called to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Introducing the Gospel

The promise of the good news is one that runs from man's fall through all of the Old Testament

(Genesis 3:15; Malachi 3:1). One who believes the Old Testament should logically accept the New, since it reveals God's plan for helping man overcome the fall. So, it is natural for Paul to instantly turn to the Gospel and the Son who is its central theme (John 20:30,31). He is both God come down to earth and man, a descendant of David (John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:5-8; Matthew 1:1-17). While all His miracles proclaim His Sonship, the resurrection declares Jesus is God's Son beyond doubt (Acts 13:30-33).

The Christian's hope is living because he serves a resurrected Lord (Romans 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:3)!

Jesus had bestowed God's grace, or unearned gift, upon the apostles so they might, in turn, tell others about it. Paul uses "we" either editorially, or to include all of the apostles. In either case, he was made an apostle to deliver the message of faith to be obeyed. The remainder of the Romans letter deals **only with obedient faith, not faith only**. Paul was to preach especially to the nations, or Gentiles, for Christ's name's sake, or so His name



might be glorified (Romans 1:5).

Extending Grace and Peace

The Roman Christians had received the gospel call by obeying it. They were a part of the Gentile group to whom Paul was specifically commissioned to preach. He addressed the letter to all Christians in Rome, Jew or Gentile. The Gospel is God's great expression of His love, as can be seen later in this letter. Again, the "to be" is supplied and would be better left out since all Christians are set apart in God's service (1 Corinthians 1:2). The Greek greeting was *charein*, or "greetings". Paul uses *charin*, which refers to the free gift of God. The Hebrew greeting is *shalom*, which

means "peace". Certainly Christians are recipients of God's grace and that inner peace which passes understanding (Romans 1:6,7).

A Challenge for the Current Age

Paul's words stand as a significant challenge to Christians living today. We must not forget Whose we are. Wherever we walk, whatever we do, we wear the name of Jesus. Though we are not specially called, as Paul was, we have been commissioned to carry the good news to all the world, and should take that commission just as seriously as he did (Matthew 28:18-20).

It is vitally important that we remember our Lord was raised from the dead! Therefore, Jesus was, and is, the Son of God! Through His grace, we find freedom from sin. Those who have experienced that grace are compelled, by it, to proclaim the means of every man's freedom from sin.

The gospel call is received by any who obey it, no matter what nationality. The Gospel is God's ultimate expression of love for lost mankind. Because of it, our constant prayer for other faithful followers should be that they receive the grace of God and its accompanying inner peace! †

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Apparently the words describing “man” in the Old Testament are not always used distinctively, but enough of the elemental meaning of those words remains to make them very informative.

1. *Adam*. The first word which God used to describe man is adam; “let us make adam” (Genesis 1:26), which means that which is red, ruddy, earthy. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:47, “the first man is of the earth, earthy.” The word *adam*, then, reflects man’s earthly origin, shaped by the great Potter from dust (dry earth, clay) of the



“Show Thyself a Man”

Hugo McCord

ground (*adamah*). Finally, *adam* must return to the *adamah*, from which he was taken; the dust of the *adamah* he is, and to the dust he must return (Genesis 3:19). It is thus quite understandable that the first *adam* was given the name “Adam”.

2. *Enosh*. A second word describing man is *enosh*, meaning that which is frail, feeble, mortal. Man’s inability to keep himself alive is shown in Moses’ saying to God, “Thou turnest *enosh* to destruction” (crushing) in Psalm 90:3. And just as *adam* became a proper name, Adam, so *enosh*

became a proper name for Seth’s son, Enosh (Genesis 5:6).

3. *Nephesh*. A third word describing man is *nephesh*, meaning that which breathes. Though the word *nephesh* is used to describe animals (Genesis 1:20,24), yet at times *nephesh* is used of human beings, as distinct from the lower creation (Numbers 31:35; 1 Chronicles 5:21). As *adam* pictures man’s *physical substance*, and as *enosh* pictures man’s *mortal nature*, so *nephesh* points him out as a breathing being.

4. *Gibbor*. A fourth word describing man is *gibbor*, depicting

TEXTUAL STUDIES

physical strength and courage. A *gibbor* is a might man of valor (1 Chronicles 12:8; 28:1), whose strength is compared to a lion's (1 Chronicles 12:13). A *gibbor* is *valiant* (2 Chronicles 13:3).

5. *Ish*. A fifth and the most significant word describing man is *ish*, used often to depict *strong intellect and eminence of character*. The title of Psalm 90 pictures Moses as the *ish* of God. Though Israel's leader was an *adam*, an *enosh*, a *nephesh*, and a *gibbor*, apparently much more is denoted when he is called the *ish* of God. Noah, a man who walked with God, is called a righteous *ish* (Genesis 6:9) and perfect. The book of Job begins, "*There was an ish in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that ish was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and turned away from evil.*"

It does not appear accidental that the aged David would challenge his son Solomon, "*be strong therefore and show thyself an ish*" (1 Kings 2:2). An *ish* is not a boy; an *ish* shoulders *responsibility*. When Abner had gone to sleep while guarding the king, David taunted him, "*Are you not an ish?*" (1 Samuel 26:15).

Time was in Israel's history when one true *ish* would have saved the nation. God looked for an *ish* (Jeremiah 5:1; Ezekiel 22:30), and found none, and He let the heathen

take over. The same God today cries out to all Christians, regardless of sex: "*Make men of yourselves*" (1 Corinthians 16:13). †

Before his death, Hugo McCord had been a long-time professor of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma, USA.

The Transformed Life

"Everything looks different now. I have peace in my heart which I never had before." Several years have passed since I heard a young man speak these words during a coffee break with his co-workers.

This young man had touched a live wire while working on the power lines going into the Coliseum and he was severely burned. By medical authority it should have been instant death for him. Although in a critical condition for a long time, he amazed the doctors and survived. He felt he was living a second life, and he wanted everyone to know it was so different from the first. Because of his faith in and obedience to Jesus, he had a new beginning.

Whether we come to Jesus in a quiet time or in the storms of life as did this young man, He will transform our lives and give us something worth living for.

— Copied

The Most Important Question

Charles E. Burch

The apostle Paul and Silas had been beaten with many stripes and were cast into the inner prison at Philippi. *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:25-30).

“What must I do to be saved?” is the most important question that anyone could ask. Then, of equal importance is the correct answer. Many men give a denominational-church answer to this question, instead of a Bible answer. But the person asking must hear and obey **God’s** answer, not man’s, to be saved.

What answer did the inspired Apostle give? *“And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”* (Acts 16:31). They taught him the “Lord’s plan of salvation”, or the “Gospel”. The first part was faith, or belief, but that was not all. Jesus said: *“...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3). Philip refused to baptize the Ethiopian until he confessed Jesus to be the Son of God (Acts 8:36-38). Jesus taught: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...”* (Mark 16:16).

So in order to answer this important question, the Bible reveals five things: (1) Hear, (2) Believe, (3) Repent, (4) Confess, (5) Be baptized for the remission of sins. This makes up the Gospel of Christ. Without obeying the Gospel one will be *“punished with everlasting destruction...”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Why not do what the Bible teaches, that you may live in heaven forever? If this is from the Bible, and others tell you a different plan of salvation, how could their message be from God? †

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

Some form of the word “baptize” or “baptism” is used over 100 times in the New Testament. This emphasizes the importance of the subject of baptism to the followers of Christ. How ironic and tragic, then, that there is such widespread disagreement in the modern religious world over the meaning and purpose of baptism. The question, “What does baptism mean?” demands our closest possible attention. Consider the following:

1. Baptism

means union with Christ. Paul writes in Romans 6:3 that we are “*Baptized into Jesus Christ*”, or as the Modern Language Bible translates, we are “*baptized in union with Christ Jesus.*” In Galatians 3:27, Paul concludes: “*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*” (NAS). Entrance into

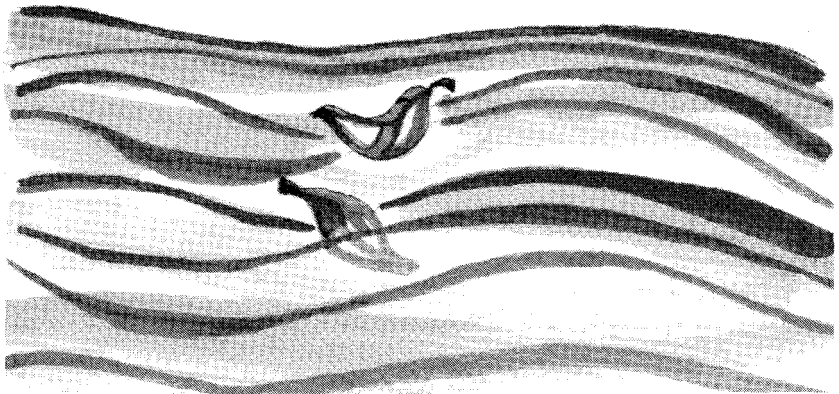
Christ and all that it implies (cf. Romans 8:1; Ephesians 1:7) is achieved in the act of baptism.

2. Baptism means submission to the Lordship of Christ. Jesus said: “*All authority has been given to Me in heav-*

*What Is
the Meaning
of Baptism?*



Bobby Dockery



BIBLE QUESTIONS

en and on earth" (Matthew 28:18, NAS). Immediately after making that statement, He told His disciples to "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 28:19 NAS). Clearly the command to be baptized is rooted in the power or Lordship of Christ. Jesus insisted that there is no genuine submission to His Lordship without obedience to His commands. "*Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,'*" He asked, "*and do not do what I say?*" (Luke 6:46, NAS). Baptism is an act by which we acknowledge the Lordship of Christ over our lives.

3. Baptism means entrance into the Body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, the Apostle Paul writes: "*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body*" (NAS). The one body is the church (1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 1:22, 23). This is borne out by what the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:23 where he notes that "*Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body*" (Ephesians 5:23, NAS). Baptism is the act of obedience which causes God to add us to the church (See Acts 2:41,47).

4. Baptism means participating in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "*Do you not know,*" Paul asks, "*that all of us*

who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3, NAS). In the act of baptism we become the people for whom Christ died; we gain the benefits which His death makes possible; we re-create His death, burial, and resurrection by being buried with Him in water to be raised to newness of life. In doing so, we obey the "*form*" or "*pattern*" of the doctrine which is delivered unto us (Romans 6:17). It is baptism which ties us to the cross of Christ.

5. Baptism means newness of life. Jesus said that we must experience the new birth of **water** and of **the Spirit** (John 3:3,5) in order to enter the kingdom of Heaven. We are raised from **baptism** to "*walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4, NAS). Baptism is not only an ending to a life of sin; it is a beginning, the embarkation point of the Christian life.

The fact that baptism is mentioned more than 100 times in the New Testament leaves no doubt as to its importance! The things which are connected with it show its necessity.

"Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). †

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Why Do Some Insist That Baptism Is a Requirement?

Wayne Jackson

Why do some insist that baptism is a requirement for salvation when the Bible simply says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21)?

The question assumes that calling upon the Lord's name and being baptized are mutually exclusive obligations. They are not.

Consider the following:

(1) It is evident that merely "calling" on the name of the Christ is not sufficient to effect salvation, since Jesus Himself declared: "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Clearly, therefore, "calling" on Christ involves more than a mere verbal plea.

(2) In Acts 2, the same apostle who promised salvation to all who "call on the name of the Lord," also commanded, "Repent ye, and be

immersed each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ to obtain the forgiveness of your sins" (2:38). Since the "shall be saved" of 2:21 is equivalent to the "forgiveness of sins" in 2:38, it necessarily follows that "calling on the name of the Lord" includes both repentance and baptism.

(3) Later testimony from the New Testament makes it apparent that the person who submits to baptism, in order to receive pardon, is calling on the name of the Lord. Note Acts 22:16. Ananias instructed the penitent Saul as follows: "And now why do you tarry? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name."

All who wish to enjoy the remission of past sins will call on the name of the Lord by obeying the gospel plan of redemption. In no other way can one receive pardon. †

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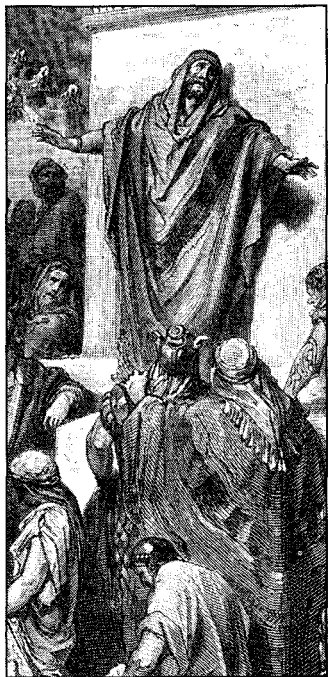
Salvation is not a matter of reformation
but of transformation.

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.

1. **100** I was the son of Amittai (1:1).
2. **90** God called me to be a mighty preacher to a mighty people (1:2).
3. **80** God would have pity on that city because 120,000 people lived there, and also much livestock (4:11).
4. **70** The climate was hot where I was, and I was grateful for shade (4:6).
5. **60** I complained to God, "It is better for me to die than to live!" (4:3).



6. **50** As is typical of humans, when God didn't do what I wanted, I actually became angry with Him! (4:1).

7. **40** I explained to God that I was not surprised at His willingness to be merciful; I had expected it, and that was the reason I had run away from my preaching job (4:2).

8. **30** I learned the hard way what it feels like to have weeds around my head, and to be in water too deep to be able to save myself (2:5).

9. **20** When my companions cast lots and discovered that I was the reason for the grave danger they were in, I admitted the truth and advised them what to do to save themselves (1:7,8).

10. **10** Even though I repented of my disobedience to God's instructions, I was still a very reluctant messenger. Maybe the reason was that I did not want to be an instrument for bringing anything good to the enemies of my people (2:1-9).

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.



Simon Says

Royce Frederick

Beginning in Acts 2, we see Simon Peter boldly proclaiming the Gospel. As early as Matthew 16:16, he had confessed to Jesus: *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* But the path to Acts 2 was not always easy. As he walked with the Lord, Peter often made mistakes in things he said to Him.

“Lord, this shall not happen to you!”

After Peter’s confession, Jesus warned His disciples that He would suffer, die, and rise again (Matthew 16:21). Jesus encourages the weak and warns the strong (Matthew 14:27; John 16:33; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 3:12-14).

Peter could not believe Jesus would die. *“Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’”* (Matthew 16:22). Peter confessed who Jesus is, but denied what Jesus said. Peter is not alone. Many confess Jesus as Lord but deny some of His words. Jesus said, *“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do*

not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46; see Matthew 7:21-23).

In Genesis 3:4, Satan told Eve, *“You will not surely die.”* Satan often tempts us to take short-cuts around God’s will, bypassing any sacrifices which may come between us and the benefits we desire (Matthew 4:8-11). Jesus told Peter, *“...Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”* Then He told His disciples, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me, For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”* (Matthew 16:23-25).

Jesus came to give His life as the sacrifice for our sins (Matthew 20:28; John 1:29). After Jesus arose, Peter understood and wrote, *“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Peter 1:18,19).

BIBLE CHARACTERS

“Lord...let us make here three tabernacles...”

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him onto a high mountain to pray. The disciples fell asleep, but later awoke to see Jesus glorified. Two great men from the past, Moses and Elijah, were talking with Him about His coming death (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). Peter “...*did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid*” (Mark 9:6). But He spoke anyway, “...*not knowing what he said*” (Luke 9:33). How often we speak the wrong words when no words were called for at all!

Peter suggested that they honor all three men: “*Lord, it is good for us to be here: if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah*” (Matthew 17:4). But God rejected the idea. “*While he was still speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only*” (Matthew 17:5-8). Peter later wrote about this in 2 Peter 1:16-18.

Peter surely had good intentions, but man’s religious ideas are not acceptable to God (Matthew 15:9,13). We must worship and serve Him as He instructs us in the Bible, without changing anything (Jude 3:1; John 9).

Moses and Elijah were prophets of God during the Old Testament times. But God removed the law of Moses when Jesus died on the cross (Colossians 2:14; Galatians 3:24, 25). Now the New Covenant of Christ is God’s will for His people (Hebrews 8:6-9; 9:15-17; John 12:48).

Jesus is our only Lord (Ephesians 4:5). He is our only mediator, not Mary or other departed saints (1 Timothy 2:5). He is our only way to God (John 14:6). We honor God the Father through Christ the Son (John 5:22,23; 23,24).

“You shall never wash my feet.”

After the last supper, Jesus began washing the feet of His disciples (John 13:1-17). But Peter said to Him, “*You shall never wash my feet!*” (13:8). Jesus reasoned with him, and Peter finally allowed it.

Pride often prevents us from serving others — and letting others help us. Jesus did not lose His greatness by serving others. In fact, we see His greatness through His service. He did not come to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28; Philippians 2:5-11). Later,

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Peter wrote, "...Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5).

"...I will not deny You!"

Jesus warned that His disciples would forsake Him. Peter argued, "...I will never be made to stumble" (Matthew 26:33). Jesus then warned that Peter would deny Him three times that night. Peter replied, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" (26:35). But he did. He denied Christ exactly as He foretold (Matthew 26:57-75).

Jesus did not abandon Peter, but helped him overcome his sin (Luke 22:31,32; John 21:15-19). After Jesus arose, Peter boldly preached Christ to the people who had murdered Him, endured prison, and met death without once turning from the Lord (Acts 2:4; 2 Peter 1:12-15).

Peter's mistakes do not destroy our respect for him. Instead, they endear him to us. He becomes more beloved to us because we, like Peter, make mistakes. And, as Peter overcame his mistakes with the Lord's help, you and I can do the same. †

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That's When

When it seems every way that I go
I run into a wall,

When it seems every path I take
Is so slippery I fall,

When I reach the end of my rope
And I don't know what to do

That's when He says, "My child,
I'm walking right here with you."

That's when He takes my hand
And tells me it will be all right,

That's when He says I don't have to be
Alone or afraid of the night;

That's when He says He loves me
So much He died and rose again;
And that's when I know I can make it
Cause I know He's coming back again.

So I'm not going to be discouraged

When I slip or when I fall;

I'm not going to be afraid

When I look up, see a solid wall;

I'll just lift my eyes a little higher

'Til I can see the victory —

Maybe tonight or tomorrow I'll see Him,

Coming back for me.

— Carol Cox

What the Bible Says About Satan

Randy Kea

There have always been questions and speculations about the devil (or Satan). God, in His Word, gives us all the information we need to battle and overcome the arch-enemy of mankind (2 Peter 1:3; Deuteronomy 29:29, 2 Timothy 16,17).

1. He is called “the devil” (accuser) — Matthew 4:1
2. He is called “the tempter” — Matthew 4:3
3. He is called “Satan” — Matthew 4:10
4. He is called the “god of this world” — John 14:30
5. He is called “the prince of the power of the air” — Ephesians 2:2 (no physical body)
6. He is called “the prince of this world” — John 14:30
7. He has his own “devices” — 2 Corinthians 2:11
8. He uses “wiles” (tricks) — Ephesians 6:11
9. He uses “subtlety” (craftiness) — 2 Corinthians 11:3
10. Paul spoke of the “snare” of the devil — 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Timothy 2:26
11. God is greater than Satan — 1 John 3:8
12. Satan was the first sinner — 1 John 3:8
13. He is “the father of liars” — John 8:44
14. He has his own preachers (all false teachers are ministers of Satan) — 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
15. He is very deceptive — 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Revelation 12:9
16. He perverts the Scriptures — Matthew 4:1-11
17. He has always sought to change God’s Word — Genesis 3:1-6
18. He would rob man of God’s Word — Luke 8:12 (He knows that the Word of God is the only source of salvation — James 1:21)
19. Through his devices and wiles he blinds people to the truth — 2 Corinthians 4:4
20. He is compared to a wolf, a serpent, and a roaring lion — 1 Peter 5:8; John 10:12; Revelation 12:9
21. We can resist and overcome the wicked one — James 4:7,8; 1 Peter 5:8,9

BIBLE CHARACTERS

22. The avenues of temptation listed — 1 John 2:15-17
23. God provides a way of escape — 1 Corinthians 10:13
24. The lost will be cast into hell with the devil and his angels on the day of judgment — Matthew 25:41,46 †

Randy Kea preaches for the church of Christ in Forest Park, Georgia, USA.

The Hiding Place

No place to hide in this world of evil;
Satan's venom is everywhere,
On the highways, in the byways,
Tempting all earth's children
With his evil, subtle ways.
No place to hide, only in Christ the Lord.
Seek and find this safe place of refuge;
Put on the whole armor of God.
Satan's darts fly fast and furious,
Seeking whom they may destroy.
Fear not, you're safely hidden 'neath God's armor.
You're safely hidden in Christ the Lord.
Satan goes like a roaring lion
Seeking whom he may deceive.
Believe him not; he is a liar.
Speak to him God's Holy Word.
God's Word is all-sufficient;
You're safely hidden in Christ the Lord.
Be strong, dear child, and fight life's battle.
You have God's promise true;
Keep faith and never falter,
Satan's evil can never molest you.
Rest peacefully on Christ's strong breast.
You're safely hidden in Christ the Lord.

— Anna Kelly Davis

A Twenty-First Century Martyr

Dick Ady

Before US forces went into Iraq, a man in Tikrit by the name of Abdel Youssef sent his wife and daughter to Istanbul, Turkey. Later he took his two young sons by night and met his family there.



Read the following story and weep with us. Then add the name Abdel Youssef to the list of faithful heroes mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Abdel has given his life for the cause of Christ in the Middle East.

Abdel had long wished to learn about Christianity. In February, 2004, he met a Christian in Istanbul who put him in touch with one of our **World English Institute** teachers who proceeded to teach him by e-mail. The teacher, a retired electrical engineer, had taught in Albania in 2002 with a WEI follow-up team. While there, he had developed extensive material comparing Islam with Biblical Christianity. He had studied the Qu'ran and prepared himself well for the day when the opportunity came to teach Muslims. Like Esther, he was in place "for a time such as this".

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Within 24 hours of the first contact, Abdel had started to spread the news by e-mail to Yemen, Bahrain, Oman, and Libya. Each person who wrote said basically the same thing: "My friend says you can teach us how to be Christians."

Abdel and his wife and family were hungry for the truth and absorbed the lessons and other material sent to him as fast as it could be sent. In March he, along with his wife and 13-year-old daughter, was baptized into Christ. Like Andrew who went to tell Peter after he had met Jesus, Abdel immediately left the relative safety of Turkey and flew to Yemen where he had relatives and friends to tell them, "I have found the truth". His suitcase, containing 50 Bibles, was confiscated but he was released, undoubtedly so he could be watched. This did not deter him.

Abdel's World English Institute teacher wrote of him, "At one time as many as 400 people were motivated by Abdel to study the Bible with me. A number of them believed and were immersed. Entire groups of students were born again. They knew that they were risking their lives. Persecution came. Some went to jail. It is believed that others died.

"Abdel's efforts were not limited to Yemen. Thanks to him, there are now Christians in other Middle Eastern countries. Their numbers grow.

"Abdel and his wife knew they might be tortured and killed, but they never swayed from their commitment.

"Abdel was jailed twice in Yemen and once in another country. He was beaten each time. After being released the last time, a group of radicals captured him, beat him, and gouged out one of his eyes. This beating was severe."

So that those who wanted to study would not have to go to public internet cafes, they — on their own and with their own funds — bought 20 computers and set up a rotation so that groups of family and friends could study by e-mail. Because of this man, **between March and September 2004, about 1200 became Christians in the countries of Yemen, Bahrain, Oman, and Libya. Without exception, they have told us that, if you can read the *Qu'ran* in the original language, you know that the "peace" taught there is "submission" (becoming Muslims). Otherwise, you will be destroyed. Several have disappeared, but the work continues.**

To give you an idea of this man's commitment and courage, here are excerpts from some of his e-mails:

"Churches in America should not stop praying. Our interest is to persuade fellow-men who were brought up in this misconception kind of teach-

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

ings. Some are not willing to understand and that puts our lives in danger. Every day I wake up, before going to talk to anyone I must know what is going outside. I know anytime I am able to land into the den of lions.

“Tell brothers in America about our love for the Lord. I remember when I watched ‘The Passion of the Christ’ I saw the Son of Man (Jesus) killing the serpent (snake). This is what we need to know, that our Lord has defeated the power of Satan and even if they try to ruin us in the Middle East, we won’t get scared and die easily. We win through the power that lies behind the Lord and Savior. The Lord loves all His people and He wants us to change.

“Should you find it necessary please we’ll also ask you to pass my emails to churches to pray for us. We need prayers. Pray for my wife so much. Her willingness to support me is amazing and without her I couldn’t have done anything so courageous. Pray for my children, too, not to change their minds because of what they will see in their lives in the particular environments in which they will live. Pray for the _____ and their family in _____. I want us all to congregate in _____ before choosing a second country. I will be willing to help M, and we teach each other each day. I have no more words to say other than to tell you good news of me having the internet at my home. God bless you and we thank you. My wife is so tired by my side I must take her to bed now. It is 2:30 in the morning and I must sleep.

“It is very kind of you that you have been able to pray for me and my family. A lot of things are happening in the world that gives glory to our God and Jesus. It is with happiness in me that I have sat to send this e-mail to you this morning. Many have been praying to hear any word from me and I didn’t know whether I would be able to talk to anyone in life, neither to my wife nor my children. But for now I do thank God that He has enabled everything to happen as I have been wishing.

“I was arrested in the town of _____. They got me red-handed with Bibles that I had bought through M in Turkey. Besides, they got us trying to fix some several computers. This was not a coincidence but rather someone had arranged. I was arrested with several others, but to their lucks, they were Yemini. Even the Betrayer was among us who pretended to be a Bible student. I discovered that later.

“I was confined in a police station waiting for my fate, but when the fate was becoming something more than I expected, I knew I would just die.

FROM THE HEART OF. . .

I was beaten and, as I type this email, I have several fractures in my body. The officers humiliated me naked. I was taken from one point to another and was highly warned not to try and communicate to outsiders, especially Americans. I was not able to communicate with my wife as well. I was denied food and would eat only if I was able to be with a few others in a shared cell. Most of the time I spent in a lonely cage because my inmates were very brutal and would beat me because they knew the main reason for my arrest was that I was trying to change the Arabs to think like Americans in Christianity.

“From there they threw me out at the border of Oman and Yemen. This was the birth to most of my physical pains and wounds. I was arrested as I was thrown to that border. Oman Police officers respected me not. They did wonders with my body. They did every experience a doctor could try to exercise their skills. I was left for dead. All the time I have been away my life nearly ended, till God saw me through. It was just Wednesday that I saw something moving in my case. I had no choice but to threaten the police that I would talk to friends in America so that they could contact media groups to expose what was going on. When I got a chance I called (our brother in Bahrain) whom I asked to make sure to call you and others for any help. He wasted no time but rather called back to the Police station and asked for my release. I think the police realized that he was so serious and harsh that by Friday I was released. They handed me to the Yemen border guards who had nothing to do with me and released me immediately. I traced my way back home and met with my family. I am very joyful.

“There are friends in Oman whom I talked about joining the courses and learn the Bible. They are very impressed and wish to start. I can't promise when they can start since I want to stay here in Yemen and see that all people get a chance to start their lessons. I would say that if all seem not working the brethren in Oman would help in this matter. But we must be very careful with all our deals.

“The work at the University is at a standstill since their leader was also arrested. I am not sure when he will get out but all these must begin by Monday when I will trace for him and see what we can do to help get him released. **[As far as we know, to this date he is still “missing”. 30 were studying there and we think they are all gone. JT]** I don't like group studies unless they are people whom we really know and highly trust. Group studies have various problems, and the major one is that there are people in the group who serve as agents to make others get into jails.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

“Also, I am not ending my efforts in _____. I will continue with my work as from Monday. I haven’t known how the church is down S. and whether the students are participating well. **My major concern, even if it will cause my death, is to see men in our Middle East changed.** Many hate change but those who have been well influenced by our teachings seem to be responding very well. The good news is that some people are still planning for the similar meeting we had last time. This time we are going to be very careful.

“Rest assured that our faith in J. stands just the way we received the good news from you, and we will not dare to fear the world even if it threatens to kill our physical bodies. God loves us and He will protect us in all ways. Pass my regards to the church and tell those who have been praying for me that I am alive but very tired and in physical pain through the beatings I received while in Oman. God is love, and let’s all seek to love each other. Keep preaching about Jesus all the time!”

After his next disappearance Abdel was missing 16 days.

“Are you fine, my brother?”

“I am fine but have lost my left eye. I am in pain but will be able to get medication. I am still in Yemen. I was nearly killed in the bush. Tell friends, families, and all Christians to pray for me.”

From his wife:

“Abdel is at home but not where we lived before. It took me lots of times, hours and money to trace for him and get him. He is being attended by the doctors at home, we are paying private doctors for this. His left eye was taken out. This makes him cry as a kid while he is in pain. Our negotiation made them happier, otherwise they had wanted to remove both eyes and for him never to see Bible again.”

WEI teacher: “After his last beating, Abdel and his family left the country and went to a place where friends could give aid. With proper medical support, he was recovering from his injuries.

“Then, during the third week of October, Abdel’s life ended when a group of assassins attacked him and slaughtered him in the home where he was recovering.

“The message of Abdel’s death came from his wife on 10/24/04 with the subject line: **‘Prayers answered!’** She said: ‘Thanks a lot for your prayers, but as it pleases the Lord, Abdel is with Him now. He died shortly after 10 our time. May the Lord grant you favor to do his will.’

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

“Abdel’s family is currently in hiding, fearing a similar fate.

“Spreading this report is placing them and others in great danger. They know this but they are asking us to make these events known. They are living for Him and are ready to die for Him.”

Testimony from Abdel’s friend:

One of Abdel’s closest friends (Muhamed Mula) wrote: “Abdel’s death came at a time none expected. He died as a hero with no home. The killers did all they could to make it nastier than anyone could imagine, but still the victory is ours. Churches around the Arab world are now mourning Abdel.

“Without his efforts, we could have been in darkness. In his effort to help the work in Yemen, Abdel bought 50 Bibles and many computers. The computers, which were all confiscated, took lots of money from us. We spent nearly \$20,000 during a period of three months to bring people into the study of the Bible through WEI. Abdel was arrested with the copies of Bible and later released on the grounds that he should not try to do such things in Yemen.

“Abdel was later arrested again and taken for torture. They threw him across the border of Yemen and Oman.

“Without Abdel the three major churches in Libya would not be there. Without Abdel, eight congregations in Yemen would not be there. Without Abdel, two churches in Bahrain would not be there. Without Abdel, Christians meeting in Southern Saudi would not be meeting. Without Abdel, over 1,000 believers in all these countries would not believe.

“Abdel clearly posed threats to some that were very real, and that was the principal motivation for getting rid of him. We must unite in prayers and put our Lord Jesus Christ ahead of us. If we pray in peace and are ready to die, as many of us have died since March this year, then we’ll make it fully.

“We are going to offer financial support to Abdel’s children and wife. We are surrounded by folks whose lives are bloodthirsty. We know we may die, but we won’t give up.

“Please, if there is any international newspaper, we beg you to put this in it so that everyone around the world can pray for us.”

In the October/November edition of *WEI Update*, Dick Ady wrote, “Yes, dear brothers and sisters in the Middle East, we are praying for you. We know that God has received Abdel into Paradise where he is comforted. We are praying that Abdel’s story will inspire others to imitate his faith, love, and courage.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

We are also praying that God will protect you who are still alive.

An e-mail from brother Ady on April 7, 2005 gave this information:

“We received word this morning that another strong church leader in the Middle East has given his life for the cause of Christ.

“Muhamed Mula has been a tower of strength in the church ever since Abdel Youssef was martyred in October 2004. Muhamed has helped raise half a million dollars for the construction of a WEI Training Center in Bahrain. He was arrested at the construction site in early April. Now, he is dead.

Muhamed is much like Abel. *“By faith, he speaks, even though he is dead”* (Hebrews 11:4).

Listen to the words of this hero of faith as he speaks to us from the grave: “We are slain each month. We are either butchered or tortured. Unraveling the details of what happens to people would be difficult under the best of circumstances in the gangland shadows of the Arab world. We all must fight to stop this. Our best men are being butchered in spreading the truth. . . . We must unite in prayers and put Jesus Christ ahead of us. If we pray in peace and are ready to die, as many of us have died since March this year, then we’ll make it fully. We are surrounded by folks whose lives are bloodthirsty. We know we may die, but we won’t give up.”

Just before his death, Muhamed wrote, “Our faith is from Jesus, not men. They will destroy us, but they will not kill our faith.

“Did you know that the churches in Yemen have grown so much? We have over 1,200 people meeting each Sunday. What about Libya? The devil is working hard, but a fourth congregation was planted last week with 41 members. There are between 300 and 400 strong church members in Libya.

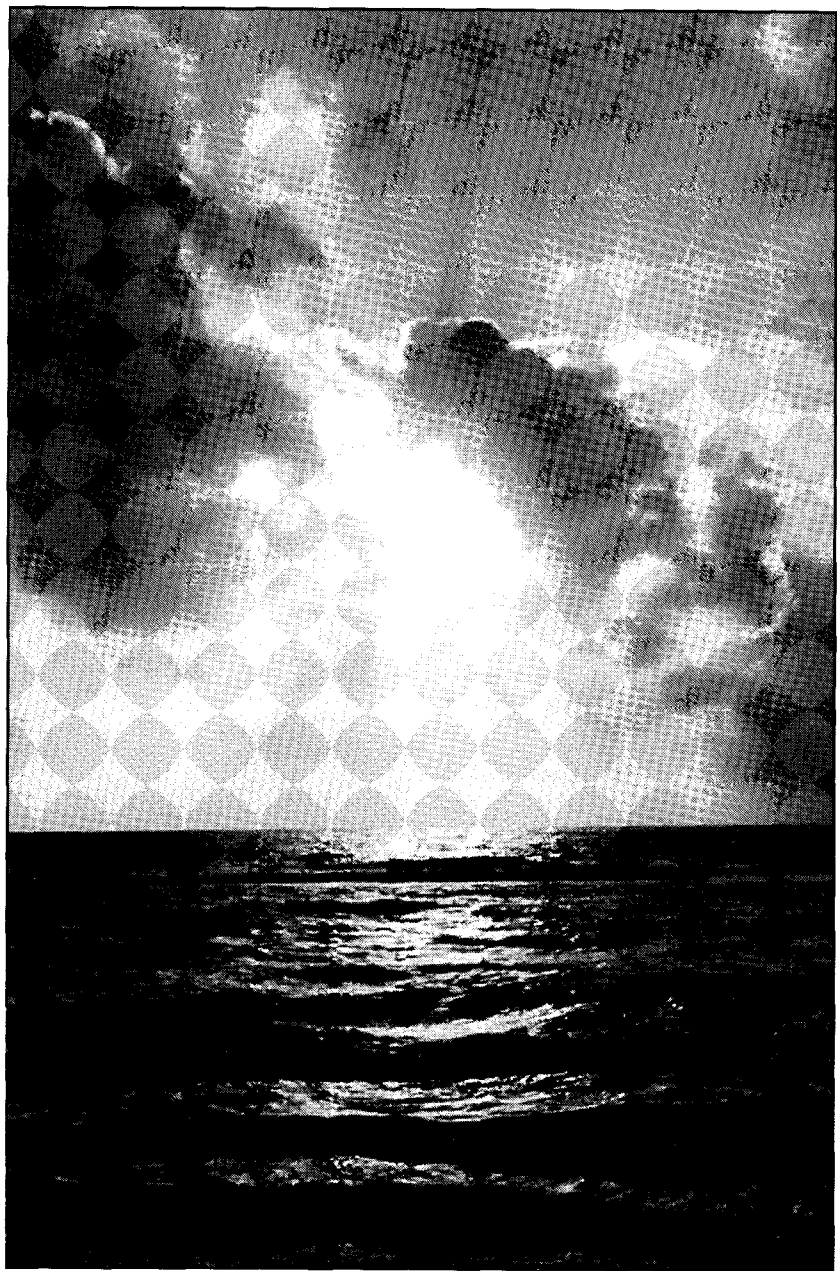
“I will try to send more news later in the morning when I know who is dead and how they were killed.”

Muhamed’s final words were, “Don’t grieve for our lives. Grieve that some men want to kill the church.”

As someone has said, “These are the bravest people I have heard of in modern times. May God welcome his [Muhamed’s] soul as a great soldier of Christ.”

With love in Christ,
Dick and Maudine Ady

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We Are Calling for Your Help Now!!! It is Urgent!!!

“I am a Christian, preaching and teaching the word of God to others. I have one of your books here, entitled BIBLE THEMES, which I have read for almost 6 times. I have no other book to read apart from the Bible. Please, I kindly request for more books that you may have at the moment — even second-hand books I will appreciate very much. Martin Mazzai (from Zambia)”

Brethren, are you listening? We are getting many calls from our brethren in Africa and Asia, begging for **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** and other books. Those people are starved for Christian literature. Will we hear them or will we deny them the spiritual food they crave? It is up to you.

With our editions in English, Spanish, (Telugu and Tamil in India), we are printing around 70,000 copies of this quarterly magazine, but our goal is to reach 100,000 copies of each issue (we wish it could be a million or more!). With that volume they will cost only 50 cents a copy. Our printer will package and address them for \$3.00 per bag, and then the postage for 35 copies in an M-Bag is \$11.00. This means that we can print and ship one box of 35 copies to a foreign address for approximately \$35.00, providing literature for 35 people. If you send \$35.00 a month, covering the cost of 12 boxes a year or 3 per quarter — 420 magazines — you will be enabling 420 X 10 people to read 112 pages of Gospel message in a year. That’s 4200 people you can be instrumental in teaching with this small contribution and small effort on your part! Think of the good that would do! Surely, most individuals and congregations can spare that much for the spreading of the Gospel.

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