

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## EDITORIAL

### *Trusting Faith: The Need of the Hour*

Perhaps there is no place on earth now where people could feel secure. With incidents of terrorism growing in every place rapidly, feeling of insecurity has become a commonplace everywhere. There is no place where one could go today without being afraid. Planes are being hijacked, trains and buses are being blown off. There are bomb scares and bomb blasts in vehicle parking places, in places of amusement and in private and government buildings. Is there any place where one could go and stay without the feeling of insecurity? There is none on earth. Indeed this is a world which is very insecure. Jesus knew this and he taught about it a long time ago. In His great sermon on the mount Jesus said:

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21).

This Christ taught over nineteen hundred years ago, because he realized that if we depend solely upon things of the earth we will fail. Nothing is certain and dependable on this

earth. A number of people, in last few months have lost money, houses and things that they had accumulated for years. James in the first century preached, "Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit, whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." (James 4:13, 14). The words hydrogen bomb, missiles, nuclear and chemical weapons, and space aircraft are words which bring chills to our spines. We are living in a world where hundreds of thousands of people can be wiped out within an hour. And the danger is growing each day.

So what is the answer? Is there any place where we can feel secure and protected? Is there any place where we could go for peace? Yes, there is, Christ Jesus says, "In Me you have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). And the Apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace, with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1). There is no way to be at peace in life unless we have peace with God, and we make peace with God through Jesus Christ. Jesus who knew that this world is going to be very much insecure, said in the world you will have tribulation, but then He quickly added the words, "but be of good cheers", He said, "because I have overcome the world". Jesus knew that He was going to die on the cross for sinners and that He would defeat death when He would be raised from the dead and thus would become the Saviour of all who would believe in Him and obey Him.

In this world of insecurity, where dreaded diseases and calamities are not uncommon, where there are fires and accidents, where there are terrorism and wars everywhere, trusting faith in God is the only answer for peace. Knowing that this world is highly insecure, I also know that if a disease or a calamity or accident or a bomb destroys my body, yet all of them put together cannot destroy my soul. Because I believe in Jesus and I am trying to obey his commandments by following in His steps. With the Apostle Paul I can boldly say: "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1

Corinthians 15:57). I read in God's book where our Saviour said: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14: 1-3). So if we believe in Jesus and are trying our best to live in this world as He wants us to live, then through Him we have peace with God, and Almighty God will take care of us when life on this earth is over. So be of good cheer, if you are a Christian.

## ***Some Certainties***

**J.C. Choate**

We are living in troublesome times. Anything can happen any time any where. Nothing is certain. Just because we are able to do something today, that does not mean that we will be able to do it tomorrow. This causes anxiety, frustration, and discouragement.

Even the scripture tells us that we do not know what will be on the morrow. (James 4:13,14). We cannot, therefore, afford to put our trust in earthly things that are here today and then gone tomorrow. (Matthew 6:19-21). So, are these uncertainties all there is to life? Isn't there something more lasting, something that we can put our trust in? There is, and we are going to consider some of these certainties at this time. We'll mention four of them:

*First*, "We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we will carry nothing out." By inspiration of God, the Apostle Paul made this profound statement. He continued, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through

with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." (1 Timothy 6:7-12).

Someone has said that there are two things in life that are certain: taxes and death. I guess there is a lot of truth in those words, but notice that Paul is playing down the material things of this life, showing that regardless of who we are, all of us entered the world the same way and all of us will likewise depart in the same way. As he said, we brought nothing with us, and we can take nothing with us. This means that it is so foolish to love money above all else and to strive for material things which will not last, and which we cannot keep forever. We should, rather, let our emphasis be upon those things that are good and right, the things which will better our lives and the lives of those around us.

Christ taught that we should not lay up for ourselves treasures on the earth, those things which will perish, but we should lay up treasures in heaven which will live on to our credit. (Matthew 6:19-21).

*Second*, the Lord's promises are certain. Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). While we cannot always depend on man to keep his word, we can be assured that the Lord will always keep his promises. Paul said, "For I know whom I have believed." (2 Timothy 1:12). The Hebrew writer tells us that it is impossible for God to lie. (Hebrews 6:18). Paul says that we have the "hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Titus 1:2).

The Lord has made so many promises. To his people, for example, he has promised to be with us always. (Matthew 28:20). Paul reminds us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his promise." (Romans 8:28). He also said that we have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

There are many more promises made by God, and the wonderful thing is that we know that His promises are certain, that he will keep every one of them.

*Third*, death and judgment will be certain. The Hebrew writer said, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrew 9:27). It is true, as Paul said, that some will be living at the time of the Lord's return, and they will be caught up into the air to meet Him. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). But since no human body can go to heaven, or even to the place of destruction, all will die or will be changed, into immortal substance, and then all will face the judgment. Job said that "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." (John 14:1). James said, "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain : Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:13,14).

For sure we will die, but then what? The judgment will certainly come. That is why we must live our lives well while we have the opportunity. We must remember that death is certain and that there is no way to go back into life and change things for better. We must remember also that as sure as we die, it is just that certain that there will be a judgment, and it will be just as certain that we will be there and we will be judged according to the deeds we have done in the body, whether good or bad. Christ will be our judge (Acts 17:31), that is, according to the words he has spoken. (John 12:48). He has already told us that after the judgment the righteous will go to be with the Lord eternally, but the wicked will be cast into hell. (Matthew 25:46).

*Fourth*, it is certain that Christ will come again. Jesus said that if he went away--he did--then he will also come again. (John 14:1). There are many, of course, who do not believe that Christ was resurrected from the grave, even though the evidences that he was raised are undeniable. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). Had he not been resurrected, he could not come back for us, but since he did arise from the grave and returned to the Father in heaven, it is just that certain that he will keep his promise to come back. There are those who would argue that since he has not returned

after all of these years, surely he will not come, but Peter wrote that people were saying the same in his day. His advice to them would be good advice to the unbelievers of this age. Hear him, as he says, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8). In other words, time is meaningless to him, so don't doubt the return of the Lord even though it has been almost two thousand years since he went into Heaven.

But why is Jesus coming again? To accomplish many things: to keep his promise, to bring an end to all things, to destroy the heavens and the earth (2 Peter 3:10), to call all from the graves, both good and bad (John 5:28, 29), to judge mankind (John 12:48), to deliver his kingdom--the church, his people--up to God (1 Corinthians 15:24), and to send the wicked away into everlasting punishment. (Matthew 25:46).

Yes, Christ is coming again. Will you be prepared to meet him?

My friends, be wise and put your faith in those things which are certain. Obey God and live for him so that you will be prepared to meet him.

## ***Titles***

**Jim E. Waldron**

The Lord Jesus said, "You know how that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet, it shall not be so among you, but whosoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:25, 26). Again the Lord said, in condemning the use of titles, "and you are all brethren" (Matt. 23:8). Even "brother" is not a title for preachers, but a term of endearment for all male Christians, as sister is for the women in Christ.

In Jesus' day the scribes and Pharisees, who were the clergy, loved the wearing of titles like "Rabbi", "Rabbi". Along

with this they wore their "preacher's clothes," and wanted the best and highest seat in the house.

Today the preacher group also wants to be in the clergy caste. They too love religious titles. They want the title of "Reverend", another is "the Right Reverend", "the Very Reverend", or even "the Most Right Reverend".

Among ministers (the word means servant) even in the church of Christ some cannot resist the desire for titles that exalt them over their brothers. One calls himself "Chief" of this or that. Another lists himself as "doctor", even though he doesn't practice medicine in the secular world. Now even brothers from North America are coming over and being announced as "doctor" such and such. Did any one ever read in the scriptures of "Doctor Paul" from Jerusalem, or "Reverend Timothy" at Ephesus, or "Chief" Silas at Troas?

Since some are being announced to their brothers as "doctor", what about others? Should not everyone get credit for their educational attainment? In such a case to be fair to all, announcements on Lord's day would go something like this, Brother Doctor will preach today. Brother SSLC will lead the singing. Brother 8th Standard will lead the first prayer and Brother Peon, who left school in the fourth, will lead the closing prayer. God forbid! Did not our Savior say "all of you are brethren".

Let us oppose all this foolishness to introduce titles among Christians, which exalts a man because of his worldly attainments. Such creates castes in Christ.

## ***Submission to God***

**Steve Williams**

**"Submit therefore to God" (Jas. 4:7).**

Surrender or submission to God is an essential part of the conversion process and our continuing walk with God. In order to draw near to God, we must say, "Not my will, but yours be

done." The following are some constituent parts of surrender to God:

1. *The totality of our surrender:* If we are going to surrender to God, our submission needs to be complete. The more we hold back, the more we prohibit the working of God in our lives to change us. The Lord does not like for people to "hesitate between two opinions" (1 Kgs. 18:21). To the church in Laodicea Jesus said, "You are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot" (Rev. 3:15). We can not serve two masters (Mt. 6:24). Our surrender to God needs to be total and complete.

2. *Humility:* We must remove self from the throne of our lives. "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord" (Jas. 4:7). "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God" (1 Pet. 5:6).

3. *Repentance:* There can be no real surrender unless we repent of our sins, of our self-willed disposition, and of our pride. We must destroy our own selfishness in order to make self open to God's will. We need to purify our souls to make room for God's dwelling therein. As you clean out a glass before you fill it with pure water, we must repent as an essential part of surrender and submission so that God can fill our lives with blessings.

4. *Trust:* We have not truly surrendered to God unless we trust him. To the degree that we attempt to remain in control and to direct our own destiny, to that degree we have not bowed in submission to God. We are like the little girl whose father offered her a dime. She asked for a nickel instead. He asked why. She said, "A nickel is bigger." So it is when we trust our own judgment more than God's. We rob ourselves of untold blessings by not trusting him. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."

"Soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Pro. 15:1).



# *He Cannot Deny Himself*

**Tom L. Bright**

"Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us: if we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

"He cannot deny Himself." Do we understand the implications of this tremendous statement? The undertones are weighty and should be closely considered.

Thayer defines the word deny, "To prove false to oneself, act entirely unlike himself." Vincent, in his *Word Studies of the New Testament*, wrote, "Thus to his own nature, righteous character, and requirements, according to which he cannot accept as faithful one who has proved untrue to him. To do this would be to deny himself" (Vol. IV, page 300). Lenski, in his comments on this passage adds, "Christ cannot contradict himself, prove false to himself, in the end disown what he was before. . . deny all his warning threats, give them and thus himself the lie, and let these deniers enter heaven as do his faithful believers . . . Count on the changeless Christ to all eternity."

Paul affirms that God is incapable of doing anything that is contrary to righteousness, truth, holiness, and purity. He cannot act at anytime unlike Himself. All His dealings with man will always, and on every occasion, be in absolute agreement with His divine nature and according to His revealed will. In other words, He will always act according to everything the Bible reveals about Him.

The Bible tells us that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). For God to be proven a liar would mean that He has denied Himself. He is faithful. "Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and loving kindness with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9). He, by his very nature, must be true to His promises and warnings.

Some other characteristics of Deity, that God cannot deny,

include: Love (1 John 4:8), light (1 John 1:5), mercy (Psa. 103:17-18), good (Psa. 34:8), gracious (Psa. 84:11), holy (Ex. 15:11), and righteousness (Psa. 119:137). He can never be anything less than, nor act in a way that would negate, these attributes of his nature.

Bible believers accept the inherent and distinctive qualities of the divine nature, and know they cannot be contradicted. However, it is possible to draw a wrong conclusion. Some think, since God is love, he is overly kind and will not require strict obedience to His will. The wrongheaded judgment that the goodness of God prevents his wrath really means that man can do no wrong. It also means God has denied Himself. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

Such ideas as, "That's OK, God and I have it all worked out," excuse sin as being unimportant. Sometimes a person, when discussing some wickedness in his life, will say "God understands," which means God accepts his misbehaviour.

Such reasoning may seek to exalt the love of God, but it forgets His justice. There is perfect harmony between God's "justness" and His love, between His mercy, and His holiness. Jehovah never ceases to be just and holy, and therefore can always punish in wrath.

"To you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

If God, because of pity, fails to punish evil doers, he has denied Himself. His mercy is never separate from His justice. "Behold then the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22).

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose

sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom, the Lord will not reckon sin" (Rom. 4:7-8). The King James Translation renders verse eight, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The word impute does not mean God considers a person righteous, when he is not righteous. The word impute, in the King James version, means, reckon. To whom will God not reckon sin? Paul says, "to those whose iniquities are forgiven."

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). In the next verse the apostle wrote, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." The gospel makes known the right doing of God, and because of His righteousness sinful man can be made righteous.

If God declared a person righteous separate and apart from that which reveals His righteousness. He would deny Himself. We see the eternal love of God in his willingness to forgive rebellious sinners on condition. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). We see the eternal wrath of God in his refusal to justify the unbeliever (disobedient). "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). "Behold then the goodness and severity of God."

God cannot deny Himself!

## *Must There Always be Strife?*

**Al Brown**

The church of Christ has suffered strife from its inception. The seeming neglect of Grecian widows caused discord in the early church. Stephen struggled with the hellenistic Jews and lost his life for the cause of Christ. Saul, after his conversion, had to strive with the enemies of Christ in Damascus, Jerusalem, Cyprus, Antioch of Pisidia, Antioch of Syria, Iconium and Lystra. Most of Paul's life was turbulent. Struggle and trouble were a part of his life, and of the whole church.

Jesus was in never-ending conflict with the Jewish leaders,

which finally became so bad that they hung him on a tree! The teaching of Jesus brought on upheaval and conflict.

No one enjoys strife. It gave Jesus no pleasure. Why, then, is strife so much a part of His religion?

Jesus came to pay the price for sin (Matt. 20:28). Satan is not easily conquered. He contested every inch of ground with the Son of God, and, although Christians are free from bondage to him, he still fights for mastery over the redeemed (1 Peter 5:8).

Christ came to bring peace with God and man. Still, obeying God will bring us into conflict with those who are of the world. We must "contend earnestly for the faith." Contending for what is right, conflicts with all who have no interest in doing right.

Satan and his agents are responsible for the strife and conflict, not Christ and his disciples. The splintering of the church is always the fault of him who sows tares among the wheat. When one chooses to submit to the Lord's will, he is in conflict with Satan and his agents. He has peace with God, but the world, which is largely under the control of the devil, is his enemy. Satan will find a way to create strife, and make it appear to be the fault of the saint. He is clever, and the world is naive.

Satan is evil. That is why there will always be conflict between the Christian and the world. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (John 3:19).

"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

"For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

"He that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whiter he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11).

Satan lives, and so, therefore, there must always be strife. When the church makes compromise with the devil, the strife ceases. God help us to fight against every wickedness, and innovation, and the archenemy will see to that that there will be strife. A strifeless world is a Godless world.

## ***Those Troublesome Objective Facts***

**Terry M. Hightower**

One day an actress tried to take her tiny white poodle through customs. She knew it was against the law, but because poor little dogs suffer away from their masters, she tried to smuggle him through, covering him up under her coat. Smiling her prettiest, the actress "sailed up" to the customs barrier. Everything went splendidly--until her "coat" barked! We laugh at people trying to fool fallible humans, but some try to fool the infallible God:

"Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying, 'It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments'. . . And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, 'Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah'. . . And Samuel said, 'What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?' (1 Sam. 15:10-14).

God told Saul to smite the Amalekites, utterly destroying everything, both "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15:3), but he thought that his way concerning religious instruction was better than (or at least as good) the Almighty's way. Amazingly, Saul twice claims that he had obeyed the voice of God and had gone the way that the Lord had sent him (15:13, 20). But (instead of a dog) sheep bleated and oxen lowed to call him a liar! Objective facts are hard for even a king to get around. No one ever gets "so big" or powerful that he or she can ignore "obeying the voice of

**Jehovah" (1 Sam. 15:22). When we reject God's objective word, He will in turn reject us (1 Sam. 15:23).**

Like the movie plots involving the so-called "perfect crime" where the perpetrator thinks he has planned every move and every "cover-up" so perfectly, we actually believe we can avoid a day of reckoning. On a vacation trip to the mountains a man and wife from Vermont met a quiet, pleasant couple from New York. All four of them had a great time together. Later, the gentleman from Vermont made up an album of snapshots he had taken of the other couple and mailed it to them in New York. The gift was never acknowledged, until one day a big-city lawyer appeared and asked the man if he had prepared the album. "Sure," was his reply, "Did they get it?" "It was received all right," said the lawyer, "And I'm representing the man's wife in the divorce suit. You see, she wasn't the woman in the album!"

Are you trying to fool the infinite God? Do you really think that you can hide personal sin from the One who formed you in your mother's womb (Ps. 139:13) or from the One of whom it is said that "there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13)? Are you really irrational enough to believe, even for one moment, that the Bible is wrong when it declares a "day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16)?

If you know that the Bible requires belief (John 3:16), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession of Christ (Rom. 10:10), and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), then why not do these things if you haven't? If you know that you are an unfaithful Christian, why not come back today by repentance, confession and prayer (Acts 8:13-22)? "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23).

**"Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble" (Prov. 15:16).**

# ***Faith is the Answer***

**Harold Littrell**

Faith is the starting point in living acceptably before our Heavenly Father. "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Believing in God means accepting Jesus as his Son, and the Bible as his word.

Faith is the initial element in obtaining eternal life. Saving faith must include works of obedience (for faith without works is dead, James 2:17,26). Belief is essential to beginning the Christian life, living the Christian life, and dying in Christ. Faith is the foundation for virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Peter 1:3-11).

Faith comes by hearing the Lord's word. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that Believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

The created universe blazes abroad the glory of God, and the heavens proclaim his royalty (Ps. 19:1). If the cosmos came into existence very slowly, and mostly by accident it would reflect very little honor to its maker. The magnitude and marvel of the heavens and earth call for an omnipotent designer.

The writer of Hebrews states that faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of unseen things (Heb. 11:1). The word translated substance is *hupostasis*. *Hupo* is under, and *histermi* means to stand--therefore; to stand under, support, hold up, or a sub-structure. The translators of the King James Version used the English word that most nearly rendered the meaning of *hupostasis*. *Sub* means below, and *stance* means to stand. Substance is a substructure. This is what faith does. It is foundational and supports all the rest.

When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Barnabas what

he needed to do to be saved, the answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Faith was the starting point. They preached the gospel to the jailer's household. Upon hearing the message of salvation, they believed, and obeyed. The great rejoicing of the jailor and his family came after faith had perfected itself in baptism (Acts 16:30-34).

The Ethiopian Eunuch, after hearing the faith producing gospel from Philip, asked what hindered him from being baptized. Heaven's answer was, "If you believe with all your heart you may" (Acts 8:36). One must believe with all his heart. It is not a passing fancy, but genuine heart-filled faith that starts one on the road to eternal life.

Faith is the answer to all our problems. Faith can move the mountains of sorrow, and sadness. It can brighten our world with the knowledge of the presence of our Lord. He may be an unseen guest in our homes, but his presence is very real. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6). Living faith brings the unshakeable confidence that all is well with our souls.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

## ***DNA and God***

**Steve Gunter**

A journalist on the science beat has written, "some scientists think that in the beginning a rudimentary strand of DNA, having formed haphazardly, haphazardly began making copies of itself" (*Three Scientists and Their Gods*, Robert Wright, 1988). Then he admits, "DNA, even in this crude form, has form and can give form, it is a highly nonrandom arrangement of matter." "The legs of the lame are not equal" when it comes to some scientists evasion of the evidence that compels faith in the Genesis creation account.

The science quoted above abounds in the classrooms and



culture of our nation. Carl Sagan's malicious materialism is a stench in the nostrils of our Lord. How is it that otherwise highly intelligent individuals so willfully disregard the increasing evidence for divine creation? Paul explained the cause:

For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought. For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory before God (1 Cor. 18-29).

To the saved the preaching of the cross is the power of God. Einstein said of the marvel of the material universe, "its existence indicates an intelligence so superior as to make man's intellection virtually insignificant." To humanists of the Carl Sagan school of error the gospel is "foolishness," therefore creation is out, and "highly nonrandom arrangements" are just taken for granted.

I do not worship DNA, for I know God made DNA and this superior truth forever closes my ears to the secular sirens who seek to disenchant my soul and cheat me of the hope of Heaven if after life's way my Lord and Judge shall say, "Enter in good and faithful servant."

# **"The Divine Bridge"**

**Kippy Myers**

God formed man from the dust of the ground and saw that what He had done was good (Gen. 2:7). He made woman from man's side and saw that it was very good (Gen. 2:22). God then placed the two in a special garden that He prepared for them. The garden was beautiful and perfect. The couple were in the presence of God and thus enjoyed the blessings that come from such a relationship. To complete this perfect arrangement, God gave the humans a law to benefit by, but they chose to violate it (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6), committing the first sin (1 John 3:4).

The major consequence of their transgression was a separation from God and from the blessings that naturally come from being near Him. Because of their sin, God drove them from the garden and placed a guard at its entrance to make sure they did not return (Gen. 3:24).

This was not an arbitrary act on God's part. God's very nature involves purity and goodness. So, as two north poles on magnets oppose one another because of their natures, sin is in direct opposition to the nature of God. Therefore, sin cannot exist in His presence. Sin separates the creature from the Creator (Isa. 59:1-2).

When man's sin put a distance between him and God, God looked down on man's pathetic condition. He wanted to close the gap which man had put between them. But, because of God's nature, any reconciliation would have to involve a way to rid man of his sins. God set about to provide a bridge over which man could return. He began building a bridge over which man could eventually come back to Him.

God had no sins to purge. He could not come to man. Man had left Him and he would have to be the one to return. Yet, God would do all that He could do to bring back the relationship while preserving the free will of man.

As God began to construct the bridge, the first plank that formed it was love. As He looked upon man's sinful condition,

God saw that man had gotten himself into something he could not get out of by himself. God had to do something to help him out of his dreadful position. That which motivated God to begin building the bridge was love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His Only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

God so loved. This shows the intensity of His love. He so loved that he gave. This kind of love cannot merely look on from the sidelines and do nothing. It must act! During the Vietnam war, wives of the prisoners of war could not just sit and wait for the government to do something. Their love compelled them to sign petitions, hold rallies, write to their congressmen, insisting something be done to bring their beloved husbands home. Even so, God's love would not allow Him to look upon man's lot without doing something about it. "Herein is the love of God made manifest, in that while we were yet sinners. He sent His Son to die for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:8-9).

Another plank of the bridge was God's mercy. Thayer defines mercy (eleos) as "Kindness or goodwill toward the miserable and afflicted joined with a desire to relieve them."

Imagine yourself in front of the fireplace on a cold winter day. You are drinking hot coffee and eating a donut as you watch a television show about Hawaii. Something outside the window catches your eye. A beggar is walking down the street. You notice his torn shoes, and the rags he is using for socks are poking out of the holes. The fire burns your toes and you pull them away. You look at him again and see there are holes in the knees of the beggar's trouser. You think how cold he must be. You take a bite of donut and wash it down with a sip of coffee. Then something happens inside you. You feel something for the poor beggar. You care about him. This feeling motivates you to get up, open the door and call him in to get some food and clothing. You show mercy. God saw man in sin with no escape. His love for man caused Him to show mercy.

Still another plank was God's grace. Just as His love gave way to mercy, so mercy gave way to grace. Grace is the natural outcome of mercy. God wanted to show kindness, and He did so by His grace. Grace means "favor." If I do you a favor, I do an act of good will.

God's grace is the gift He gave to man. He did not give it to man because man deserved it, but because man needed it. God's grace saves us (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:1-2). God gave us His Son and the prospect of salvation even when we did not deserve it.

The next plank was faith. We have been looking at things God did for man's redemption. Now, we look at what man must do. Since God offers grace to man, He must now devise a way by which man could get to the grace--a way for man to contact the blessings involved in the gift. God chose the way of faith. Faith is the means by which we reach up to God's grace and receive the gift of salvation. "For by grace are we saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8).

Imagine a huge coliseum filled with beautiful gifts. You know what is inside but you cannot get in because there is no door! The gifts represent God's grace, the undeserved blessings that He has given us. Then God makes a door by which we can gain access into the realm of gifts. On the door is a sign. It says "Faith." Through Jesus "we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:2). We have salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

God has provided a bridge over which man can cross, and be with Him through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18). Because of God's love, mercy, and grace, our faith can appropriate reconciliation with him. We all stand at our side of the bridge, contemplating the sturdiness of the first plank of faith. God says to man, "Step out and cross," Faith steps out. Unbelief will not step out.

Others say, "But I am too heavy with sin. The bridge can't hold me." God replies, "I will forgive your sins if you will step out." Still others tell him, "The way is too long and hard. I can't see across and I'm afraid I will grow weary before I reach the other side." God says, "I will give strength to make the journey."

Things on this side may not be clear at first, but as you travel they will become clear. "Step out," some balk at his word and remain in self-imposed isolation. That is their free choice. Let us step out at God's command, and keep walking, firmly sustained by His love, mercy, and grace until the day we reach the other side to see face-to-face Him who made the journey possible.

# *A Bloody Sacrifice*

**Larry D. Mathis**

An understanding of blood atonement is crucial. It is the central message of both Old and New Testaments. The Bible emphasizes that "apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

God required, from creation to the cross, the blood of animals. Finally, He required the blood of His own Son. That trail of blood ran all way from Eden to Calvary. What did it mean? Liberal theologians object to blood in religion, and remove all references to it from their hymn-books. They condemn the idea of saving blood as slaughter-house-religion!

Blood atonement is a vital part of God's plan of Salvation. When Adam sinned the angels may have thought him to be hopelessly lost. They knew the condition of fallen angels (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). Sinful man also should be "kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Justice demands satisfaction. Jehovah cannot pass over sin and maintain his holiness. "But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Jehovah had a plan. The plan originated in the mind of God before creation, and involved blood atonement. God revealed this mystery to man and angels in stages.

Mankind needed to be educated before the wisdom of God, in the program of salvation, could be appreciated. God began the schooling with Adam and Eve in the garden. God said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). This promise implied man's need for salvation, and a Redeemer; the Redeemer would be of the seed of the woman, and be wounded, and be victorious over the Old Serpent. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy.

Beginning with Adam and Eve, Jehovah started the sacrifici-

cial system. Adam and Eve needed a covering for their nakedness. The Hebrew word translated "atonement" means "covering." To satisfy the need "Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). In order to be skinned, the animals had to be killed. Animals gave their lives to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve because of sin. We can only imagine how Adam felt when he realized that those innocent animals died to provide a covering (atonement) for himself and Eve.

With what feelings of surprise, too, must Satan and his rebel host have heard from Jehovah, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent."

How intensely angels must have looked upon the first lamb offered in sacrifice. They became students of the sacrificial system, and watched closely the shadows, types, promises and prophecies.

The two angelic figures in the Most Holy Place above the Mercy-Seat symbolized this, in Moses's day. Their faces, turned downward, anxious to penetrate the mysteries that then lay concealed in, and beneath, the golden ark of the covenant.

"And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubins shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 25:17-22).

Peter wrote that the angels desired to look into the mystery of salvation (1 Peter 1:12). The ancient Hebrew prophets

earnestly inquired into these matters, "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11).

The Mercy-Seat shows God's mercy converging with His law, sprinkled with blood. Jehóvah, in his forbearance. anticipated Calvary (Rom. 3:25). Generations saw this wonder, but neither man nor angels understood it until Jesus ascended Golgotha.

That old system was a shadow, and the new system the very image of the heavenly things. As the bud brings forth the flower, Judaism brought forth Christianity. Moses delivered the Christian system "embryonically" in prophecies, in the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and in instructions for feasts, sacrifices, and ceremonies. Judaism foretold, and eventually proved the redemptive ministry of Christ.

Just as a man's shadow would reveal far less information about him than the living man himself in the flesh would reveal, the shadow of future things, as revealed in the law of Moses, is far inferior to the reality of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Animal blood could not make the worshipper perfect, as pertained to his conscience (Heb. 9:22; 10:4). In its covering it was partial, and temporary, but it gave the necessary respite until God allowed Christ to die for all.

Since "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" Christ, the Great Volunteer, undertook the task. He could not do God's will with mere animal sacrifices, but would need a body specially prepared of God. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me; In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure; Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God. Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the

offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:5, 10).

Nothing less than the blood of the perfect and sinless Lamb of God, himself God, could take sins fully away. Nothing less than a prepared body that housed deity, could remit sin. What can take away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. "What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh! precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow. No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus." There is power, wonder working power, in the blood of the lamb!

He was holy (Luke 1:35). There was no fault in him (Luke 23:4). He was not convicted of sin (John 8:46). He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21). He did no sin (1 Peter 2:22). He was without sin (Heb. 4:15). He was without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:19).

The man whose name is The Branch would build the temple of the Lord. He would bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne. He would be a priest upon his throne (Zech. 6:12-13). He would speak peace unto the brethren: and his dominion would be from sea to shining sea (Zech. 9:10).

God accepted that offering. The blood of his Son is adequate to satisfy the law's demands, and solve the greatest moral problem that ever occupied the attention of men or angels. Jehovah could be just, while justifying sinners. Not the blood of just any man would do. Not even the blood of a very good man. The blood of a perfect man--a man who knew no sin--and was God incarnate was necessary in order to make sinful man whole. God the mighty maker died for man the creature's sin.

The great Antitype of the sacrifices slain by divine appointment appeared on the old rugged cross. He whipped death and hell. Life and immortality came to light through the gospel. He made possible access into the holiest place.

"What must I do to be saved?" You must hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17). You must believe (Heb. 11:6). You must repent (Acts 17:30-31). You must confess that Jesus Christ is God's Son (Romans 10:10). And you must be immersed into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38).