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## *Mountain Moving*

Lord, I've never moved a mountain  
And I guess I never will;  
All the faith that I could muster  
Wouldn't move a small ant hill.  
Yet, I'll tell You, Lord, I'm grateful  
For the joy of knowing Thee,  
And for all the mountain moving  
Down through life You've done for me.

When I needed help You lifted me  
From depths of great despair,  
And when burdens, pain and sorrow  
Have been more than I could bear,  
You have always been my courage  
To becalm life's troubled sea,  
And to move those little mountains  
That have looked so big to me.

Many times when I've had problems  
And when bills I've had to pay,  
And the worries and the heartaches  
Just kept mounting every day,  
Lord, I don't know how You did it,  
Can't explain the wheres and whys,  
All I know, I've seen those mountains  
Turn to blessings in disguise.

No, I've never moved a mountain  
For my faith is far too small,  
Yet I thank You Lord of Heaven,  
You have always heard my call.  
And as long as there are mountains  
In my life I'll have no fear,  
For the mountain-moving Jesus  
Is my strength and always near.

— Author Unknown

# THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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## 18 EDITIONS

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

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



# THE BLESSINGS OF MAKING GOOD DECISIONS

**J. C. Choate**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

The world is in sin and man finds himself sinking deeper and deeper into that bottomless pit. Paul said that all have sinned, and that the wages of sin is death

(Romans 3:23; 6:23) While the whole creation moans and groans in darkness, trying to find the meaning of life in material things, and trying to find happiness in the pleasures of this world, life gets bleaker and man finds less to live for the further he travels down that road of sin.

Most of the world goes to great lengths to oppose God and to turn others against Him. Men count themselves all-wise in denying that He is Creator, and they glorify the illogical and unscientific system of belief known as the theory of evolution. They indulge in the pleasures of the flesh and end up with AIDS, which cannot be cured. They ignore God's laws and destroy the home, values, and as a result, the nation.

In dealing with this very type of people, the apostle Paul wrote:

*“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not*

*God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*

*“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which 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 ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

*“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:18-31).*

Now, did you hear what Paul said in that lengthy statement? Read it again. The assurance is clearly given that God has, and will, put down the wise, the mighty, the evil of this world, and will raise up the simple, the humble, and the obedient through their acceptance of Him and His teaching. Worldly wisdom, human wisdom, and man's own ideas are not enough to direct our steps to happiness and spiritual prosperity. God has promised that He will bring to nothing all such foolish thinking, and all denials of His power and existence.

Do you want to be happy? Do you want to have a good life? Do you want to make a real contribution to this world? Then decide that you will believe in the Lord and that you will give your life to Him, obeying His will and spending the remainder of your days in faithfulness to Him.

Even the majority of believers in the Lord have not learned the lesson of making the total commitment to God which will change their lives and give them true happiness. Many want to be Christians but at

the same time they are trying to hold on to the world with its foolish thinking. They are torn between two opposing ways and end up being frustrated and unhappy.

On the other hand, when you finally decide that you are going to give your life to God, if you are sincere you will not be making conditions about your obedience. You will be ready to yield to His word and to comply with His teachings. Christ said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:16). You will be ready to accept what He has required and to comply without any reservations. You won't complain, offer excuses, make arguments, or put man's reasoning above God's teaching, but you will whole-heartedly obey the Lord to be saved and to become a Christian.

When you decide to take God's word as your sole guide in spiritual matters, you won't have any problem understanding what He has revealed about the church — whose it is; whose name it (and you) must wear; when, where, and by whom it was begun; who is its only head, its only foundation, its only authority, guide, and savior.

You will have no problem accepting what God says about the church's organization, how it is to worship Him, and what you must do to become a part of it. Passages such as Matthew 16:18, Acts 2, Ephesians 5:23, Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Mark 16:16, John 4:24, Acts 2:42, and 1 Corinthians 15:58,24 will be easily understood, because you will have made the decision to follow God's word, and you will *want* to understand what He says! When you accept these truths as they are set forth in the Scriptures, you will not be teaching that one church is as good as another, that there are many ways to heaven, and that the many contradictory teachings of the various denominational churches are acceptable to God.

It is so easy to be obedient and happy when you make the unreserved decision to follow God without question. Once that decision is made, **MANY LIFELONG DECISIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE!**

Having decided to obey Christ in baptism and to become a part of His body — the church — you no longer have to question what you will be doing on Sunday morning, if you will go to worship or stay at home, if you will go visiting, or if you will decide that you "feel bad" and need to stay in bed awhile longer. No! The decision to obey God

has been made! You know that you will be assembling with the church to worship Him on Sunday morning, *every* Sunday (Acts 20:7), every time the church meets!

You know that you will be worshipping in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). That means that you will be studying God's word, praying, singing praises to God, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and giving of your earnings according to the way you have prospered during the week (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 2:15, Ephesians 5:19, 1 Corinthians 11, and 1 Corinthians 16:2).

You will not have to make a weekly decision about your contribution, whether or not you will give, and how much. There will be no sham, no cheating on God — no robbing God (Malachi 3:8ff). Instead of asking, "How little can I give, and 'get by'?", you will give freely, cheerfully, sacrificially, as you have purposed in your heart (2 Corinthians 9:6,7).

In your daily life, that ONE MAJOR DECISION TO GIVE YOUR LIFE TO GOD will have incorporated many small decisions. You will not debate about being honest, about abstaining from worldly and immoral behavior, about being faithful in marriage, about being a person of integrity, about being hard-working, going the 'second mile' — about hundreds of other decisions that will already be settled matters. Any taint of ungodly living would be inconsistent with your initial decision of total commitment to God.

People miss so many of the good things of life by making a chain of bad decisions, each one following the other. Instead of being happy, their lives are miserable disappointments to themselves, to their families, to their friends, and most of all to God Himself.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Do you want to be happy? Do you want to enjoy life? Do you want to have the fullest, richest, most rewarding existence possible in this world, with the crowning hope of eternal life with your Creator? Do you want to be a blessing to your family, your friends, to humanity in general? If so, I urge you to make a life-changing decision, the one that will lead you to obey the Lord and to be faithful to Him all of your remaining days. When you make that decision, you will find that life has suddenly become much easier, and so much more beautiful! †



# The Wisdom And Knowledge Of God

**Byron Nichols**

While we highly respect the entire Bible, most of us have very special feelings regarding certain passages of Scripture. We can't help but have our favorite verses, chapters, etc. My mother's favorite

passage was Romans 11:33-36. These verses also constitute my favorite group of verses. Here Paul praises God in this manner:

*"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord?' (Isaiah 40:13) Or who has become His counselor?" (Job 36:22) 'Or who has first given to Him, And it shall be repaid to him?' (Job 41:11) For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."*

Dear readers, we are about to try to come to a better understanding and appreciation of one of the most majestic and marvelous groups of verses of all of God's inspired Word!

We may stand in awe of the wealth of Bill Gates, the world's richest man, but the many billions of dollars of the head of the Microsoft Corporation still leave this man as a pauper in comparison with the riches of God. Our God owns all of the material wealth of the universe, including that of Bill Gates. However, some of the very greatest riches belonging to God are in the realm of wisdom and knowledge. The inspired testimony of Paul was that *"the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men"* (1 Corinthians

1:25). Please understand that Paul was not saying that God has ever acted foolishly or demonstrated any weakness whatsoever. Rather, this was just a way to emphasize the tremendous superiority of God's wisdom over that of mere man. The Holy Spirit led David to put it this way: "*Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite*" (Psalm 147:5).

Moffatt's translation of verse 33 in our text may well help us to see the magnitude of God's knowledge: "*What a fathomless depth lies in the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable His judgments! How mysterious His methods!*"

Surely it is true that we may know the mind of God only to the extent that He chooses to reveal it to man. Who could possibly ever advise God on any subject? Job certainly could not, and both Isaiah and Jeremiah join Paul in affirming that no man can (Isaiah 40:13,14; Jeremiah 23:18).

God gives to all, but He receives from none. What could man possibly give to God, in view of the fact that God created the entire world and continues to be the owner of it all? We have absolutely nothing to give to Him so that He then would be in a position of needing to repay or reimburse us. But some may object by referring us to Paul's admonition in the first part of the next chapter in Romans (12:1,2) to give our lives to God. Indeed, we are to give our lives to God in sacrificial service to Him! However, even in presenting our very lives to God, He in no way becomes indebted to us. Our lives can never be so good as to cause Him to owe us anything. We will forever be indebted to Him, never the other way around!

Goodspeed translated verse 36 like this: "*For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends!*" In this verse Paul sums up his beautiful and heartfelt doxology. Like Paul, we need to recognize and acknowledge the greatness and majesty of our God and join together in affirming that God and God alone is deserving of our everlasting homage and adoration and praise.

May we duplicate Job's attitude toward God. Even in the midst of his questioning of God, Job declared, "*Though He slay me, I will hope in Him*" (Job 13:15). Surely our confidence, our faith, our trust, and our hope must and can rest in God!

Please consider this beautiful poem by a dear Christian lady who expressed her love and admiration for the Lord in these words:

# **This Lovely Earth**

**When I behold this lovely earth  
And think of its wonderful birth —  
How God, by His great might and power  
Brought forth each tree, each lovely flower —  
I bow in humble adoration  
Before the God of creation.  
My heart overflows with joy and love.  
Glory to our God above!**

**He made the sun that shines so bright,  
The moon, the stars to rule the night —  
Created all things, great and small —  
Our great God created them all.  
Angels in heaven prostrate fall,  
Humbly obedient to His call.  
O mortal men on this old earth,  
Praise Jehovah! He gave thee birth!**

**Our God devised redemption's plan  
For every tribe, for every man.  
Dear sinner, your poor soul to save  
Christ conquered death, hell, and the grave.  
O come, make hallelujahs ring!  
Raise your voices! His praises sing!  
Praise Him from whom all blessings flow!  
Praise Him all creatures here below!**

**Anna Davis**

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## THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Only one more issue of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** before the end of 1999, and the end of the millennium! What an exciting event!

It is our desire to devote "**FROM THE HEART OF ...**" in Volume 24 to the world picture of evangelism. We want to show something of what is being done by the Lord's church to reach out to the world. In Volume 25, the first issue of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** in the new millennium, we want to focus our attention on the job before us: the countries that have not yet been evangelized and what needs to be done to reach them.

Our purpose always is to teach the untaught and to strengthen God's children. We ask your prayers to that end. **JCC**

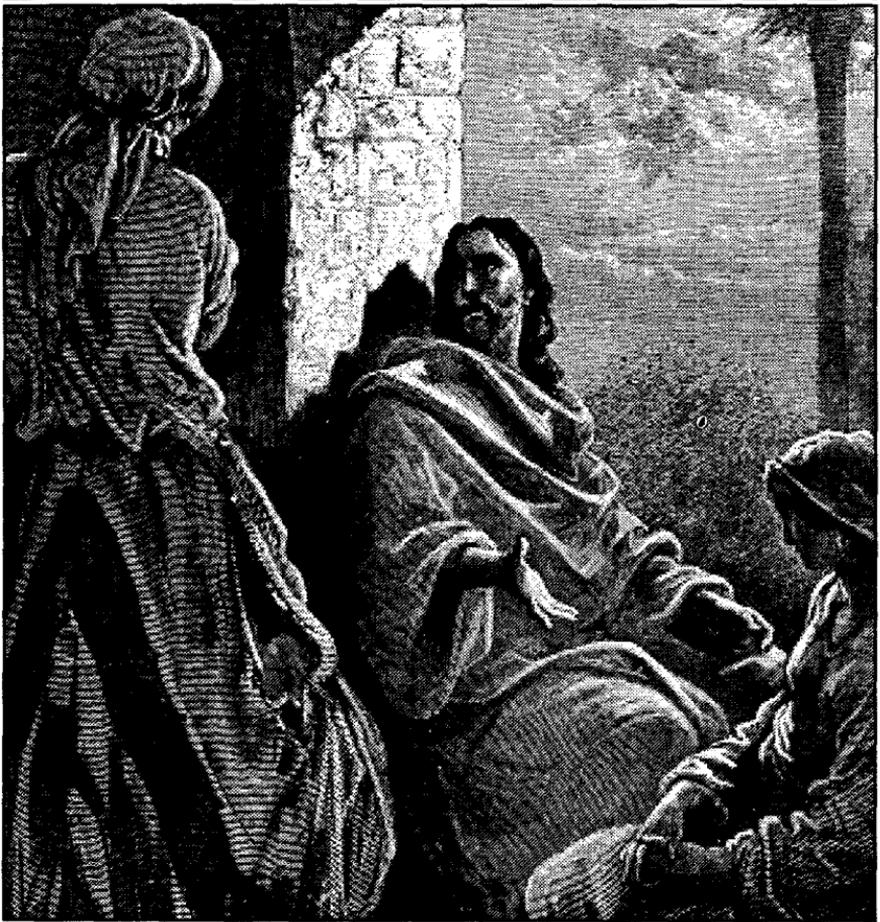
## Winter Will Come

Proud Nature, resplendent  
In scarlet and gold,  
The colors of kings  
You grandly unfold;  
But what will you do  
When winter has come  
And stripped you of glory  
Right down to the bone?  
Naked and freezing  
In icy cold winds,  
You'll fight for endurance  
Till spring comes again.

Till spring comes again  
With a mother's sweet care,  
Enfolding in emerald  
The limbs that were bare;  
Regal her gifts of rubies  
and gold,  
Regal the music  
She'll sweep through your soul,  
Regal the promise  
Of summer's rich store,  
Regal the bounty  
She'll lay at your door;  
But hear the soft warning  
She whispers in song:  
"After the summer,  
Winter will come."

And listen, oh soul,  
As you dream in the sun:  
After the summer,  
Winter will come.

— Betty Burton Choate



# Jesus — Example To All

**Peter Mostert**

Jesus — example to all!

*"I do not speak," said Jesus, "on my own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to*

*say and what to speak...Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to*

*observe all that I commanded you.”* This commission was, at first, given to Christ’s disciples. They, in turn, gave the directive to those who later became Christians.

Paul, writing to Timothy, said, *“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also”* (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul was so emphatic about teaching the pure Gospel of Christ that he cautioned the church in Galatia, saying, *“Even though we (apostles) or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel other than or more than that which we preached to you, let him be accursed”* (Galatians 1:8).

Through the ages some people have taken it upon themselves, for one reason or another, to rewrite God’s Word. Recent attempts include a non-gender-biased version of the Bible, a condensed version, and an elimination of major sections that are reportedly uninspired, including many of Jesus’ sayings. This reminds me of a person who was told of an important teaching by Christ, and was shown the passage in the Bible. He immediately ripped out the page and said, “Now it is no longer there.”

Our “self-help” culture insists on “going-it-alone” and, as a certain child once put it, “Do it mine self!”

The same message may, by some, be directed toward God: “I don’t want to be told what to do!”

Throughout the years the Gospel of Christ has not changed. God is still seeking and saving the lost. People may have distorted it; some have added to it, some have taken away from it, and some have wandered from it, but the pure Gospel remains constant, waiting to be discovered by any seeker who will listen and obey its message, and preached by any who would be a true standard-bearer for God.

In the constant attitude of our Lord, we have an example of how we should revere and obey God. Throughout His earthly ministry, He made such statements as these: *“...the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does the Son also does in like manner”* (John 5:19). *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (John 6:38). *“My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me”* (John 7:18). *“And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him”* (John 8:29).

Jesus is our only Lord and Savior, and our example — listen to Him and obey Him. †

**Peter Mostert preaches for the Lord’s church in Yucaipa, CA, USA.**

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OBEDIENT BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST

**D. R. Gnanasundaram**

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the free gift of God to all believers in Jesus Christ who obey the gospel of our Lord and are baptized as commanded by Him. **This gift is proof that a Christian is a child of God.**

The Jews, before the era of the New Covenant upon the death of Jesus Christ, were quite rightly the children of God as they were the only ones to whom God gave the Old Covenant. But when the New Testament came into effect all men in every nation, whether they be Jew or Gentile, are children of God by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul stated this truth in Galatians 3:26-28, which reads, *"For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."* Herein

we have it clearly stated that all men by being baptized into Christ Jesus become the children of God.

Paul further declared in Galatians 4:6, *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."* Today man is a son of God not by the physical fatherhood of Abraham but by faith in Jesus Christ and by obedience to His commands. It is by the process of baptism, the new birth, commanded by our Lord in Mark 16:16, that man is born into the family of God. At that point, God acknowledges him as His son by giving him the Holy Spirit.

Thus it is that through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ man knows for certain that he is a Christian and a child of God. Further, as a true child of God, the Christian calls God, *"Abba, Father,"* and by his continued obedience to the commands of our Lord, the Christian sustains a warm

## GOD

and close relationship with God, for we read in Revelation 3:20,21, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*"

### **The Bible teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the basis for Christian brotherhood.**

We all know that the children of one father are brothers and sisters. In the same way the children of God are brethren. They not only have a perpendicular relationship between themselves and God but they also have a horizontal relationship of brotherhood between one another. The same Holy Spirit who makes one a child of God also makes him a brother to every other child of God.

Paul explains this truth in 1 Corinthians 12:13: "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*"

The Holy Spirit who dwells in one child of God also dwells in every other child of God in the world. This relationship is certainly closer and more binding than the

fleshly ties of physical brothers and sisters. When our Lord Jesus was told that His mother and brethren wanted to speak to Him, He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and declared in Matthew 12:49,50, "*For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother.*"

### **The temporary nature of physical ties between parents and children, and brothers and sisters.**

The scribes and the Pharisees, during the time of our Lord on this earth, were very fond of being greeted by men in public places. They loved to occupy prominent seats at feasts, and they would have broad borders on their long garments to draw attention to themselves as godly men. Their pride was puffed up when others called them Rabbi or father. Jesus condemned this vain attitude in no uncertain terms by repeatedly calling them hypocrites. In Matthew 23:8,9 He said, "*But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*"

It will be observed that when Jesus said, "*Call no man your Father upon the earth,*" He was not referring to our physical parents, to

whom we refer as father, but He was especially condemning the insincere people of His day who wanted other men to respect and honor them by giving them the title of father.

Further, the fleshly relationship which binds brothers and sisters will cease with the death of the physical body, but the spiritual relationship is eternal because the spiritual part of man never dies. Therefore the brotherhood in the Spirit is so very precious that it must be guarded, protected and developed, as stated by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:3: *“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* When we sing the song, *“Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love,”* we are singing about the tie of the Holy Spirit.

**The gift of the Holy Spirit is an ‘earnest’ deposit.**

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:5, *“Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame things is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”*

We again read in Ephesians 1:13,14, *“In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”* The word ‘earnest’ is not used as an adjective but as a noun

which means a pledge or assurance that a promise will be kept. It also means money or substance given in advance, as a security that the full amount promised will be paid.

God has given us His word as clear proof of the fact that He will keep all of His promises. Also, when He confirmed the spoken word of the apostles by signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit, this was a seal of confirmation and authentication.

We read in Mark 16:20, *“And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.”* Hebrews 2:3,4 states, *“How shall we escape so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.”*

Therefore God, by confirming the word with signs and wonders and miracles has attested or sworn or affirmed that He will keep all of His promises. The fact that God will never fail was stated by Joshua at the close of his life, in Joshua 23:14: *“And, behold this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath*

*failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."*

Today we have God's promise of **salvation and forgiveness of sins** when we believe in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, confess our faith in Jesus and are baptized. As proof that He has forgiven us, God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Further, this gift is God's guarantee or pledge that **He will raise us from the dead**. This fills us with joyous anticipation and gives us a glorious hope that we will be resurrected to live eternally with God.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 we read, "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*"

The Holy Spirit is a partial payment on our eternal inheritance, even while we live in these physical bodies, for we read in Romans 8:16,17, "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children,*

*then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.*" What a wonderful and glorious thought that something bigger, better and greater than the present gift of the Holy Spirit awaits the faithful Christian in heaven! The life in Him that we experience now is the foretaste of all that is to come!

### **Does this gift mean that Christians have miraculous powers today?**

Does this gift mean that Christians have miraculous powers today, as was true of some in the first century? No! Surprisingly, the words 'Holy Spirit' are not synonymous with 'miracles'! A careful reading of the book of Acts will show that, while all baptized believers (Acts 2:38) received the gift of the Holy Spirit — *spiritual life in God* (John 6:63) — only those who were given special gifts by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 5:12; 6:3,5,6,8) could do miraculous deeds.

Dear friends, you too will have access to all of these promises of God if you will only believe in Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, confess you faith in Jesus, and be baptized. Then God will forgive you and you will have that rich inheritance in heaven. †

**D.R. (Reggie) Gnanasundaram is a preacher of the gospel in Colombo, Sri Lanka.**

# The Greatest Name

Bill Nicks

In Revelation 19:11-16, Jesus is called Faithful and True, a righteous judge, and "*King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*" When Peter was asked by what name the lame man at the Beautiful gate was healed, he replied, "*by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole*" (Acts 4:10). He further said, "*Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Verse 12).

Paul said to the Philippian church regarding Jesus, "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus*

*Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Philippians 2:9-11).

A different verb tense is given in Romans 14:11f, "*every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*" The implication is that we now have the *obligation* to bow in submission to Him, but it will be too late at the judgment when we will be *forced* to acknowledge Him as Lord and Christ. Now, we **should**; then, we **shall**.

Real Christians are shocked at the avalanche of obscenities heard in daily life and in the media. Profanity is lightly esteeming the name of Deity, even as Esau was profane in lightly esteeming his birthright (Hebrews 12:16). In Exodus 20:7 and Deuteronomy 5:11, God said, "*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in*

vain. *For the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.*"

This means those who take the name of God in vain will be punished. If you have lost a job, or your marriage has failed, the problem may very well be your lack of reverence for God's name. God allows His people to be punished today even as He did in the sentence of wandering for Israel in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29), and later the sentence of 70 years captivity in Babylon to Judah for their idolatry (Ezekiel 20:35-38; 22:1-22; Jeremiah 52:12f). Their lack of reverence for God and His Holy Name was the primary cause of their punishment. They had drifted far from the attitude of scribes of old who so revered His name that they would not pronounce the four letter Hebrew word that stood for Jehovah.

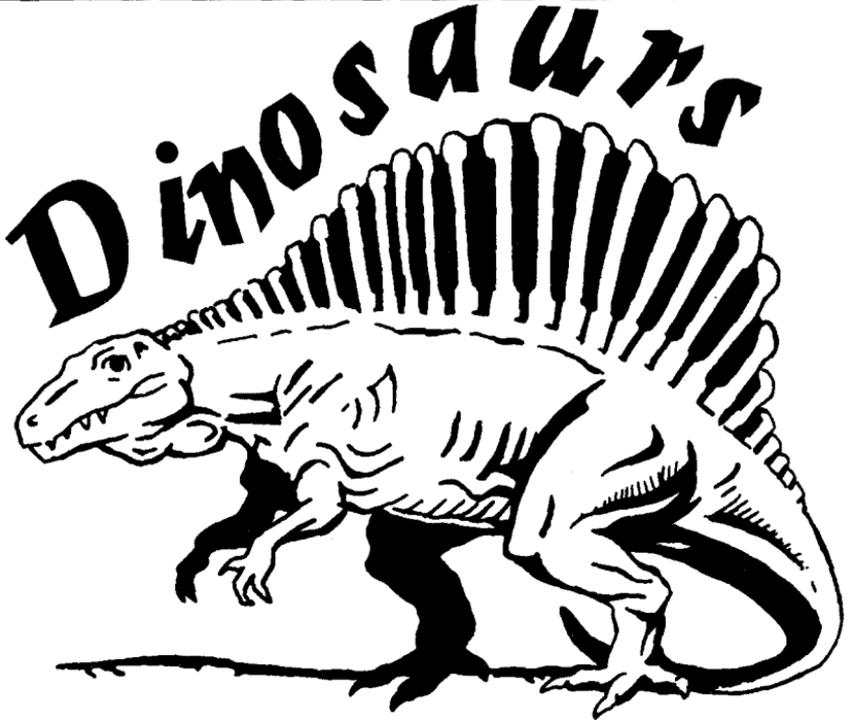
Our modern society also has wandered far from this spirit of reverence. Cursing is so common it seems that it is the normal reaction to frustration or anger. But there are three things that must be respected and revered if we are to return to God's way.

1. **We must reverence His name;** it stands for His character, His person, His Holiness (1 Peter 1:15,16).
2. **We must reverence His**

**word.** *"To that man will I look, even to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word"* (Isaiah 66:2). Job said, *"I treasure his word more than my necessary food"* (Job 23:12). His word is inspired of God (God-breathed) (2 Timothy 3:16f). Our attitude must be that of the Bereans, who *"with eagerness of mind searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

3. **We must reverence His church.** Jesus built it and bought it with His own precious blood (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). We must respect its oneness (Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18). We must respect its pattern (2 Timothy 1:13) which gives us information about how to enter the church, then how to worship and serve in it (Romans 6:11-6; 1 17f; Ephesians 5:18f). God's plan for His people has been clearly revealed. It is our obligation to search for it. Begin with respect for His name, then for His word, then respect His church. We can restore the church in its ancient purity if we truly reverence the greatest name on earth. †

**Bill Nicks is a former missionary to Africa and the West Indies, and is now serving as missionary-in-residence at Freed Hardeman University in Henderson, TN, USA.**



## and the Global Flood

**Bruce Stewart**

Biblically, we know that dinosaurs were on the ark since two kinds of every animal were taken aboard. In fact, these creatures not only survived the year-long ordeal of the flood but lived for hundreds of years afterwards before they became extinct.

According to Genesis 6:14-17, the ark was approximately 450 feet long, 45 feet high, 75 feet wide and had a space capacity of 1,400,000

cubic feet (the equivalent of more than 500 box cars on a train). It was not built to go from point A to point B, but to simply be a floating box. The ark had no rudder, mast, or sail. No boat was built larger than the ark until the 1850's.

Noah was not commanded to take two of every species into the ark, only two of every kind. Kind appears to be a more general term than species. Certainly, there were

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fewer species in Noah's day than today. Instead of hundreds of species of dogs and cats there were probably just a few (many of the different species of dogs and cats in the world today are the result of breeding). There was adequate room for all the kinds of animals, along with extra space for food and supplies.

What about those gigantic thirty-ton dinosaurs that reached heights of three stories? How did they fit on the ark? God probably did not send to Noah full-grown adult dinosaurs but smaller "teenagers" which would have taken up less space and yet were capable of reproducing.

God brought the animals to Noah so he did not have to go out and "round them up" (Genesis 7:9). Since God brought the animals to the boat in a miraculous way, He may have also provided them with some means of hibernation so that feeding and cleanup would have been kept to a minimum. The dark, rocking environment of the ark may have contributed to the animals' slower activity.

Friends, Christians should have no problem accepting the reality of dinosaurs many years ago. Neither should we reject the idea of the existence of these huge animals on Noah's ark. †

**Bruce Stewart preaches the Gospel of Christ in Mobile, AL, USA.**

### How Do We Know Jesus Was Resurrected?

After Jesus was raised from the grave, He was seen and recognized by many people. One of His followers had said, "*Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe*" (John 20:25).

When Jesus appeared to the disciples, He said, "*Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving but believing*" (John 20:27).

That disciple's response of recognition was, "***My Lord and My God!***" (John 20:28).

We will be raised from the grave, in our own recognizable bodies, just as Jesus was. 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 says, "*...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible...*"

The fact that Jesus died for us, and conquered death in resurrection, assures us of our own victory over physical death!

***NEXT: When I die, where will I go?***

# The Illogic of *Theistic Evolution*

Hershel Dyer

Theistic evolution, *the theory of God creating all living beings through an evolutionary process over millions of years of mutations and alterations between the now-recognized biological orders*, has a popular acceptance among many religious people. With this view they content themselves that they can hold faith in the God of the Bible (though ignoring the specifics of what the Bible reveals about that God and His creation) while accepting the conclusions of "science" at the same time.

Of course, this means that the creation story in Genesis must be mythologized and written off as historically untrue. Also, that Jesus, Paul, and other teachers simply did not get their facts straight about Adam and Eve (cf Job 31:33; Matthew 19:4,5; 1 Timothy 2:13,14; Jude 14). If God did not create that original pair from whom we have all descended, then the whole of Scripture is thrown into confusion. To hold to the deity of Jesus and to the inspired message of the apostles while giving credence to theistic evolution is utterly illogical!

Furthermore, if God made man "*in His own image*," in any sense of the word, what is that image? That it belongs to man and not to the other creatures is clear, even if the Genesis story is made a romantic myth. But if God guided the evolutionary process through multitudinous alterations in the animal orders so as to bring homo sapiens (sensible man) into being, why is the human creature or his life of any more value than the lower orders? At what point in these numberless creature-changes did the God of theistic evolution stamp His image upon one of them? Have proponents of the evolutionary theory ever thought of prosecuting a man for killing a fish, a bird, a reptile, etc? To historically reject the Genesis account and still believe that the life of a human is more sacred and to be respected than that of a lower creature is a case of the purest illogic. †

Hershel Dyer preaches for the Tenth & Rockford congregation in Tulsa, OK, USA.

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In September 1995 Madalyn Murray O'Hair, an atheist who was the leader in getting prayer removed from public schools in the US, disappeared with one of her sons and a granddaughter, and has not been seen since. Besides clothes, highball glasses, and other standard rubbish collected during her travels, she left behind in Austin, Texas three dogs, her medicine, and a ten year old Porche which was found in the Austin airport after she vanished. She probably took with her \$500,000 which she withdrew from the American Atheist Inc. bank account in San Antonio.

No one is sure what happened to her. Some think she died or was murdered. Others think she left for New Zealand. Recently an auction was held in Pluggerville, Texas to pay some of her back taxes. Among those things that were sold were two dollar bills with "In God We Trust," crossed out, the 1985 Porche, and a Bible given to her December 15, 1968, by a group of school girls at a Baptist church in Tulsa.

The Porche 944 with only 45,000 miles on it sold for the cheap price of \$2,750 and her two dollar bills for \$10.00. Her set of atheist books sold for \$10.00 while the Bible sold for \$2,000. One would wonder why an atheist so fervent in her desire to remove belief in God from society would have kept a Bible in her home. A Roman Catholic bought the Bible and a Baptist bought the Porche. One would have thought that belongings of a person of such national recognition would have sold for a high price like that of famous people. Surely she would have been sadly disappointed if she had known that her atheist books would have brought so little in comparison to the price paid for her Bible. Her lawyer is holding her diary, which was not sold, hoping for a higher bid.

Philip Terzian, associate editor of the *Providence Journal* in Rhode

**Atheism's Best  
Is the  
Worst**  
Owen D. Olbricht

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Island, as quoted in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, Saturday, January 30, 1999, p. 8B, in the article, "A Prayer for Madalyn Murray O'Hair", evidently with insight into her diary, wrote:

"It is no great surprise to learn that Mrs. O'Hair was something of a tortured soul, yearning all her life for wealth and notoriety: She wishes to 'humiliate Billy Graham on television for money,' and to own a mink coat and a Cadillac. She certainly gained notoriety, if not wealth, but it scarcely brought her happiness: Each new year, she resolves to achieve great things and conquer the world for disbelief, but by springtime she is deep in the slough of despond, blaming Jews, homosexuals and blacks for her distress.

"For moralists among us, there may be a lesson in this — something along the lines of G.K. Chesterton's notion about atheism: The great danger, he said, is that when people cease to believe in God, they do not embrace *nothing*, but *anything*. Madalyn Murray O'Hair pointedly rejected God, as many do, but she clearly was entranced by the goddess 'Success'. *Human nature abhors a vacuum.*"

The life of Mrs. O'Hair is an example of the misery and depression that can come from living without God. Her only hope of happiness was in her present personal suc-

cess, gain, national acclaim. She was without belief in anything or anyone outside her own self who could uphold, help, and sustain her. Doomed to failure was her life's goal of destroying the Rock on which others stood. At its *best*, her life was *worse* than that of most Christians.

In contrast to her life, look at the joy and happiness which fills the lives of thousands of followers of Christ. Even if their faith is misplaced, as she claimed, and is in vain as far as eternal gain is concerned, their belief in Jesus gives purpose, meaning, and joy to their present lives! At the *very worst* the Christian's life is *much better* than anything atheism has to offer; while at its *best*, the life of an atheist is *much worse* than the life of a Christian at its *worst!*

But the faith of a Christian is not in vain. It is built on the solid Rock of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. Such a life not only brings happiness now but offers the hope of a glorious eternity in the world to come.

Concerning Christians and their relationship with Jesus, Peter wrote, "*And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory*" (1 Peter 1:8).

**Can such joy be found in atheism?** †

**Owen D. Olbricht is a preacher of the Gospel, living in Sherwood, AR, USA.**

# Epithets of New Testament Books

Barry C. Poyner, Ph.D.

An epithet is a characterizing word or phrase that may accompany or replace the name of a person or thing. For example, “John the Baptist” and “Sons of Thunder” memorably describe certain biblical persons. Consider these epithets of the books of the New Testament.

Matthew’s Messiah

Mark — Master on the Move

Luke — Longest and Most Literary Life of our Lord

John — Juxtaposition of Jesus and Jehovah

Acts — Amazing Account of Apostles in Action

Righteous Romans

Carnal (First) Corinthians

Confused (Second) Corinthians

Gullible Galatians

Edifying Ephesians

Pattern for the Philippians

Christ-centered Colossians

Thanking the (First) Thessalonians

Time’s Termination in (Second) Thessalonians

Training (First) Timothy

Tireless (Second) Timothy

Titus’ Task

Postcard to Philemon on Philanthropy

Hebetudinous Hebrews

Jabs from James

Persecution from without in (First) Peter

Problems within in (Second) Peter

First John on Fellowship

Second John on Separation

Third John on Teamwork

Jousting Jude

Reiterating Regal Revelation

†

Dr. Poyner is associate professor of Communication at Truman State University in Kirksville, MO, USA and worships with the Filmore Street congregation.



# Indicting Ignorance

**Max Patterson**

Someone once said, "It's not a sin to be ignorant, it's just a sin to stay that way."

All of us are ignorant about something. However, something about which we cannot afford to be ignorant is God's will for us in our lives. Most of us are familiar with Acts 17:30 which says that during the Old Testament times God winked at ignorance. Now, in this present time, He commands all of us to repent. However, even during the period of time when God winked at ignorance, the prophets of God minced no words in getting to the root of the problem that plagued men. Notice one such example in Hosea.

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Hosea said the Lord had a *controversy* with the people, and the reason stated was that there was **no truth, no love, and no knowledge of God in the land** (Hosea 4:1-6). The second thing Hosea did was to *get specific*. He listed some of the sins that were the direct result of the lack of knowledge of God, and lack of respecting His will. Hosea said:

- ❖ There is swearing (oaths, or taking the name of the Lord in vain).
- ❖ There is lying (recklessness with the truth).
- ❖ There is killing (murder).
- ❖ There is stealing (not respecting the property rights of others).
- ❖ There is committing adultery (the openness of which is a shame).
- ❖ There is a breaking in or out (that is, for the purpose of robbing and murdering with one violent, bloody deed following another).

Does this sound like anything you have heard lately? Politicians seek answers to our problems in this regard in government. Sociologists and economists seek answers in more money and jobs. However, Bible students know why these

problems plague society. "*There is no knowledge of God in the land.*"

### We Cannot:

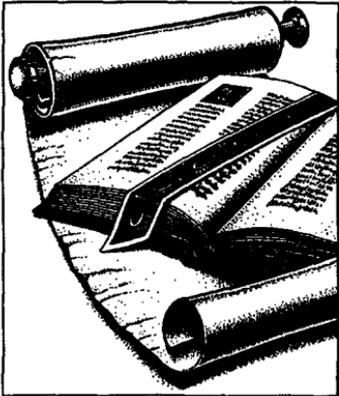
- ◆ Fill our children's minds with pornography and expect them not to be immoral.
- ◆ Fill our minds with violence of the electronic media, and expect some of our people not to be criminals.
- ◆ Fill our bodies with alcohol and other drugs and not expect more people to be killed and maimed on the highways, and more murder and domestic violence to take place.
- ◆ Teach our children the theory of evolution — that we all came from animals — and not expect some of them to act like animals.

**But**, we can fill our minds, and our children's minds with the Bible, and expect Christians and Christian conduct.

Today, we need to be as forthright as Hosea in identifying the problems, and call for a return to the morals, ethics, and religion taught in the Word of God. It is the only answer! †

**Max Patterson preaches for the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Neosho, MO, USA.**

Humans were made in the image of God. When we destroy that image within ourselves, there is no substance left. Only disintegration of the fabric remains. — BBC



# The New Testament Is Eternal and Universal

## G. Devadanam

Unlike the Law of Moses, the New Testament is both eternal, following its inauguration, and universal in its application. There is no question of the validity of this basic concept, but if any one needs proof, numerous examples will provide evidence to establish this fact beyond any controversy.

✓ **The first proof** is from the book of Matthew, chapter 28. The context is: The resurrected Christ meeting His apostles at a certain mountain place in Galilee (Matthew 28:16,17). In His message to them, the Lord epitomized His constitution for the church-kingdom and delivered it to them, putting it all in a nut-shell of just three verses! We read:

*“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations** (universal), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you **always, even unto the end of the world**” (eternal) (verses 18-20).* Can there be any dispute concerning this proof? Who would argue with our Lord?

✓ **The second proof** is from Acts 2, on the occasion of the inauguration of the New Testament itself, on the day of Pentecost! The Chief Guest for the event was no insignificant person: He was the Holy Spirit, Himself, sent down from heaven (Acts 2:1-4)! The

## THE WORD OF GOD

apostle Peter was the human agent used by Him, to cut the ribbon and declare the doors of the kingdom “open”, as it were (verse 14ff).

Guilt ridden Jews were the august audience. They were convicted guilty of crucifying their much-awaited Messiah. Responding to their desire to purge their guilt, Peter said, “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For this promise is unto you, and to your children...*” (implying the Jewish nation). If he had been speaking of the Law of Moses, the promise would have stopped abruptly with those words, excluding the rest of humanity as aliens (Deuteronomy 6:1-10; 7:1-10).

The New Testament, however, is a different covenant altogether. Therefore, Peter continued his speech unabated. The New Testament promise, without any prejudice or reservation, is extended equally “*to all that are afar off (implying universal application), even as many as the Lord our God shall call*” (indi-

cating that it is age-lasting, too) (Acts 2:38,39).

✓ **The third proof** is taken from 1 Corinthians 1:2. There Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote thus: “*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth...*” Had he ended his statement there, it would have meant a different thing, but Paul continued his description to explain that the church and its law have eternal and universal application: “*...with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*” (cf 5:17; 14:37).

Sighted examples support the fact that the New Testament is eternal and universal. But our concern is: *in what way are the New Testament principles applicable to us now?*

Before we look for the answer to this very important question, let me illustrate a problem, taken from 1 Corinthians 5. There we find a fornicator in the church. The church was ignorant of its responsibility toward him. Divine direction was offered by the apostle, the church carried out the instruction, and the problem was settled. Now, see how this typical

## THE WORD OF GOD

New Testament principle is applicable with universal and eternal force!

At present, for instance, in the church at Perawbur, we do not have that problem, which once plagued the church at Corinth. So the solution offered there has no relevance to us now. But somewhere, in some remote place, if a member of the Lord's Body happens to keep another man's wife, the universal nature of New Testament precept is revived there. The same instructions that applied in the church at Corinth apply there, too, bringing about the same effect.

Suppose such a problem is not existing in any congregation anywhere in the present world. Does that mean that the solution once offered by the apostle to meet that specific problem is out of place? Not at all. As long as the church remains on earth, when the problem recurs, the same solution shall be revived, regardless of its place and time (cf 2 Peter 1:12-15).

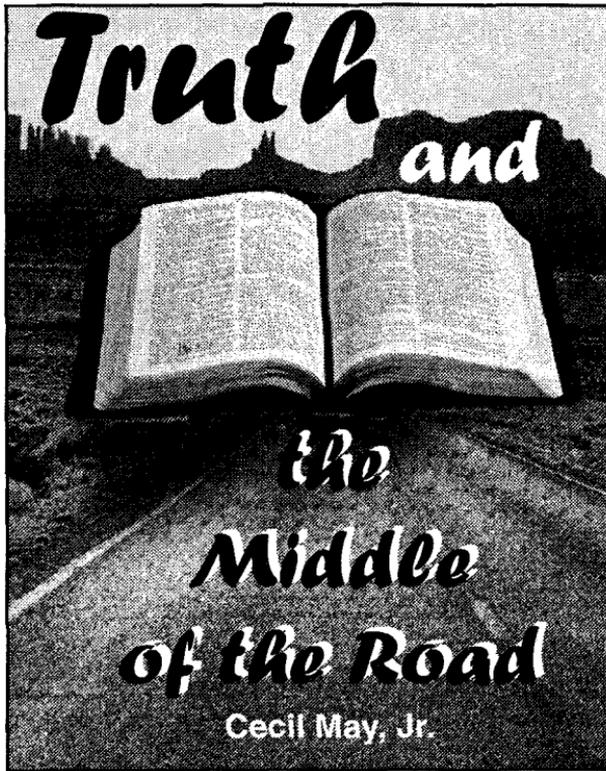
Thus the New Testament contains the stipulated precepts to meet any spiritual requirement of its recipients. It was handed

over to the church with an express purpose: that the church must be guided and directed by the eternal and universal principles stated therein.

In other words, the New Testament is the Divine Constitution for Christ's spiritual church/ kingdom on earth. The eternal or age-lasting kingdom requires an eternal constitution. If the kingdom is universal, encompassing "*every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*" (Revelation 5:9), it naturally requires a universal code of conduct.

If the New Testament is such a constitution, and if Revelation is an inevitable part and parcel of it, irrespective of the language used to impart it, can the message of Revelation now be applied differently from the rule of faith and practice of New Testament pattern? No, it too is a message meant for all people for all time, until the Lord returns with His mighty angels and the sound of the trumpet, ending the earthly age. †

**G. Devadanam is a preacher of the Gospel in Chennai, India.**



Nothing is so extreme but that someone can find some way to be more extreme.

That being true, any extremist can present himself as “moderate” or “in the middle” by pointing to someone more radical than he. Any of us, wherever we are doctrinally, can comfortably see ourselves as the center.

It is often helpful to highlight and clarify a particular truth by contrasting it with its extremes. It is im-

portant to realize, however, that *one does not arrive at truth just by staking out the middle.*

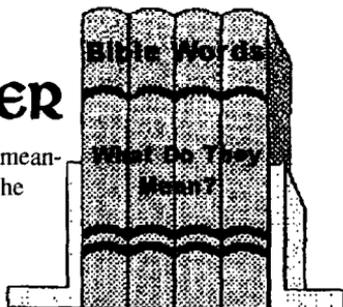
God’s word is truth (John 17:7). When we seek God’s will with a submissive heart (John 7:17), we can read and understand what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). When we understand it, it will be a midpoint between extremes, but that is not what makes it truth.

Find the truth in Scripture. Then turn neither to the right — as an extreme fanatical — nor to the left — as a liberal. *“Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ...that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess”* (Deuteronomy 5:32, 33). †

**Cecil May, Jr. is Dean of the Bible Department at Faulkner University in Montgomery, AL, USA.**

It Helps to Enrich Your  
**BIBLE WORD power**

Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words as they are used in the context found in Romans 6 (KJV). After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.



1. **sin** *n.* – (Gk. *ham ar tee' ah*) A: literally 'a missing of the mark' B: excuses C: going contrary to the local customs and culture D: attitude.
2. **grace** *n.* – (Gk. *khar' ece*) A: an expression of pity for those in need B: good will bestowed on those who do not earn it C: charm D: beauty.
3. **dead** *pred. adj.* – (Gk. *ap oth nace' ko*) A: one who is slow to understand B: wickedness C: cessation, separation D: without hope.
4. **live** *v.* – (Gk. *dzah' o*) A: to be active, lively B: the state of one's mind C: citizenship in heaven D: to exist.
5. **baptized** *v.* – (Gk. *bap tid' zo*) A: to sprinkle or pour water B: to make fully wet by burying in water C: a figurative word D: a confession.
6. **newness** *adj.* – (Gk. *kahee not' ace*) A: a renewal of life B: situated at the beginning of a thing C: youth and innocence D: to be forgiven.
7. **likeness** *n.* – (Gk. *hom oy' o mah*) A: a preference for a thing B: to be forgiven C: made like unto D: a photograph.
8. **resurrection** *n.* – (Gk. *an as' tas is*) A: a rising up B: eternal life C: to rebel against the government D: the return of the spirit to God.
9. **crucified** *v.* – (Gk. *soos tow ro' o*) A: a cross B: the Jewish method for capital punishment C: to impale in company with D: to die by stoning.
10. **serve** *v.* – (Gk. *dool yoo' o*) A: to wait tables in a restaurant B: a term used in certain sports C: the work of a paid servant D: to be in bondage.
11. **dominion** *v.* – (Gk. *koo re yoo' o*) A: to exercise lordship over B: an area set aside as a kingdom C: a type of government D: required service.
12. **reign** *v.* – (Gk. *bas il yoo' o*) A: a storm B: to have authority over, as a king would rule C: an elected sovereign D: the gaining of power.
13. **obeyed** *v.* – (Gk. *hoop ak oo' o*) A: obeisance B: to submit to authority C: agreement with terms stated D: compliance without understanding.
14. **unrighteousness** *n.* – (Gk. *ad ee kee' ah*) A: wrong or wrong-doing; lawlessness B: being right before God C: a state of rebellion D: wavering.
15. **form** *n.* – (Gk. *too' pos*) A: a paper to be filled out B: a good example C: the pattern or representation of a thing D: a level of schooling.
16. **doctrine** *n.* – (Gk. *did akh ay' y*) A: a doctor's opinion B: a book of laws C: rules developed by men in religion D: denotes that which is taught.
17. **wages** *n.* – (Gk. *op so' nee on*) A: a check B: payment of any sort C: the cause of sin and rebellion D: the foremost concern of the apostles.

1. **sin** *n.* – (Gk. *ham ar tee' ah*) **A:** literally 'a missing of the mark'; behavior that puts one in a state of lawlessness and rebellion in relationship to God.
2. **grace** *n.* – (Gk. *khar' ece*) **B:** graciousness, good will bestowed on those who do not earn it.
3. **dead** *pred.adj.* – (Gk. *ap oth nace' ko*) **C:** cessation, separation; used in these verses to indicate separation in spiritual death, and figurative death (cessation) to sin.
4. **live** *v.* – (Gk. *dzah' o*) **D:** to exist; again, these verses carry the thought of our state of existence as well as our spiritual life .
5. **baptized** *v.* – (Gk. *bap tid' zo*) **B:** to make fully wet by burying in water; the Greeks understood the word to mean to dip, to plunge, to immerse.
6. **newness** *adj.* – (Gk. *kahee not' ace*) **A:** a renewal of life; through the spiritual re-birth which takes place in the obedience of baptism, the penitent believer becomes a new creation before God.
7. **likeness** *n.* – (Gk. *hom oy' o mah*) **C:** made like unto; resemblance. Having been buried with Christ in baptism, our 'resurrection' from the water as new creatures is like His resurrection from the grave.
8. **resurrection** *n.* – (Gk. *an as' tas is*) **A:** a rising up; the believer is resurrected from baptism, having put off his old body of sin
9. **crucified** *v.* – (Gk. *soos tow ro' o*) **C:** to impale in company with, used in reference to an actual crucifixion in company with another, as the obedient believer is 'crucified with Christ'.
10. **serve** *v.* – (Gk. *dool yoo' o*) **D:** to be in bondage; in this case, to serve God, Christ, the law of God, and one another as true servants.
11. **dominion** *v* – (Gk. *koo re yoo' o*) **A:** to exercise lordship over; to rule over, to have control of a person or situation.
12. **reign** *v.* – (Gk. *bas il yoo' o*) **B:** to have authority over, as a king reigns.
13. **obeyed** *v* – (Gk. *hoop ak oo' o*) – **B:** to submit to authority; to listen attentively and to be obedient to whatever is commanded.
14. **unrighteousness** *n.* – (Gk. *ad ee kee' ah*) **A:** wrong or wrong-doing; lawlessness; the rejection of divine law; the wrong committed against God's law.
15. **form** *n.* – (Gk. *too' pos*) **C:** the pattern or representation of a thing; the metaphor is of a cast or frame into which molten material is poured to give it a particular shape.
16. **doctrine** *n.* – (Gk. *did akh ay'*) **D:** denotes that which is taught.
17. **wages** *n.* – (Gk. *op so' nee on*) **B:** payment of any sort; hire; used metaphorically of the payment for sin.

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### Vocabulary Scale

- 7-10 correct .....Good  
 11-13 correct.....Bible Student  
 14-17 correct.....Bible Scholar

# UNAUTHORIZED FIRE

Loy  
Mitchell

*Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord" (Leviticus 10:1,2).*

**Why Did God Kill These Two Priests?** They were sons of Aaron, the high priest. Their uncle was Moses, the leader of God's people. But they were killed by fire that came forth from the presence of the Lord.

### These Men Sinned

How did they sin? Were they not priests? Yes, they were priests. Were they wrong in offering incense? No, this was not sin. Were they using the wrong censers? No. Their sin was one of **presumption**. They chose their own method of returning thanks and giving praise to God. They did not have respect for what God had commanded. When man does not obey in the way God has commanded, he shows disrespect for the Almighty.

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

### These Men Died

"The penalty was too harsh," many cry. "Why were they not given another chance?" Paul wrote that the "*wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23). So few today seem to remember that failure to submit to God's way produces the death of man.

### These Men Have Lessons For Us

We must obey not only God's moral commands, but also every command of God in the way He prescribes. That way for followers of Jesus is found in the New Covenant of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1,2). In our worship to God we need to make certain that we have the right attitude. We must make certain that we do exactly what he has commanded, not adding to or taking from what he commands. Where, for example, is the command or example of Christians offering incense or lighting candles in worship? Where do we find saints in the church using instruments of music in worship?

**The ways of man never can be a substitute for God's ways.**

Nadab and Abihu tried it, but failed. Today men have substituted sprinkling for immersion in baptism. Men have used human names for the church Jesus bought with His blood. Men have turned to the traditions of "the elders" and "councils" for what they do in work and

worship. All is vain and will produce displeasure and death.

Let us heed what happened to Nadab and Abihu, and let us do what God commands in the way He has commanded. †

**Loy Mitchell is a former missionary to Zimbabwe and is now preaching for the church in Topeka, KS, USA.**

*His greatness fills  
the Universe,  
and more...*

**He spoke,  
and by the power of  
His Word,  
the world  
and *all* things  
came to be...**

If we could comprehend  
*His* greatness  
and *our* smallness,  
in awe we'd fall  
face down upon the ground,  
no words to speak,  
hardly breath to breathe.  
Perhaps the Seraphim  
would come and touch us,  
give us strength,  
that we might not perish  
in His awesome presence.

— Betty Burton Choate

**A** bemused professor of philosophy writing in the Chronicle of Higher Education of June 27th, 1997, discussed the reaction of his students to the Holocaust, a crime against humanity which had outraged previous generations.

According to Robert L. Simon of Hamilton College, an increasing number of students "accept the reality of the Holocaust, but they believe themselves unable morally to condemn it, or indeed to make any moral judgments whatsoever. Such students typically comment that they themselves deplore the Holocaust and other great evils, but then they wind up by suspending moral judgments."

Yes, that's right; they end up by "suspending moral judgments" on attempted genocide, and the horrors of Alusshwitz and Belsen. Although "they themselves deplore" the atrocities of the Third Reich, there is evidently something more deplorable than the gas chamber and the concentration camps; namely the idea that there exists an immutable moral law to which all men are amenable. Such an idea is

deplorable and unthinkable to them because, of course, moral absolutism means that some behavior is "wrong," "bad," "evil," and "reprehensible." Such intolerance of the preferences of other individuals, groups, or cultures, is the only real crime against humanity. Moral relativism is, for an increasing number of people in our society, the only game in town, and the only real criminals are those who refuse to play their way.

The Christian, of course, adamantly refuses to play this game, and he refuses because he is convinced that ethical absolutes do exist. This conviction grows out of the

knowledge that man has been created by, and is accountable to, a God whose infinite holiness constitutes the very foundation of morality.

For the Christian that which is ethically "good" is that which God approves, and that which is ethically "bad" is that which God condemns. *Moral absolutism* is quite simply a fruit of Christian faith. But then *moral relativism* is a fruit as well, one of several poisonous fruits produced by a noxious plant called "**monism.**" Now, we may not hear



**On  
Absolute  
Morality**

**Rex Banks**

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

this particular term bandied about in conversation by the average person but the effects of the monistic position are frighteningly obvious in our society today. In a word, **the monist argues that all that exists is made up of one substance.** If he is a “*naturalist*” then our monist friend views that substance as **matter-energy.** If our “monist” friend is a “*pantheist*,” on the other hand (eg a “New Ager”), then that one substance is **spirit.** According to the pantheist, “all is God and God is the all”. Hence Shirley Maclaine’s infamous “I am God! I am God!” chant before millions of T. V. viewers. The term “monist” itself may not be widely used, but naturalism saturates our academic institutions, and pantheism is as pervasive as the crystal-hawking, incense burning bookshops without which many cities would be incomplete nowadays.

Moral relativism is just one of the dangerous ideas spawned by a monistic view of the world, and its effects upon society are devastating.

We’ve reached the point where some refuse to condemn the actions of Adolph Hitler because — to them — human activity, like all activity, is simply the result of physical and chemical forces at work (as per naturalism), while others refuse to condemn Hitler’s actions because they believe that both he and they are God (as per New Age pantheism). Truly,

such people have forgotten how to blush with shame (Jeremiah 6:15).

However, there is an up side to all of this. As the moral bankruptcy of these human philosophies is exposed, there will be those with good and honest hearts who recoil from such manifestly evil doctrines and who are receptive to the truth. As the pillar and support of this truth (1 Timothy 3:15), the church of Jesus Christ must resist compromise with evolutionary theory and New Age occultism, and hammer home the only message which offers hope to a confused world:

There is but **one God** (Deuteronomy 6:4), whose **eternal** (Psalm 90:2) **unchanging** (Malachi 3:6) and **holy** (Leviticus 19:2) **nature is the very basis of morality.** Man the creature is completely subject to his God as clay is subject to the potter (Romans 9:21). Blighted by sin, man often calls “evil” “good,” and “good” “evil” (Isaiah 5:20), but God’s Word forever “settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89) sets forth His judgments which are “true” and “righteous altogether” (Psalm 19:9). And the jewel in the crown is this; **knowing that we are but dust** (Psalm 103:14), **God has provided a way home for weak and frail humanity — the way of the cross** (John 3:16). †

**Rex Banks lives and works with the church in Hamilton, New Zealand.**

# Grace:

# 3 Things We Know About It.

**Jack Harriman**

**First, we know how to define it.**

We say it is God's unmerited favor — favor we do not merit, have not earned and do not deserve. David deserved to die on two counts — adultery and murder. But when he finally saw the gravity of his sin, confessed it and repented of it, God put away his sin (2 Samuel 11,12).

God bestowed on David a favor he did not merit, had not earned and did not deserve.

**Second, we know how much we need it.**

Without a savior, all men are like those said to be "*without hope and without God in the world*" (Ephesians 2:12). And man cannot be his own savior. He cannot be saved by being good, generous or moral. He cannot be saved by attending church services, eating Lord's suppers or teaching Bible classes. If we helped all the needy and baptized all the lost, we would not earn our salvation. All of these things have a place in the life of a faithful Christian, but even if we did all of them flawlessly, we would not merit our salvation.

**Third, we know how to accept it.**

Jesus died for all mankind (Hebrews 2:9), but only a few will be saved (Matthew 7:13,14). Since He died for all, why are not all saved? Because most will not accept the gift of salvation. Jesus said, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*" (Mark 16:15,16).

The gospel is the good news of God's wondrous gift of grace which we do not merit, have not earned, and do not deserve. Those who believe that news and are baptized, accept the gift — accept the grace. Those who do not, reject the gift and are eternally lost without the saving grace of God. There is no middle ground.

These three things we can know, without doubt, about the grace of God. †

**Jack Harriman is the preacher for the Center Street Church of Christ in Fayetteville, AR, USA.**

# Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter two, NKJV.

1. What happened on the day of Pentecost that caused a multitude of people to gather? (V. 1-4)
2. Why was everyone confused? (V. 6)
3. How many language groups (nations) were represented? (V. 9-11)
4. What were the apostles speaking? (V.11)
5. Peter explained that what they were hearing and seeing was by the outpouring of God's \_\_\_\_\_, in fulfillment of a prophecy spoken by \_\_\_\_\_. (V. 16,17)
6. The prophecy concerned the day when it would be possible for people to call \_\_\_\_\_ (V. 21) Before that "great and notable day", there would be certain signs. What were they? (V. 19-20) When did this happen? (Matthew 24:29; Luke 23:44,45).
7. What had the Jews done to Jesus? (V. 23)
8. How had God proved Christ among them? (V. 22)
9. It was not possible that Christ be held captive by \_\_\_\_\_. (V. 24)
10. David had prophesied what two things concerning the Lord? (V. 27)
11. Therefore being \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, He poured out this which you now see and hear. (V. 33)
12. Peter declared that all Israel should know \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. (V. 36)
13. What did the people cry out? (V. 37)
14. Then Peter said to them, "\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_..." (V. 38)
15. Those who \_\_\_\_\_, and that day \_\_\_\_\_. (V. 41)
16. What word was used to designate this new body of believers? (V. 47)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]



# A Life-Changing Vision

W. T. Allison

Open your Bible to Isaiah 6. The high water mark of Old Testament understanding of God is found in the writings of Isaiah. And the vision recorded here shaped his thinking and preaching. This same vision will change our lives. *"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting on his throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim...and one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth*

*is full of his glory"* (Isaiah 6:1-3).

The king was dead and the prophet grieved. He had pinned his hopes on this earthly monarch. God decided to show Isaiah who really was King in Israel. He revealed Himself in all His holiness and power. The effect of that vision can be summed up in three little words: "WOE", "LO", and "GO."

The prophet said, "WOE," the word of conviction. *"Woe unto me, a man of unclean lips"* (verse 5). The dazzling holiness of God made

## SALVATION

the prophet ashamed of his own unholiness. He was struck dumb. He waited to be slain by that awesome power.

Mark it down, friend, the man who doesn't know himself as an unclean sinner never has seen the Lord's power. When you stack your life against that of Jesus, it will make you cry out as Isaiah did, and as Simon Peter did, "*Depart from me, I am a sinful man, O Lord*" (Luke 5:8).

The seraphim said, "**LO,**" the word of **cleansing**. "*LO, this has touched your lips and your iniquity is taken away*" (verse 7). God does not want to destroy *sinners*, but *sin*. The live coal from the altar is a beautiful symbol of the cleansing of our heart through the blood of Jesus. Sin is deep-rooted and long-standing. The lips are unclean because the heart is impure. God provides through the altar of fire an inward holiness that means life instead of death. No man has to live with garbage in his heart and trash on his lips. The blood of Jesus can cleanse us from sin. You can be forgiven, renewed, and cleansed!

God said, "**GO,**" the word of **commission**. As soon as his sin was purged, Isaiah heard the voice of God calling for a messenger to the people saying, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*" (verse 8). He volunteered on the spot without considering the salary,

fringe benefits, or retirement plan. The unclean heart thinks of itself just like the unclean lips speak of themselves. Sin is self-centeredness. Once the heart is cleansed, it thinks of others, and once the lips are purged, they speak for God.

God said, "**GO,**" but warned Isaiah that few would listen. The results of his ministry would be like a charred stump of a fallen tree — not much to show for his efforts. No wonder the prophet cried, "*Lord, how long?*" God said, "*Until the cities be washed and without inhabitants*" (verse 11). As long as there are people who will hear, you go on speaking. We don't serve because we are wanted, but because we are needed. We don't take God's Word to others because we are assured success. We do it because He says, "**GO AND TELL.**" The holy heart is obedient and durable. It must salute like an army sergeant and endure like an army mule.

*Isaiah saw God, saw himself, and saw a needy world. The visions hang together. Saving grace comes from God, touches our lives with power, and reaches out through us to embrace others. This same vision will change our hearts as it did the heart of Isaiah.* †

**W. T. Allison preaches for the Creekwood congregation in Mobile, AL, USA.**

# RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL

Albert Gardner

When Paul arrived as a prisoner in Rome, the Jews of the city came to him to hear him, *"He explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening"* (Acts 28:23).

Notice what this apostle taught them. **He explained the kingdom, which is the church, and he taught them about Jesus.** It is strange that some today want us to tell about Jesus but not mention the church, because they say, to tell them about the oneness and undenominational nature of the church will turn people away.

It is a fact that some reject Bible teaching about the church. Does rejection by the majority make the teaching false? *"For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar"* (Romans 3:3,4). Truth is not determined by what is popular but by the written word of God.

It is not the *method* and *manner* people are rejecting, it is *the truth* they refuse. They did not kill Jesus because of *the way* He said it, but they rejected *what* He said.

When a person hears the gospel in a clear, kind, understandable way, he can never be the same again. One can never be neutral about Jesus. Notice the result of Paul's teaching in Rome.

*"And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved"* (Acts 28:24).

The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8), shows the different receptions to the sowing of the same seed. Because we have the power of choice, we make up our own mind about Bible teaching. That is why some believed and some believed not.

**What is your response to the Gospel?**

†

Albert Gardner is a preacher of the Gospel in Marmaduke, AR, USA.

# The Joy of Thy Salvation

Owen Cosgrove

Psalm 51 is one of the songs that David wrote in the painful shame and disgrace that followed his sin with Bathsheba. His plaintive cries for forgiveness touch the heart. In verse 12, he pleads, "*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.*" Three great truths are embodied in that prayer:

**1. There is joy in salvation.** David had known the delight of walking with God. The piety and purity of his youth are reflected in Psalm 23. Joy is a basic part of the Christian life. Coleridge said, "To write good poetry, one must have inner joy." This is true of most things in life. To live Christianity well requires and produces inner joy. "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice*" (Philippians 4:4).

**2. Salvation's joy can be lost through sin.** "*The way of the transgressor is hard*" (Proverbs 13:15). "*Be sure, your sin will find you out*" (Numbers 32:23). Sin can cost you your health, your mind, your happiness, your joy, your fami-

ly, your reputation, your peace, your hope — your very soul. The soul that sins will surely die. The wages of sin is death. No matter how many skulls and crossbones the Lord puts on the sin bottle, some still want to taste the poison that assassinates the soul. Repeatedly the Scriptures warn, "*Take heed lest ye fall.*"

**3. The joy of salvation can be restored and reclaimed.** The alien sinner can receive forgiveness for wrongs by repenting and being baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). The wayward Christian can come home through repentance and prayer (Acts 8:22).

It is not too late. One who has lost the joy of his salvation can be washed and sanctified and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11). God wants His erring children to come home, and there is rejoicing in Heaven when they do. †

Owen Cosgrove is involved in printed evangelism in many countries and preaches for the Northside congregation in Waxahachie, TX, USA.

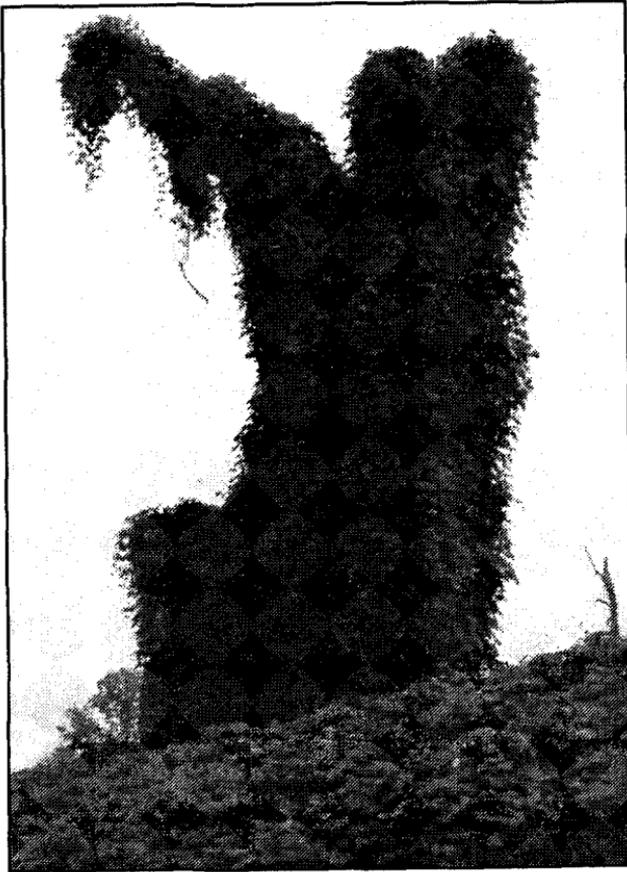
## SALVATION

**T**hey say it came from Japan! But as one travels through Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, and other southern states in the United States of America, one can see kudzu growing all over on

both sides of the highways and Interstates. Kudzu is a wild vine which grows deep roots and spreads enormously. It takes over all the grass on the ground; it climbs over trees of any size; and before long

# Have You Seen Kudzu?

Sunny David



everything is covered; nothing else is visible but kudzu only! Large trees can be seen by the hundreds, completely covered with kudzu. It takes over all the limbs and the trunk of the tree and climbs and sits over on the top of the tree and thus stops its further growing. Finally it smothers and chokes it to death.

Kudzu looks pretty from a distance, but it is deadly for other vegetation, grass and plants and trees. Years ago

## SALVATION

when it was first imported and planted as a ground cover, no one in America thought that it would prove to be such a deadly vine for other plants and trees. But now in more recent times some states are getting worried about the enormous growth of kudzu and the damage it is causing to timber. They are thinking of ways to scientifically get rid of this monster, but they haven't found one yet.

When I look at kudzu, it reminds me of sin. Every sin begins in its smallest form. In fact, its be-

Jesus was right when He said in John 8:34, "*Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.*" Sin enslaves people, so much so that even when they wish to get out of it they find themselves unable to do so. Instead of one becoming master of sin, sin becomes the master. The wages of sin, says Romans 6:23, is death. In the long ago, Isaiah, the preacher, had rightly told his people, "*Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from*

**Every sin, in the initial stages, looks appealing, beautiful and colorful and desirable, just as it did to Eve and Adam in the beginning — just as kudzu looks as a young, green, healthy plant.**

ginning is made as an invisible seed in one's heart, as Christ taught in Matthew 5:27,28. Slowly it grows in one's life, and then it takes control. Sin changes the character of a person. He or she doesn't look or sound the same as they did before. The entire personality gets covered over with sin, and this ugly covering changes them so much that they are no longer known as they were once. Now they are called drunkard, or gambler, or thief, or adulterer.

*your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear"* (Isaiah 59:1,2).

Every sin, in the initial stages, looks appealing, beautiful and colorful and desirable, just as it did to Eve and Adam in the beginning — just as kudzu looks as a young, green, healthy plant.

But the wages of sin is death. Sin separates people from God; from the source of eternal heavenly life. Therefore, in sin, people are

## SALVATION

dead, says Ephesians 2:1. According to James 1:14,15, "*But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.*"

While in sin, one may be living physically but in the spiritual sense he or she is dead, because sin separates people from God. "Sow a thought," someone has said, "and reap an act. Sow an act, and reap a habit. Sow a habit, and reap a character. Sow a character, and reap a destiny."

How rightly it was said! Sin is taking people to only one place, finally, and that place is hell, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8). Yet, Paul the apostle, in Romans 6:23

declared: "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" In 1 Corinthians 15:56,57, he said, "*The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

I do not know whether they will ever be able to get rid of kudzu from the United States of America. But I do know, as the writer of the song said, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

*In Christ*, the sinner can get rid of the curse and over-growth of sin in his life. †

**Sunny David is a preacher of the Gospel in New Delhi, India.**

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**A man's bosom companions  
His character denotes;  
The Lord's sheep should not play around  
With the Devil's billy goats!**

**There are eyes that are always peering,  
And wagging tongues that never cease;  
And he who heeds what "they say" of him  
Shall never enjoy sweet peace.**

**— Selected**

# Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc.

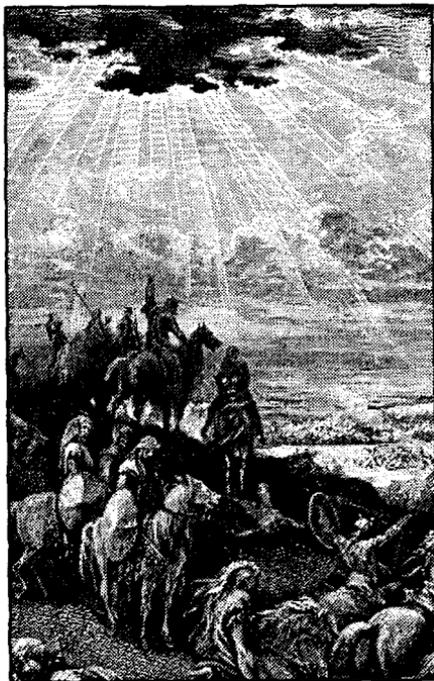
When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word.

1. **100** My name means 'Yahweh is salvation'.
2. **90** The transliterated form is 'Jesus' (Hebrews 4:8).
3. **80** I was of the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Nun. My name was changed from Hoshea (Numbers 13:8,16).
4. **70** My first mentioned responsibility was to make a survey, along with several others (Numbers 13:16-20).
5. **60** Because of my deep faith in God, I became a great leader among my people (Numbers 27:18-23; Deuteronomy 34:9).
6. **50** Three times God told me to "be strong and of good courage" (\_\_\_\_ 1:6,7-9).
7. **40** Before we attacked Jericho, a Man came to me. His sword was drawn in His hand. He told me that He had come as the Commander of the Lord's army (\_\_\_\_ 5:13-15).
8. **30** Between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal I read all the law — the blessings and the curses — to my people, so that they would be fully warned (\_\_\_\_ 8:30-35).
9. **20** God helped me win a battle by causing the sun to stand still (\_\_\_\_ 10).
10. **10** When I was old, I told my people that they must choose whom they would serve. I said, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (\_\_\_\_ 24:15).

## My Score

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See answer on inside back cover.



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## THE CHURCH

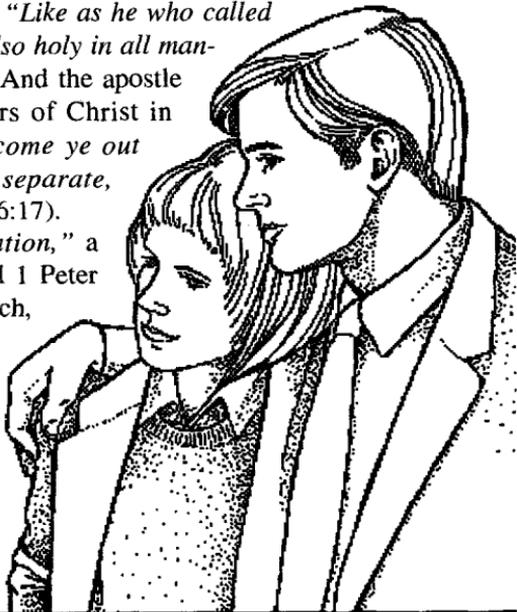
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**I**t is my conviction that we have not done nearly enough preaching and teaching on the fact that God's people are to be distinct and separate from those "of the world." Many members of the church, therefore, less than thoroughly informed, oftentimes think nothing at all of being as "the world is" and doing as "the world does."

The Bible is replete with instructions from God to His own about being holy. Let us note just one example . . . Jehovah instructed Israel in this fashion: "*Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God . . . ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them . . . and ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you . . . I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people*" (Leviticus 20:7; 22-24).

Thus, in the New Testament, guided by inspiration, the apostle Peter urged Christians, "*Like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living*" (1 Peter 1:15). And the apostle Paul admonished the followers of Christ in Corinth with these words, "*come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord*" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Christians are a "*holy nation,*" a people belonging to God (read 1 Peter 2:9 and Titus 2:14). And as such, each one of us has an obligation to "*glorify God*" as long as we reside in our mortal bodies (read 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Philippians 1:20,21, and Romans 14:7,8). †



**Maxie B. Boren is the preacher for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, TX, USA.**

# God's Holy People

**Maxie B. Boren**

Unique means "one and only one, different from others; having no like equal" (Webster). Such is the church revealed in the New Testament. Inspired writers emphasized the uniqueness of the Lord's church so that it could be identified. Paul in Ephesians, a treatise on the

W. Douglass Harris

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church, emphasized the distinctiveness of the church as having no like or equal. He called it both "the body" and "the bride" of Christ. I would ask a question: is it ever proper and even possible for one individual to have more than one physical body, or more than one wife?

But, going further, neither the word "church" nor the expression "house of God" is unique. Wherein, then, does the uniqueness of the church rest?

### **Christ's church is an exhibit of God's wisdom to angels.**

The church was part of the mystery which for ages was hidden in the mind of God (Cf. Isaiah 64:4; Matthew 13:17; 1 Peter 1:10-12). In Ephesians 3:6, Paul explained what the mystery was: *that saved Jews and Gentiles are brought together in one body — His church* (Ephesians 2:11-18). Very simply stated, this truth had been a mystery in ages past because it had not yet been accomplished and, thus, had not yet been revealed (Ephesians 3:1-5). We know, however, from this passage that the church had been in the mind (plan) of God from the beginning; it is not an after-thought or contingency arrangement (Cf. Ephesians 3:11). No other church in existence is this exhibit of God's wisdom to angels, and the culmination in the development of God's eternal plan for man's salva-

tion. "...unto him be glory **in the church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Ephesians 3:21).

### **Christ's church is unique in the price that was paid to bring it into existence.**

The church was purchased with the precious blood of Christ (Cf. 1 Peter 1:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). It is the only blood-bought institution in existence. From the beginning of time this church was a part of God's plan for redeeming man from sin (Ephesians 3:10,11; 1 Peter 1:20). Could there have been any other plan of salvation? To answer in the affirmative is to say that Christ's death was unnecessary. If sinful man could be saved in any other way, surely Christ's death was all in vain, but we know that without His sacrifice there could have been no salvation. Christ's church teaches the *plan of salvation* which is sealed and ratified by the blood of Christ — *the same blood which purchased His church.*

### **Christ's church is unique because it is God's exclusive saved group.**

The saved are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). They are the body of which Christ is the Savior (Ephesians 5:23). All of the slurs which are directed against the Lord's church grow out of misconceptions and misunderstanding of God's word.

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Simply put, the *saved are the church* and the *church is the saved*. There is no way to be saved and not be in the church, because the Lord **adds** one to the church the moment he is saved. Since the Lord adds the *saved* to the church, where are the saved? *In the church!* Since the Lord adds **every** saved person to the church, *could there be a saved person out of the church?*

And to which church does God add the saved? Since the church is the saved, some denominational questions in the light of Acts 2:27 do not make sense. For example, it is often asked, "Of what church are you?" Since the church is the saved, why not ask, "Of what salvation are you?" This is never asked, but the biblical meaning would be the same! Did you ever hear anyone argue that **one salvation is as good as another?** But those very words are used about the church, even though Acts 2:47 says the church and the saved are the same people!

**Christ's church is unique because it is nameless, as far as a proper name is concerned.**

This distinguishes it from denominational churches. A denomination is a religious body which has been given a proper name. That is the meaning of "denominate".

The Lord's church has no proper name. The words "church" and "house" are not proper names. The

expressions "*churches of Christ*" (Romans 16:16) or "*churches of God*" (1 Corinthians 11:16) are not proper names, but **expressions of ownership and relationship**. To the contrary, *each member* of the church has a proper name — *Christian* (Acts 11:26), but not the church. Does this not show that it was in God's design to make His church distinctive?

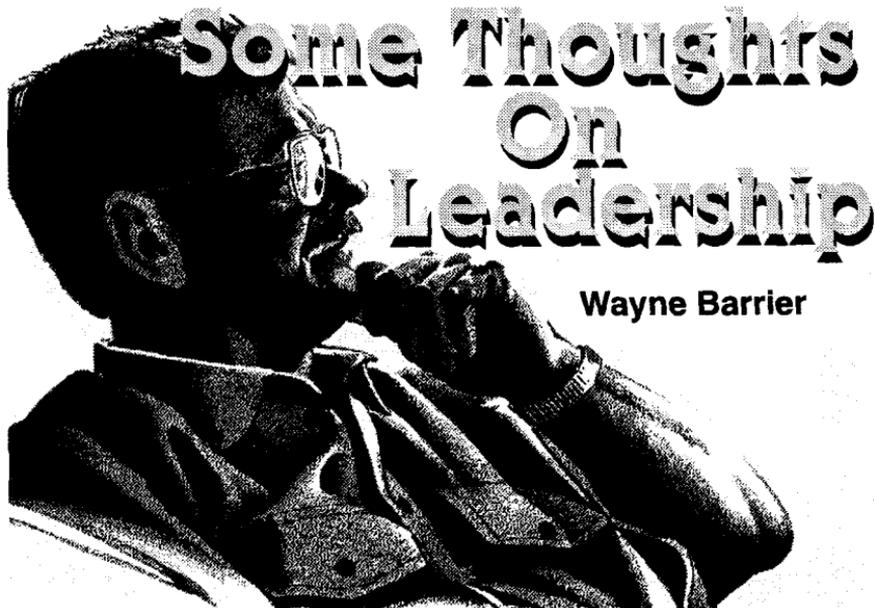
**The Lord's church is unique because of its destiny.**

*"Unto Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever"* (Ephesians 3:21). This is a pronouncement of praise to God for the great things His grace has already wrought, and the greater things for which that grace has destined Christians (heaven). Members have their citizenship in heaven (Philippians 2:20). They have their names enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23). Christ's church is His spiritual bride (Cf. Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:22,23), for which He will return (Ephesians 5:27).

**Conclusion.**

Can any church of human origin in any way compare with the distinctive features of Christ's church? Unto Him to be glory in *which* church, and for how long? †

**W. Douglass Harris is the editor of the Caribbean Messenger and lives in Decatur, AL, USA.**



**A**ny organization needs leadership if it is to succeed in achieving goals and fulfilling its purpose. We readily recognize the absence of leadership in many organizations that touch our daily lives — government, city councils, businesses, and even clubs. Functions such as planning, organizing, evaluating, and directing often lack leadership skills.

The church is no exception. The mission of the church is greater than that of any other organization — reaching every person on earth with the Gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:19). Leaders are essential to the achievement of the goals of the church.

What does God say about church leaders and leadership? The scripture is filled with examples of good leaders — Moses, David, Joshua, Gideon, Peter, Paul, and Jesus. We can study their lives and teachings to define some common characteristics of leaders.

**First**, great leaders understand their mission and are fully committed to success. They realize, without question, that their superior must be obeyed. They have the ability to develop a clear vision of success and to maintain their focus on that goal.

Christ is the supreme leader of the church (Matthew 28:18). He plainly and simply states our mission of reaching the lost with the gospel. He never loses sight of His purpose and goal.

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**Second**, great leaders of the Bible understood the first and greatest commandment as stated in Matthew 22:37-39, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* Church leaders must practice this commandment if they are to influence those who follow them in living the Christian life and in accomplishing the mission of the Church. God demonstrated for us how powerful love is. John 3:16 says, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

**Third**, great leaders lead because they desire to serve, rather than to be served or to have the "pre-eminence". Jesus discusses this in Matthew 20:20-28 when the mother of James and John asks that they sit on the right and left of Jesus on His throne. Jesus replies by saying, *"Whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant, and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave."*

**Fourth**, great leaders are *first* in work and worship. Peter and the other apostles went first in teaching and preaching the Gospel of Christ throughout the world, just as Christ had been first in work before them.

**Fifth**, great leaders are effective communicators. Moses used his brother Aaron to help with communication with the children of Israel. Peter and the other apostles often were standing before the people speaking as God's Spirit guided them.

**Sixth**, great leaders keep their eyes on the goal and convey the positive message of the benefits of reaching that goal. Consider Paul's statement in Philippians 3:13,14 *"...one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

**Seventh**, leaders must earn and maintain the respect and trust of those who follow. They must also have the integrity to resign their position of leadership if they lose the confidence of followers. Leaders must be capable of delegating responsibility and authority, and of surrounding themselves with loyal, competent and hardworking subordinates who share their vision.

The Church needs great leaders today. The application of these principles and development of leadership skills should be the goal of every elder, evangelist, and teacher. †

**Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, AL, USA, and is part of the World Evangelism team.**



# Spotlight

on Forest Park in Forest Park, Georgia

**F**orest Park Church of Christ in the south Atlanta area is an outstanding example of the Lord's church functioning as He intended it to function. Under the leadership of six elders, seventeen deacons, and — contrary to the norm these days — only one local preacher, this 280-member church has an active program of work which begins in her surrounding neighborhoods and extends to the opposite side of the globe.

Randy Kea speaks on a very successful daily **radio program** which was enlarged to two broadcasts per day in 1999. A **Bible Correspondence Course** is offered, also with great success.

Various training and experiential programs are used for the development of the local church. **Evangelistic campaigns** have been undertaken for the past several years in the Newnan and Eatonton churches, among inter-city populations. **Lads to Leaders**, a training program for young boys and girls developed by Jack Zorn, has been

an important tool for 20 years, ensuring the continued strength and soundness of the church as its younger generations move into positions of teaching and leadership.

Thirty percent of the budget goes into mission work, at home or abroad. Forest Park is known throughout the church for its annual **"Atlanta World Mission Forum"**. Missionaries from the US and many foreign countries, with a wealth of varied experiences, are brought together for all-day and late-into-the-night sessions of mission-emphasis lessons. For any Christian who is mindful of Jesus' Great Commission, attending one of Forest Park's soul-stirring Mission Forums is an unforgettable experience.

**Long-term commitment** is a key word in the hearts of the elders. For 28 years they have overseen **Robert Martin's** work in the Pacific Islands (Robert conducts "*Pacific Islands Bible College*" classes), 10 years for **Randy English** in Samoa, and 5 years for **Steve Vice** in the Northern Pacific area. They also support **James and Randy Judd** in Zimbabwe, **J. Young** in Italy, **Hosie Byrd** in Greenwood, SC, and **Demar Elam** in his mission efforts.

What an example for the Lord's people, in priorities and faithfulness!

*Church membership is declining. There is only one solution for stopping the decline:*

# Evangelize or Perish

Clayton Pepper

A tour group was visiting old church buildings in Europe and England. While the tour guide described one of these buildings with its beautiful stained-glass windows, the rare carving in the pulpit, and the great speakers and dignitaries who once attended, a little old lady kept trying to get the guide's attention. Finally he recognized her. She said, "Sir, has there been anybody saved here lately?"

Shift to your hometown, and answer this question: "Has there been anybody saved in this congregation lately?"

A church in the suburbs was growing. Members were moving into the area, but a nearby congregation began losing members because of controversial trends within the group. Joy existed in the suburban congregation because it was receiving many talented and faithful Christians. *But was the body of Christ actually growing? Was a great outreach program bringing in the lost of the community?*

During a 12-month period, this church extended 156 invitations in the public assembly. In only eight services did anyone respond to the gospel to become a Christian. A few had been baptized at other times.

A congregation in a Georgia mission area was starting a meeting on Sunday, but the baptistery was dry. No conversions were expected. Many congregations could sell their baptisteries and never miss them.

Many people believe something is happening to our membership, but we do not know what to do about it. Some say, "If we would only preach

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like we used to. You cannot tell our preaching from the denominations." Others say, "We should preach more about hell; the church would grow more."

A church leader called me to say, "We have plateaued at 260 and have been that size for a long time. Our building is about 80 percent filled. Will we grow if we add on to our building?" My belief is they will not.

A congregation of 600 members was declining. The solution was to build a family life center where church members could have more fun and togetherness. However, the new facility did not stop the decline in membership. There are no easy solutions or work-free solutions to the problem of decline. Only one thing will turn the trend around: evangelize or perish! An easy way with less work may be sought, but they will not produce genuine and lasting growth.

**More and more preachers and elders are not pleased with the fruits of our preaching or our Bible school programs.**

The promise and expectation of growth based on new construction is coming from out-of-date information, probably from the '50's.

Another congregation was not doing well regarding growth. One of the elders called and said, "We are relocating our congregation. We are told that we will have a 10 percent increase in attendance per year." My guess is they will not.

Growth came easy in the '40's and '50's, but this trend began to change in the '60's. In those days more responsibility was placed on the lost to "come" than on the Christians to "go".

- Now we are at ease in Zion.
- We are a cult of the comfortable.
- Evangelism disturbs the status quo.
- We are a closed shop for the edification of the saints.

One writer said, "Some of the recurring complaints I hear from church leaders in my seminars are: 'We have a problem getting committed workers. We don't seem to have support to initiate new programs. What can we do to boost Sunday and Wednesday night attendance? We've discontinued gospel meetings because of a lack of interest.'"

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More and more preachers and elders are not pleased with the fruits of our preaching or our Bible school programs. The system we have followed is greatly influenced by holdovers from the Protestant system of methods (i.e., the pastor system and others). Yet where fervent love and zeal exist, there is hope.

About 1976, Batsell Barrett Baxter called a meeting of preachers and elders from Middle Tennessee to discuss the truth about our failure to grow. He asked that all tape recorders be turned off because he did not want his message played outside the assembly. He had given the same lesson in Abilene, Texas, and printed copies were available.

**Many congregations send missionaries to far-off places, yet are ineffective in reaching their neighbors next door. Why? What can be done to change this?**

Baxter said, "We must recognize our ineffectiveness in reaching those among whom we live and work with the gospel message. Many congregations send missionaries to far off places, yet are ineffective in reaching their neighbors next door. Many congregations are baptizing few people other than their children each year. Just as there are empty cathedrals throughout the continent of Europe, and as many of the largest, most impressive denominational church buildings in our major cities are relatively empty, so it may be with our buildings unless we can make a 'turn-around' in our effectiveness in evangelizing our neighborhoods and our cities" ("Crisis" 1976).

Has anyone been saved at your congregation lately? How many invitations were extended last year in assemblies where no one responded to obey the gospel? Is it too late to bring about revival? †

Clayton Pepper works with Restoration Network International in Nashville, TN, USA.



*Even if you're on the right road, you'll get run over if you stand still. Will Rogers*



*If your life depended on how well you know your Bible, how long would you last?*



# Tips for an Effective Visitation Program

Compiled by Clayton Pepper;  
Other Suggestions by Rod Spaulding

## 1. Visits to the Sick in Hospitals and Nursing Homes.

- A. Become personally acquainted with administrators.
- B. Set aside a time for visitation each day and let nothing but extreme emergencies interfere.
- C. Take something with you on first visit for “ice breaker” (Suggestion: **The Voice of Truth International, Power for Today**).
- D. Check names of Protestants in file and use approach listed later in this section of outline.
- E. Continue calling each day and after patient has gone, suggest home study during convalescence.
- F. Suggest to administrator that others would like to participate and start an *organized visitation program* if possible.
- G. If hospital is small, assign certain workers particular rooms to call on.
- H. Suggested approach for hospital call:  
“Hello, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. I am from the church which meets on \_\_\_\_\_. I wanted to stop by and visit with you briefly. I noticed that your religious preference was listed simply as Protestant. I have found that many times, when people don’t list a specific denomination, they do not receive a visit from a minister and I

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wanted to stop by and see if there is any service I could render.”

(Develop a friendly conversation at this point. This can be done by asking leading questions and then letting the person talk about things in which he is interested.)

### 2. Some Good Leading Questions:

- A. Do you live in the area?
- B. How long have you been here?
- C. When do you think you will leave?
- D. What do you do?
- E. Do you attend church services regularly? (From here, go into the non-denominational nature of the church. This is also a good place to leave some religious literature. (From *Growth Through Personal Evangelism*, page 28).

### 3. What Are You to Accomplish?

- A. Assure the subject of your interest, concern and desire to help.
- B. Minister to spiritual needs as opportunity permits or lay the groundwork to do so later.

### 4. How Does It Work?

“Jesus teaches us that the mark of true discipleship is that we love one another. And the Bible fully instructs that we love in deed and not in word only.

“When a member of the church of our Lord is *shut in* he must not be *shut out*. One of the most active and rewarding departments in our Sunday morning Bible School at Madison is the Extension Department. It started a few years ago on a small scale visiting older people who were heart patients, ill, or by reason of age unable to attend services. The Department grew until now it is one of our most active. It is a thrilling thing to see this group of men and women fan out all over our area after they attend worship service and Bible Study to minister to the sick and the shut-in. Many times they reach as many as 200 on a given Sunday.

“They visit not only the homes of shut-ins but also the hospitals, nursing homes, the county jail and anywhere and everywhere there is a living

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soul who is unable to attend Bible School and Worship Services.

“On more than one occasion they have visited a person in the hospital and asked them if they wanted to partake of the Lord’s Supper that day and the person would say, ‘I am a member of the church of our Lord, but I have not been faithful.’ At this the Extension worker would explain to them what the scriptures say they must do, and then he would say, ‘You should come back to your first love.’ Some have been restored; and some who have been baptized have crossed the river unexpectedly. We will have to wait until we get to heaven to know how much good this department does.

“If you have as many as one living soul in your community who is unable, because of any reason under the sun, to attend worship, then you ought to take the study of the Bible to him. May we respectfully challenge you to immediately establish your own Extension Department and visit the lonely and the shut-ins every Lord’s Day, bringing them the word of God and prayer and love. We challenge you to do it immediately.” (*This is Your Challenge Too!* by Ira North). †

### Let Me Give

I do not know how long I'll live  
But while I live, Lord, let me give  
Some comfort to someone in need,  
By smile or nod, kind word or deed.

And let me do what e're I can  
To ease things for my fellow man.  
I want naught but to do my part  
To "lift" a tired or weary heart,  
To change folks' frowns to smiles again —  
Then I will not have lived in vain.  
And I'll not care how long I live  
If I can give and give and give!

— Author Unknown



# TRAINING TO TEACH

Jane McWhorter

**Be Ready  
Always to Give  
an Answer —**

## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

As Christian women, most of us have been asked by our neighbors and other friends, "Why do you practice certain things in your religion?" We have read the Scriptures many times; we have studied in classes; we are thoroughly convinced by what the Bible has to say on the subject. However, we forget or become confused under pressure and cannot always remember the verses to cite as proof. *"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"* (1 Peter 3:15).

Since it is difficult to hold all these passages in our memories, I would like to suggest that you purchase a New Testament that can easily be carried with you at all times. On one of the blank pages in the front or back, write the titles of different first-principle subjects. Under each title list the first verse on that subject. Turn to that passage and in the margin write the reference for the next passage. In the margin beside **that** verse, write the reference to the next scripture and so on. It is really a miniature chain-reference

## TRAINING TO TEACH

which will enable us to give an answer quickly. In addition to a marked Testament, it is a good idea to also carry a small note pad with quotations from history and reference books on various subjects.

Let's begin by studying a very simple answer to the fundamental question: "What must I do to be saved?" This question is asked several times in the book of Acts, which records the history of the New Testament church.

In Acts 2:37 the Jews asked, "*Brethren, what shall we do?*" Peter replied, "**Repent, and be baptized every one of you**" (Acts 2:38).

In Acts 9:6 Saul was told to "*...arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*" After three days of fasting and prayer, Ananias appeared and told this sorrowful sinner: "*And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16). (Saul had already manifested his belief and repentance.)

In Acts 16:30 the trembling Philippian jailer begged of Paul and Silas, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" He was told, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house**" (Acts 16:30,31) After the word was preached (Acts 16:31), the jailor **believed, repented** (washed their stripes) and was **baptized** (Acts 16:33).

Thus we can see that the answer to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" depended upon the stage of conversion that each person was in at the time. The jailor had not yet believed, so he was told that this must preclude all other steps. The Jews on the day of Pentecost had already believed, but they had not yet repented, so this step was necessary before baptism. Saul had evidenced his belief and his repentance, so he was simply told to be baptized.

In the account of the Ethiopian eunuch, we learn still another part of conversion. Before his baptism, the eunuch confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37).

On a blank page at the front of your Bible under the heading, "Conversion," you may begin by listing Romans 10:17 "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" In the margin beside this passage, list the next: Acts 16:31 (belief). Beside this margin note Acts 2:38 (repent). Next add Acts 8:37 (confess) and finally Acts 22:16 (baptism). This puts one into the kingdom, but final salvation is conditional upon a life of faithfulness (Revelation 2:10). †

Jane McWhorter is a writer and the wife of a gospel preacher, and they live in Fayette, AL, USA.



**T**hrough the ages Christianity has been affected by pagan religious superstitions infiltrating its ranks. The Celts were the first and most influential of the pagan groups in Europe to be incorporated into increasingly apostate congregations of the Lord's church. Some of the practices adopted and adapted at that time are still widely followed by the majority of believers in Christ, though they had their roots in idolatrous religions and superstitions, instead of in God's revealed truths.

# Pagan Practices Infiltrated Christianity During the Early Centuries

Keith Sisman

**F**rom ancient times, the Celts controlled what is now known as Britain. They had a belief in the after life, and prayed for their dead to their gods. Their priesthood, the Druids (Oak priests) was strongest in Celtic Britain. The Druids came from the warrior aristocracy, they were arbitrators, priests, healers and divines. It was through the Druids that the Celts were unified, and it is for this reason that the Romans sought to destroy the power of the Druids.

The Druids developed what they believed to be sacred stone worship areas, the "stone Henges", of which the circles of Stonehenge and Avebury are two of the most famous. From these stone circles, alignment of the mid-summer sunrise and midwinter sunset imply both the understanding of the calendar and Sun worship. The Sun was adored under the name of **Bel** or **Belenus**. Human sacrifice was made when worshipping Bel; normally the victims were prisoners of war or criminals.

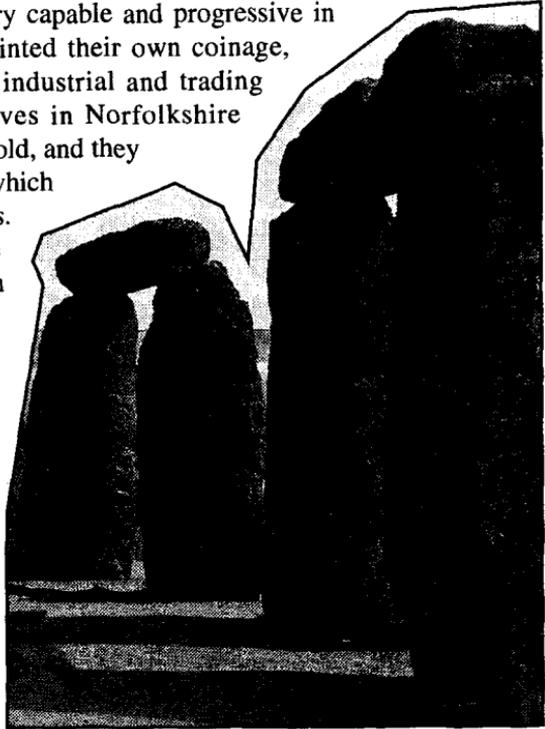
Some of the stone blocks at Stonehenge are estimated to weigh over 50 tons. About 900 stone circles survive in Britain and Ireland, some of the circles being up to 1300 feet in diameter.

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These peoples were very capable and progressive in many ways. They even minted their own coinage, organised themselves into industrial and trading areas such as Grimes Graves in Norfolkshire where flint was mined and sold, and they had wheeled transport for which they developed road systems. These were improved by the Romans and still continue in use today.

These pagan peoples with their many beliefs observed Yuletide, the feast of the winter solstice, celebrating the returning of the sun. Like religions from the east, tree worship was practiced, especially for its healing powers. Many eastern religions believed that deities or spirits lived inside various trees, and therefore

could assist those who offered prayers to the tree. The Celts held the oak tree and its mistletoe in high esteem, calling it 'all-heal', cutting the mistletoe from the tree on the sixth day of the moon.



It is from the Druids — from pagan beginnings — that **Easter, Yuletide** and **Mistletoe** have found their way into modern religious celebration via the apostate sector of the true church, which came to be called the "Holy Roman Catholic Church".

It is from these peoples — from pagan beginnings — that **Easter, Yuletide** and **Mistletoe** have found their way into modern religious celebration via the apostate sector of the true church, which came to be called the

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“Holy Roman Catholic Church”. They, like many of the Indo-European (descendants of Japheth) held the egg to be sacred, which they would paint. They also practised human sacrifice to their gods, and like other peoples across the world they had a great fascination in death and the terrible suffering of those who were being sacrificed. Their divines would watch the dying, as they believed they could prophesy from such suffering.

Two other ancient beliefs among the Druids were the doctrines of Dualism (when modified, this later turned up in Christianity as Gnosticism) and Reincarnation (which is an Indo-European eastern belief found today in Hinduism). This belief in the countless rebirth of the soul has been, and is, held by the majority of non-Christian religious groups.

Amongst their legends were the stories of battles with terrible dragons, flying serpents and sea monsters. Such stories may not be taken seriously today, but their remarkable agreement with the Biblical flood account and the similarity of dragon stories with known species of dinosaurs make interesting reading.

Celtic scholars and philosophers repeated the stories and legends of the great flood, their histories being handed down mainly by oral tradition, although some tribes had scribes (Druids) who could write down their histories and genealogies. It is said that it could take up to twenty years for a Druid to learn the oral tradition.

Amongst the Celtic legends were the stories of battles with terrible dragons, flying serpents and sea monsters. What is interesting about such ‘legends’ is that through the detailed accounts given we can recognise particular species of dinosaurs such as the dreaded Tyrannosaurus Rex, flying Pterodactyl and the frightening water inhabitant, the Plesiosaurus! Even today the Welsh flag retains its dragon, a symbol of earlier times.

Such stories may not be taken seriously today, but their remarkable agreement with the Biblical flood account and the similarity of dragon stories with known species of dinosaurs make interesting reading. Maybe modern historians should take a look back into early histories rather than totally ignoring them, in preference to unproved evolutionary timescales.

The Celts had four main festivals, which were associated with the sea-

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sons. One of these was *Imbolc*, celebrated on 1 February and associated with the *Irish mother goddess* "Brigit" (meaning exalted one). After the Druids were destroyed, the cult of Brigit remained and continues today as the **Catholic cult of St. Brigit** whose feast day is 1 February. Brigit was associated with the British deity *Brigantia*.

The cults of the many other Celtic mother goddesses have continued in the veneration shown to Mary the mother of Jesus and other Catholic female saints. The Celts held *water to be holy*, sacrificing both people, animals and valuable goods (broken first) and placing their remains in water. Today this continues in the veneration of holy water and holy wells, in Catholicism.

From 55 BC onwards the Romans would subjugate these peoples, often retaining their kings. By the time the Gospel of Christ was being spread, travel was possible across the known world, with no border controls and with superb Roman roads and sea travel. The result of this was that the Romans were fully in charge of southern Britain, and the Celtic organisation and religion had been destroyed with the elimination of the Druids.

Early in the Christian era, the British king (western Silurian family) Carradog (Caratacus) became a Christian when his father Bran went to Rome as a hostage, from where he learned of the Christian faith. King Bran returned to Britain in the year 58/59 and it is from this date that Christianity spread throughout Britain. With many of the eastern British petty kings out of the way and with the pagan Druid priesthood destroyed by Roman occupation, there was little opposition to the new religion. At the same time the Romans introduced their own pagan religious beliefs into Europe and Britain, these intermingled with Celtic beliefs and as such gradually infiltrated Christianity from the third and fourth centuries onwards.

Today this pagan Goddess — Eostre or Astarte — is still remembered by the world's yearly celebration of Easter and the making of Hot Cross Buns and painted (chocolate) eggs.

When Paul writes to the Romans (Romans 1:8), he talks of their faith being known throughout the whole world, indicating that at this time the Gospel was being spread throughout the Roman Empire, including Britain. The Europeans developed their languages with a mixture of Latin and during the late middle ages their respective languages took on their modern

## CHURCH HISTORY

character. It is with this European background, separate from Rome, that the true church would be able to evangelise and survive the terrible onslaughts from the Roman State and the later Catholic church, which in turn would be infected by the many pagan rites of the local peoples.

**A** hundred years or so before the start of the Christian era, Europe itself was populated by many pagan tribes from the north of Scotland, Scandinavia across Europe and down to northern Italy and Galatia. The common designation today is Gauls for most of these peoples. The Greeks had named this part of Europe "Galatia", which in Roman times had become known as Gallia but later as Gaul. These tribes vied with each other for supremacy, but also inter-married and traded.

The Germanic Gauls had many tribes (Lat. Germanus, a name given to them by their Celtic neighbours). The most famous of these were the Angles from Schleswig, northern Germany (Lat. Anglus) and the Saxons, from Saxony, Germany, being known today as the **Anglo-Saxons**.

The Gauls invaded England and took power from **AD 450** onwards. These people were pagan, while the primary occupants of the land by that time were Christian and/or apostate "Christian". It is from the word Angle that the name of England is derived. The Anglo-Saxons had many gods, including Tiw, the Germanic god identified with the Roman god, Mars. Tiw is still remembered through the name of the third day of the week, *Tuesday*. The Anglo-Saxons, despite their paganism, claimed to be descendants of Japheth (even Queen Elizabeth 2 is reputed to be able to trace her ancestry through Japheth to Adam)! During their travels from the middle east to their initial settlement of Germany, these peoples retained their knowledge of the flood but had forgotten the true God, like the Celts.

It would seem that during these travels, they acquired worship and knowledge of the Assyrian goddess, Ishtar, the same goddess as the Babylonian Astarte, (both pronounced in their original languages as **Easter**, to whom it was customary to make fresh or hot buns/cakes; see Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:19, two biblical passages which refer to this goddess). To the Germanic tribes she became known as either the goddess of spring, or the goddess of the East, known in Germanic as Eostre, or *estaran*, from which the Old English word *eastre* is derived. Today this pagan Goddess is still remembered by the world's yearly celebration of Easter and the making of Hot Cross Buns and painted (chocolate) eggs. †

**Keith Sisman preaches for the Peterboro Church of Christ in England.**



# How do you measure up?

**Be angry,  
and do not sin.**

**Meditate within your heart  
on your bed,  
and be still.**

**Selah.**

**Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,  
And put your trust in the Lord.**

**Psalm 4:4,5**

# The Offering

**Stan Mitchell**

So what did you get out of "church" today? Did you have a powerful experience of God? Were you inspired by what went on?

*"In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The*

*Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor"* (Genesis 4:3-5).

Old Testament worship, whether it was offered by patriarchs on a windy hillside or by Israelites in a tabernacle always had an "offering". From the very earliest of Sunday school lessons, children's vivid imaginations are fired by the image of an animal being placed on an altar, and of the smoke of the "of-



fering" rising to heaven.

In Christian worship, too, there is an offering. This is probably the best of the descriptive phrases for the "collection". We offer "a sacrifice of praise" with our lips (Hebrews 13:15). Worship has always centered around the term "offering", and Paul urges us to "offer our lives" as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). Even Jesus Christ's death on the cross was an offering to God for all mankind.

So I have just one question for you. If worship is an offering, **exactly who becomes the center of worship?** In a word, who gives the offering, God or us? The correct answer to this question will go a long way in helping us identify what we are supposed to *gain* from worship.

If we really came to **offer something to God**, then there would be much less criticism of worship on our part. *If we came to offer God* some of **our proceeds, our songs of praise, indeed our very lives**, then it wouldn't be we who evaluated the "relevance" or "merit" of our worship. It would be **God**, the one to whom we offer these things.

I wonder if *His* criteria for "good" worship is the same as the ones we commonly mention? So often we come to worship, not to "call on the Lord", but to see "what's in it for us?". Some may mistakenly think that this is worship, but it is offered to a false god, the god of tradition or pride, or even our own selves.

Instead, let us worship **the true God, in the way He has asked**. Offer Him praise above all others, not primarily because He has fulfilled you; not because you seek some "pay off", but simply *because He is worthy*. †

**Stan Mitchell is a preacher of the gospel in Borger, TX, USA.**

## WHO IS SITTING IN YOUR SEAT?

— UNKNOWN —

A preacher met a lukewarm Christian on the street Monday morning. The man knew he was in for a lecture because the preacher had often talked about failing to attend the worship services.

Thinking he would beat the preacher to the punch and take the sting out of the rebuke, the man began his greeting by making a frank confession.

"Well, my seat was empty again yesterday," he said.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed the preacher. "It wasn't empty at all!"

"What?" asked the absentee. "Who was there?"

The preacher replied, "Satan was there in your seat, leering at me and saying, 'I've got him again, Preacher!'"

The careless member repented and was in his seat the next Sunday.

## WORSHIP

**S**uppose we conducted a specific interview throughout the world. This interview was restricted to non-Christians (1) who were personally acquainted

with people who believed in Jesus and (2) who personally observed the activities of churches. The interview asked only one question: "Based on your observations of those who believe in Jesus, and based on your observations of church activities, what is your basic impression of Jesus?"

There certainly would be a variety of responses. Likely, this response would be prominent: "Jesus appears to be a deity with a massive ego." Those who do not believe in Jesus could easily draw that conclusion. The most common activity of those who believe in Jesus is worship. The most common enterprise of churches around the world is building places to worship Jesus. Non-believers could conclude that these two observations document that Jesus has a huge ego.



# A Savior Without Ego

David Chadwell

## WORSHIP

Observing the motivations of many who worship Jesus might strengthen that conclusion. Many worship out of habit. Many worship because of fear. Some worship to gain protection from harm. A non-believer could easily conclude that worshiping Jesus is a matter of prudence in protecting oneself from Jesus' anger. Jesus is easily "offended." Worship exists to "appease" Him. Physical presence in a worship assembly pleases Jesus and protects the attender from Jesus' anger.

**Conclusion:** Jesus has a huge ego and is easily offended. Thus, the purpose for building church buildings is to worship Jesus. The objective of worship is to keep Jesus calm and content.

### **On the Contrary. . .**

The person studying the Gospel accounts should be impressed by two facts.

**Fact one:** Jesus did not act or function on the basis of ego. Never did Jesus manifest a desire to be worshiped. He was worshiped on many occasions. Yet, never did He request or command worship of Himself. People worshiped Him as a voluntary expression of love and appreciation.

Though Jesus was God's own Son sent to earth in true humanity

(Hebrews 2:14-18), never did He say to anyone, "Worship Me!" Never did He declare, "Because I am the Son of God, you must worship Me! I shall return to God. Upon that return I will be the Christ, the Savior, the eternal High Priest, and your personal representative before the throne of God. Right now you had better recognize who I am. Right now you had better understand the position I will assume before God. Give Me the respect and honor I am due — fall on your knees and worship Me!"

Jesus never exalted Himself, never glorified Himself, and never sought the praise and adoration of people. He was perfect, unassuming humility. He was the meekest person who ever lived on earth.

**Fact two:** the Gospel records do not emphasize the fact that Jesus worshiped. Jesus certainly worshiped. He frequently visited places of worship (Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:16; John 8:2). Yet, in the many references to His visiting places of worship, never is the emphasis on the fact that He worshiped. Two facts are emphasized: (1) *He taught the people* and (2) *He compassionately addressed the physical and spiritual needs of people.*

The Gospel accounts contain this conscious emphasis: **people**

## WORSHIP

**who worshiped Jesus did so out of profound gratitude for His deeds or in profound awe of His identity.**

Those blessed by His miracles often worshiped Him (Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 15:25). His disciples worshiped Him after seeing Him walk on a stormy sea (Matthew 14:23). The early witnesses of the resurrection took hold of His feet and worshiped Him (Matthew 28:9). The one person who worshiped Him as she presented a request did not receive her request (Matthew 20:20-28).

Interestingly, none of the writers record Jesus devoting a lesson to worship. The people Jesus taught had been devout worshippers for centuries. They wrongly concluded that belonging to God was primarily a matter of worshiping God in the correct manner in the correct places at the correct times.

Jesus told a Samaritan woman that acceptable worship was not determined by geographical loca-

tion, but by the worshipper (John 4:19-25).

Some religious leaders reduced godliness to a matter of proper observance of traditional religious practices. Jesus told them their veneration of God was an act of vanity because they substituted human decrees for the teachings of God.

Jesus is not a Savior with an ego problem. Worship is not an ego trip for a Savior in love with His own importance. Christianity is not founded upon a Jesus who came to teach us to worship. Christianity is founded upon a Jesus who came to teach us to serve God through proper living and proper treatment of other people. Christian worship is an expression of gratitude for redemption and an expression of awe for Jesus. †

**David Chadwell is the preacher for the Westark Church of Christ in Fort Smith, AR, U.S.A.**

**What is the soul? It is the immortal imprint of God in the human He made.**

**Into the still clay God breathed the breath of life, and man became a living soul, formed in the image of his Creator. That image can think with God; it can act and react in response to Him; it can pour out love and adoration to Him, reaching out in longing. It is *immortal*.**

**But such is the power God has granted man that he can take that treasure, blacken it with sin, warp the love into hate, and destroy in hell what God intended to live eternally with Himself. — BBC**

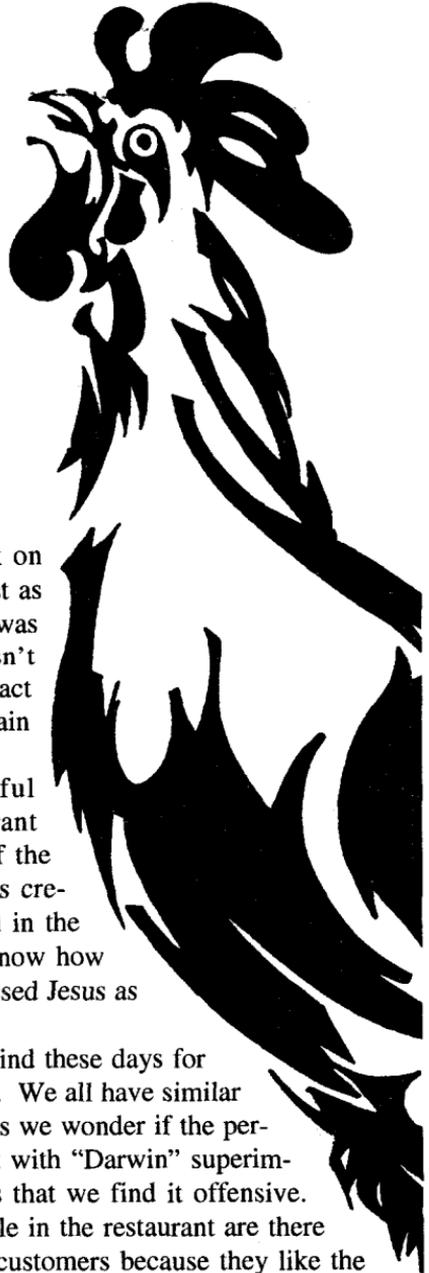
# When Will the Rooster Crow for Me?

**Bowen Rose**

This afternoon I turned my back on my Savior. I denied knowing Him just as profoundly as if I were Peter when He was on trial before the Sanhedrin. It wasn't the first time I have done this hideous act and I am heartbroken because I am certain it will not be the last.

It was while enjoying a peaceful lunch at a local SouperSalad restaurant that I began wondering how many of the twenty or thirty patrons, all marvelous creations of the Father, had been washed in the blood. You know, I was curious to know how many had repented of their sins, confessed Jesus as God's Son and been baptized.

It's a thought that frequents my mind these days for no apparent reason other than curiosity. We all have similar thoughts from time to time. Sometimes we wonder if the person across the way wearing a tee shirt with "Darwin" superimposed across a "Christian fish" knows that we find it offensive. Sometimes we just wonder if the people in the restaurant are there for the first time or if they are return customers because they like the



## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

food. Our minds are always active about something; today mine wondered how many had been saved.

Unfortunately, my thoughts did not stop there. Instead of it being a passing question, it tore at my soul until I began to devise a method of satisfying my curiosity. I could simply rise, tap my glass with my spoon and say in a normal tone of voice, "May I see a show of hands of everyone here who has been washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

After all, how different would that be than my taking a survey of how many had driven to the restaurant in a Ford? Had I asked this second question I would likely have received some chuckles, raised eyebrows and then a show of hands. Few would have been concerned that I might follow up by visiting their table to ask how they like their Ford. If I did, they would likely have graciously answered with tales of satisfaction or complaints about their recent visit to a service department, or they would have said that they didn't care to talk to a stranger about their automobile.

As I considered what sort of a reaction I might receive to the real question I wanted to ask, I thought about how I would have reacted to the question myself. I might have given some consideration to the personality who raised the question in the first place. I would immediately

attempt to judge whether it was some zealot kook possessing ideas about the imminent coming of the apocalypse, or if it was an outspoken brother of the Way. In either case, I would have likely responded with a knowing look, perhaps a wink of the eye and most likely a subtle thumbs down from the tabletop. And then I realized that my own reaction would have fallen considerably short of raising my hand. For the same reason that I never rose to ask the question, I knew that I would have publicly denied my Savior. I would have suffered temporary embarrassment in front of a handful of strangers.

Why is it then that when reading the Word in solitude, I genuinely long for an opportunity to be dragged to a dark dungeon and placed in chains because I claim to be a Christian? I believe beyond a doubt that, if imprisoned like Paul, I would console myself with my personal relationship with God. Somehow, if caused to suffer for Christ, I would be confident of sanctification.

Unfortunately, today the realization came that I am too much of a coward to ever be embarrassed, let alone imprisoned. The opportunity stared me in the face today, not to be imprisoned, but to be mildly embarrassed only for a matter of minutes, and I shrank with fear.

Satan will comfort me now,

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

assuring me that such a public display of faith is not what my Father expects of me. Too many of the patrons at the restaurant were "good" people. Whatever their walk with Christ, my outburst would have been viewed as unstable and could even have had a negative effect on them. I will be assured by the dark prince that sometime in the future, as my knowledge of His Word increases, I will be afforded more

suitable audiences, experience less resistance and accomplish much more. But not now. Never now.

Peter was told he would deny Christ three times before the rooster crowed. *When it crowed Peter knew immediately what he had done and he began to live a righteous life beyond my imagination.*

**When will the rooster crow for me?**

**Bowen Rose is a Christian living in San Antonio, TX, USA.**

### The Man in the Glass

When you get what you want in your struggle for self,  
And the world makes you king for a day,  
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself  
And see what that man has to say.

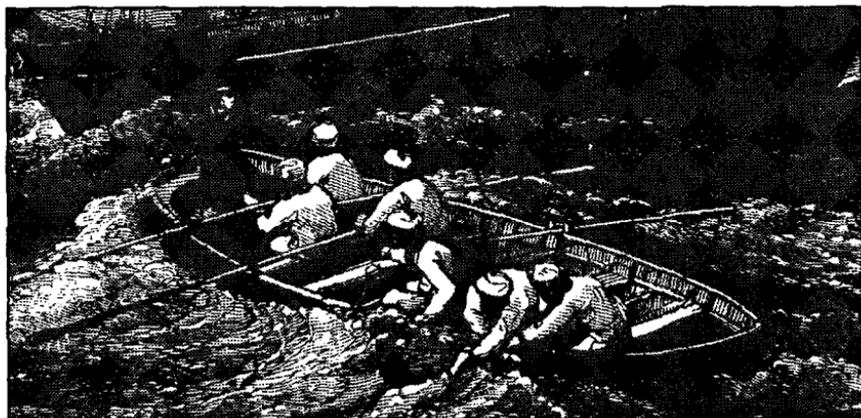
For it isn't your father or mother or wife  
Whose judgment upon you must pass,  
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life  
Is the one staring back from the glass.

You may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum  
And think you're a wonderful guy,  
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest,  
For he's with you clear to the end,  
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test  
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years,  
And get pats on the back as you pass,  
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears  
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

— Peter "Dale" Wimbrow, Sr.



# *Don't let it happen again!*

**Mark T. Tonkery**

Titanic strikes again! The video of the movie "Titanic" has recently gone on sale. With the scenes of the movie being shown daily on our television sets it has made the sinking of Titanic very real to us. The images of death and destruction make one feel sorry for the 1,000 or more people who perished in this disaster. It is even more heartbreaking to hear the historians tell us that Titanic did not have enough lifeboats for the passengers aboard, and that the lifeboats they did have were not full of people. Those in the lifeboats should have helped rescue the people drowning in the icy sea but for one reason or another they did not.

Today, it horrifies us to think that innocent lives could have been spared if it had not been for those selfish people in the lifeboats. If only they would have filled their boats, they could have given at least one more person a chance to live, to see their loved ones and fulfill their dreams.

Now many years have past since Titanic went down. Often times we think of the past and think about what we could have done then, but we forget about the here and now. As you read this there are many more people in our world than there were in the Titanic. They are drowning in the sea of life and yet, just as those lifeboats were empty, so are our church buildings.

People board the worldly Titanic and somewhere along the way they crash into the icebergs of life, whether it is a divorce, bankruptcy, disease or a number of other tragedies. Their lives begin to sink and they cry for help,

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

but the people in the lifeboats do not come to their rescue.

Christians, we are the ones in the lifeboats. We have already hit the icebergs of this world and we know what it is like to cry for help in the darkness. We are in a lifeboat with the power to reach out and save others with the message of Christ.

Sometimes we need to be reminded to rescue the perishing in this world. The Apostle Paul writes, "*Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this Gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Don't let a Titanic disaster happen again. Paul thought it was of first importance to tell the world about the gospel of Christ and so must we. Today, go pull someone out of the darkness of life and rescue him or her with the message of Jesus Christ! †

**Mark T. Tonkery lives and works in Frankfort, Kentucky, USA.**

### ***Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep***

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
But first it's time to mourn and weep  
For all around the world cries out  
In deep despair from sin and doubt.

I will not sleep without a prayer  
For those who do not know God's care.  
I will not rest without a thought  
For friends and neighbors yet untaught.

I will not, must not, fail to ask  
That God will guide my every task;  
That all I do and all I say  
Will point to Jesus as the Way.

I will not, must not, fail to long  
That all might sing salvation's song,  
That all might know the Savior's love  
And journey to their home above.

**— Craig Richardson**

# My Gratitude

For loved ones Thou hast given me,  
For friends I cannot number,  
For blood which daily cleanses me,  
For nightly peaceful slumber;

For work to do, for love to share,  
For burdens often lifted,  
For open hearts and open doors  
And help from those more gifted.

For guidance of the Living word,  
And comfort of the Spirit,  
For intercession at Thy throne  
When prayer shall bring me near it;

For confidence that others give,  
For trust they place in me;  
For godly souls who for Thee live,  
And strength they ever lend me;

For steadfast souls who stand the shock  
When Satan fierce assails them,  
Whose feet are firm upon the Rock  
Where Thou doest never fail them;

For peace and calm amid the storm,  
For lessons learned through failing;  
For faith that o'er the evil yet  
The good will be prevailing;

For crown and throne and golden home  
And life when life shall end,  
I thank Thee, Father, Lord of all,  
In Jesus' name. Amen.

— Norman Gipson

# The Crisis of Bereavement

Hardeman Nichols



Since the pale of death pierces every mortal, it is necessary for all of us to learn how to handle bereavement. I have watched with great admiration and respect the courage that has borne many a saint through hours of sorrow. Here is some practical advice I have seen others use in dealing with grief:

## **Express Your Emotions.**

It should not be considered a Christian virtue to be unmoved by the loss of a loved one. There is a difference between suppressing

one's emotions and losing one's self-control. The Bible does not say, "Sorrow not"; but it says, "*Sorrow not as others who have no hope*" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

## **Seek the Aid of Your Friends.**

The very presence of friends is an encouragement. When Paul neared Rome, the brethren came to meet him, and he "*thanked God and took courage*" (Acts 28:15).

## **Compel Yourself to Be with People.**

Your inclination may be to retreat into the refuge of privacy, but there is a greater need than one realizes to associate with others. David did (2 Samuel 12:19-23).

### **Express Your Feelings in Words.**

Talking about it will help you to accept it. If this is done at the outset of bereavement, one will sooner be able to stabilize his life.

### **Avail Yourself of Spiritual Resources.**

Even though you may not have realized the importance of the Scriptures and their comfort, now these can help in building your faith. The power of prayer and the peace of God are very precious possessions.

### **Don't Brood Over What Might Have Been.**

Both Mary and Martha said, "*If thou hadst been here my brother had not died*" (John 11:21-32).

### **Actively Pursue Worthwhile Tasks.**

Once the initial shock has been dealt with, get busy at other things. Resolve like Paul to "*reach forth unto the things which are before*" (Philippians 3:13).

### **Make Careful and Thoughtful Decisions.**

Many an individual jumps hastily into deciding the full scope of the future rather than waiting until he has regained a proper perspective of life. Don't get in a hurry. Make prayerful decisions.

### **Increase Your Trust in God.**

Those who have come through their sorrows with a deeper faith can verify that God, who rules over all, truly does make all things work together for good (Romans 8:28).

After the crisis of grief, you can serve more fully and sympathize more completely with people of like passions. With Paul, you too can thank God for the comfort received, knowing that it has now given you the ability to comfort others who are in any trouble (2 Corinthians 1:4). †

Hardeman Nichols preaches and lectures all over the U.S.A. and in other countries, as well. He lives in Dallas, TX, USA.

**"BE OF GOOD  
COURAGE, AND HE  
SHALL STRENGTH-  
EN YOUR HEART,  
ALL YE THAT HOPE  
IN THE LORD"  
(PSALM 31:24).**

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

# Happiness

Allan E. Flaxman



It would seem to me that the pursuit of happiness is the objective of most people. There are those, I feel sure, who by-pass Christianity for this very reason, wrongly believing that Christianity automatically means "long faces" and perpetual seriousness, with no room for a smile, let alone a hearty laugh.

Jesus, of course, is mostly portrayed as very serious, and, considering the seriousness of His great Message of Salvation, and the end He had in view, this seriousness is hardly surprising. However, Jesus was not without an undercurrent of humor. He almost became a "cartoonist-in-words" on at least two recorded occasions; (1) Where He referred to Herod as a "fox" and (2) where He spoke of a "log of wood" being in the eye of the hypocrite (Luke 13:32; Matthew 7:3-5). The modern cartoonist would have had some fun with the "fox" and the "log of wood".

While it is true that "happiness" is a state of mind over which, to a large extent, we have control, we should not lose sight of the fact that on occasions, it is perfectly in order to experience sadness. When Stephen was killed (Acts 8:2), Christians lamented. Jesus taught, "*Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh*" (Luke 6:21). And, Jesus, Himself actually "wept" over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39) and

at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35).

Yet a "happy attitude" is achievable. Not an absence of all sadness — rather, a generally happy approach. How? Well, by deciding on real values. We soon find that the accumulation of materialistic wealth seldom, if ever, provides lasting happiness. Observation of the materially wealthy and of those "chasing money or possessions", seldom show us people who are really happy. Probably the reason for this is that the "rich" and the "would be rich" are never satisfied. The accumulation of the first one million dollars only sets in place a "comma" in pursuit of the second and so onward, ad infinitum.

The fact is that we humans, contrary these days to the belief of many, are not just an extension of the animal kingdom, but rather we are God's special creation, into which He has breathed the "*breath of life*" making man a "*living soul*" (Genesis 2:7). This "*living soul*", by nature, calls for "spiritual food", and depending on whether or not it is supplied, we have a satisfied happiness, after which the soul craves. Reconciliation to God, as Paul points out (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), is essential to our happiness. †

**Allan E. Flaxman planted the church in the Sydney suburb of Lakemba, Australia, where he preached for about 30 years.**

# PUZZLE PAGE

## The Book of 1 John for adults

Fill in the blanks below. Then, using the letters above the corresponding numbers, complete the verse.

**Bramble**

6   13   5   4   6   11   2

**Cash**

14   3   8   2   17

**Extreme anger**

7   9   15   2

**Preferred treatment**

10   9   12   3   7

**Fine dirt or silt**

1   16   4   6

6	13	5	4

5	4

6	13	2	

6	2	4	6	5	14	3	8	17	

6	13	9	6

15	3	1

15	9	12	2

16	4

2	6	2	7	8	9	11	

11	5	10	2

9	8	1

6	13	5	4

11	5	10	2

5	4

5	8

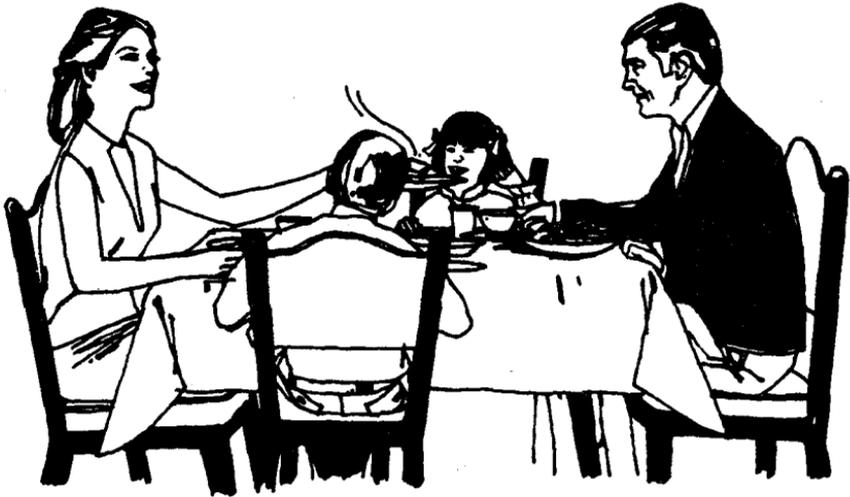
13	5	4

4	3	8

-1 John 5:11

# Needed: Home Improvement

Dalton Key



**T**he typical American family is in trouble. Statistics on every side confirm this truth.

Now this probably comes as no sudden shock to you. You have surely noticed for some time evidence of crumbling, hurting families all around you. Across the street. Next door. Or perhaps even in your own living room.

Which brings to mind a question. Why are they still called "living rooms"? Was there once life

going on in there? It seems I've heard the older folks telling stories about the days of yore, when Mom, Dad, the kids, and sometimes even the family dog, would gather in the living room after the dishes were done and spend time together.

I know. It sounds strange. These days we find it next to impossible to get the whole family together for a meal, much less for time together afterwards. When we're not eating out, with half of us at one

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

place and the rest of us somewhere else, we're eating in shifts. And on those rarest of rare occasions when the family does eat together, it's little more than a frenzied contest to see who can eat the fastest, say the least, and bolt for the back door before the others.

By now you must consider me a cynic. Rest assured, this is not the case. I'm still optimistic enough to hope the picture I've painted is

overdrawn — at least for most of us.

But one last thought. Would Jesus have increased "*in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*" (Luke 2:52) if He had been raised in a "typical" American family?

**What if He had been in yours? †**

**Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches in Amarillo, TX, USA.**

### Christian Marriage

Beautiful is the marriage of Christians, two who are one in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice.

They are both servants of the same Master. Nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit.

They are two in one flesh, and where there is one flesh there is also one spirit.

They pray together, they worship together, instructing one another, strengthening one another.

Side by side they visit God's church; side by side they face difficulties and persecution, share their consolations. They have no secrets from one another; they never bring sorrow to each other's hearts.

Unembarrassed they visit the sick and assist the needy. They give alms without anxiety.

Psalms and hymns they sing. Hearing and seeing this, Christ rejoices. To such as these He gives His peace.

Where there are two together, there also He is present; and where He is, evil is not.

— Tertullian of Carthage, c. 160-230 A.D.



# “This Is the 90’s”

Ron Carter

**I**n a letter to Ann Landers, a young lady was lamenting the fact that her boy friend had dropped her because he found out she wasn’t a virgin. She went on to explain that he was a virgin and therefore, expected the same of the person who would be his wife. She had told the young man that virginity wasn’t important to her and she did have sex once, “to see what it was like.”

Her purpose in writing to Ann Landers was to ask how she could get this young man to understand that “sex is just part of life”? Her final statement was, “Tell him this is the 20th century, not the 18th.”

It wasn’t what this young lady said that was surprising. It was what Ann Landers said in response. Even though we would expect her to comfort this young lady, we certainly didn’t expect her to turn the

young man into the villain of this scenario. But by the end of her short answer, it was clear that Landers wanted us to think of him as unreasonable and out-of-date. Granted, the young man might have needed to give more thought to things like understanding, compassion, forgiveness, and the fact that people do change. However, to make him seem strange and unreasonable for having standards is the epitome of what is happening in our society.

The message being sent to our children is that, since we are living in the 1990’s, not only is sexual intimacy outside of marriage acceptable, it is expected of every “normal” person. Now we even have the actions of our President supporting that same premise.

Even before we look at this from the view of a Christian, it would seem that the young man had a right to be cautious about someone who had sex simply “to see

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

what it was like." We live in a time when even one sexual encounter can be a death sentence. Any young man who is thinking about marriage would certainly be wise to give this young lady's statement serious consideration. **"To see what it was like"...**? In addition to the concern he would have for his own safety, he would have to be thinking about the potential of this young woman as the mother of his children. By what standards would she help to train these children?

Not many years ago, our young people were told that a "nice girl" didn't kiss on the first date. It is disheartening to see just how quickly we have evolved to a standard that seems to say, "A nice girl doesn't go to bed with a young man until at least the third or fourth date."

As Christians, our view must be extremely different. From this perspective, it all becomes very clear and exacting.

*"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God"* (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

*"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality"* (Galatians 5: 19).

*"But do not let immorality or*

*any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints"* (Ephesians 5:3).

Since Christian standards have been around for almost 2,000 years, we have to ask, what could there possibly be about our "sophisticated" age that has changed them? We are being confronted by this 90's kind of reasoning on such a common scale, it has become frightening in its potential.

Someone might say, "Yes, but you're talking about the way *the world* approaches things." Yes I am, but don't kid yourself. The world is working hard to persuade our children to make their decisions with this 90's kind of mentality—all in service to the adversary. Because of the effectiveness of their message, it is time for us to speak out. It is time for those of us who are serious about our relationship with God to do more than take a personal stand. We must also make certain there is absolutely no doubt, in anyone's mind, that a sexual relationship outside of marriage is a sin. Possibly it is also time to be reminded that sin is what separates us from God, and if there is no repentance, that separation will be eternal even for people in the 90's. †

**Ron Carter of Colorado Springs, CO, USA, is Editor of *Rocky Mountain Christian*, a monthly publication for the churches of Christ.**



# *What Will You Leave Your Children?*

**Dan Jenkins**

*T*here is no way for parents to recognize the impact a single event can have in the rest of the life of a child. I was reminded of this recently in reading about the early life of Moses E. Lard. While his name

is not widely known, his influence in the history of the church in the last century was immense. What made him have such devotion to truth? What caused him to long for righteousness until his death?

To find the answers to these questions you have to go back to the day his mother faced death. There were six children and his father was so poor the children were about to be separated. Years later Moses Lard wrote of that fateful day: "At length the painful fear was fully realized that as a family we could be no longer kept together, the day of separation at length came; to us all death would have been a relief. Thinly clad and poorly shod, we stood around the humble hearth for the last time, our mother's heart was breaking. As my brother and myself stood beneath the little cabin eaves,

just ready to take leave of the only objects on earth dear to us, and thus close the saddest scene of our lives, my mother said: 'My dear boys, I have nothing to give you but my blessings and these two little books.' Her soul was breaking, and she could say no more. She then drew from her bosom two small testaments; and as her tears were streaming and lips quivering, she screamed as if it were her last, and placed them in our hands. We all said good-bye, and that family was forever broken on earth.

"Yet, gentle reader, think us not poor as we turned from that mean abode. We bore with us a Christian mother's blessing and the precious words of Jesus. We were wealthy boys. To that little book and the memory of that scene my future life owes its shaping. I never neglected the one, thank Heaven, nor forgot the other...Her last moments, like her life, were full of high trust in Christ. To her children she gave her blessing, for each breathed a prayer, and then went hence. May that little band she so tenderly loved and faithfully served meet her in heaven, as the last groan of each is hushed, is the fervent wish of the hand that pens this."

Parents, what lifetime memories will you leave for your child? †

**Dan Jenkins preaches for the church in West Palm Beach, FL, USA.**

**W**e often hear people say the church is losing its young people. Exactly what do they mean by this? The statement is not usually given as a fact, but rather is intended to be an indictment of the church for failure of some sort.

The truth of the matter is that **the church** has no young people to lose. God has entrusted children to **their parents**, not the church. "*And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4)

The church has the same responsibility to young people that it has to anyone else, to preach the word. It is not the church that must decide at what hour your teen must be in, or which TV programs they may watch, or which children they will be allowed to keep company with.

Teachers are not the ones who allow a child to neglect his Bible class home work, or to miss assemblies.

Parents, who is kidding whom? If your child is lost, do not blame the church!

# Walking by Faith

*Loy and Donna Mitchell,  
missionaries in Rhodesia  
and Zimbabwe from 1957.*



**I**n Africa, Loy is known as “The Tract Man”. Through his years of experience, he learned what needed to be written, and how to word it. He developed a habit of folding his tracts every night, sitting in the living room and relaxing after a long day of work. He practiced dropping those messages of life, judging the distance, the wind, and the pace of the pedestrian — of which there are many on African roads! — and with gratification he would watch in the rear view mirror as the walker stooped to retrieve the folded sheet and then continued on his way down the road, reading the sweet words of God. The birth of many a soul into the Kingdom began in just that way.

Loy comes from a family of Christians in which there were seven boys, most of them preachers of the Gospel. Donna, too, was blessed with parents and grandparents who were members of the Lord’s church, so that both were mature in Christ when they took their young family to Africa to live. Donna has written the story beautifully in their book, **Among the People of the Sun — Our Years in Africa.**

Those who have been privileged to be guests in the Mitchell home know that Loy and Donna rise early and spend an hour singing hymns, praying and reading aloud from the Scriptures, both in English and in Shona. With the view of the mountains in the distance, the fragrance of the many profusely blooming flowers and trees, the freshness of the African morning, and the realization that every day is being given as a living sacrifice to God, there could be no sweeter way to walk this earth.

Feeling the need for time with their children and grandchildren, the Mitchells returned to the States to live, just over a year ago. Retired? No, simply re-located and continuing to work and build the Kingdom. The Northside church in Topeka, KS has grown by 30% in these few months of application of “mission” work methods! God bless Loy and Donna!

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## PROVERBS 17:22

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The Lord created the earth in six days, rested on the seventh, and on the eighth day He started answering complaints.



Something to ponder: Why don't they make mouse-flavored cat food?



My friend John declares that he once caught a fish so large that the shadow of it weighed over 5 pounds!



The older I grow, the more I enjoy listening to folks who don't talk much.

There was a woman in my hometown who was always shy about telling her age – about 30 years shy!



A young preacher was shaking hands with the members as they filed out at the close of the worship service. One lady came up and told him, “Young man, you are a model preacher.”

He felt good about this until he got home and looked in the dictionary under “model” and found this definition: “A small imitation of the real thing.”



“Odd things, animals. All dogs look up to you. All cats look down at you. Only a pig looks at you as an equal.” — Winston Churchill



An elder was asking a fellow elder from a different congregation about the size of his congregation's new auditorium. The first elder answered, “Oh, it will sleep about 400.”

## PROVERBS 17:22

### Bulletin Bloopers:

“Potluck supper: prayer and medication to follow.”

“Don’t let worry kill you off — let the church help.”

“For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery downstairs.”

“Irving Carter and Jessie Benson were married on Oct. 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in school days.”

“Brother Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.”



Some assert that the story of Noah’s ark was a myth. Do you suppose we could say they have mythed the boat?



The preacher was trying to get his church’s financial operations out of the red. One Sunday he announced, “Members, this morning I have three sermons — it’s your choice. The first takes an hour and is worth \$1. The second takes 45 minutes, and is worth \$2. The third takes five minutes, and is worth \$5. Will the ushers please come forward and take up the collection?”

Good advice is appreciated by everyone — if they’re giving it.



A preacher noticed a crowd of little boys clustered around a dog. He asked, “What are you doing, my little men?” One of the boys answered, “Swapping lies. The one with the biggest lie gets the dog.” “Shocking!” exclaimed the preacher. “Why, when I was your age, I never thought of telling an untruth,” he said. The boys immediately proclaimed, “You win! The dog’s yours, preacher!”



Food for thought: Where will you spend eternity — in smoking or non-smoking?



On their 50th wedding anniversary, a couple summed up the reasons for their long and happy marriage. “I never try to be selfish,” the husband said. “After all, the word marriage has no ‘I’ in it.”

“For my part,” the wife said with a smile, “I never correct my husband’s spelling.”

# Five Steps To Destruction

Don Walker

Jeremiah 6:10-16

Jeremiah had been called at a very critical time in the history of Israel and Judah. The Northern Kingdom, Israel, had already been carried away. Isaiah, who prophesied some 700 years before Christ, had warned Israel repeatedly of her sins, yet she would not hear nor take heed.

Jeremiah had been called to be a prophet to the southern tribe of Judah, but he felt ill equipped for the task because of his age (Jeremiah 1:5,6). However, Jehovah had other plans indeed, “. . . *Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant*” (Jeremiah 1:9,10). Even later in this book Jeremiah’s apprehension would shine forth. Fortunately, the drive to preach was stronger than the fear he may have possessed. “*Then I*

*said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I would not stay*” (Jeremiah 20:9).

The times of Jeremiah were very much like our times. It was a period of wealth and prosperity, yet lacking in, and poor in, spirituality and godliness. In Jeremiah we find a picture of this hellish society as we follow the five steps of destruction outlined by this prophet.

**The word of the Lord was a reproach** (Jeremiah 6:10). In chapter 8:9 we see that “*the wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?*” They were a people who obeyed not the voice of the Lord, nor received correction (Jeremiah 7:28). It is no wonder they went backward and not for-

## TEXTUAL STUDIES

ward (Jeremiah 7:24).

**Every one was given to covetousness** (Jeremiah 6:13). Isaiah would describe the people as *“greedy dogs which can never have enough”* (Isaiah 56:11). We must realize that covetousness is idolatry, and we must beware of it (Colossians 3:5; Luke 12:15). Salvation cannot be purchased with silver or gold (Zephaniah 1:18), nor is Jehovah impressed with treasures we accumulate here on earth. We must lay up treasures in heaven as we walk contentedly here (Matthew 6:19-24; Hebrews 13:5).

**They said, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace”** (Jeremiah 6:14). They were a people who did not recognize the problems that surrounded them. Many today fail to recognize the problems the church faces. The Bible speaks of false teachers in every time frame. In fact, Peter said, *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction”* (2 Peter 2:1). Though we live in a time of bless-

ings, we must also realize that we must beware (Colossians 2:8).

**They could not blush** (Jeremiah 6:15). Zephaniah said, *“The unjust knoweth no shame”* (Zephaniah 3:5). The fine art of blushing is being lost. Immodesty is becoming the sign of the times, and there seems to be no shame. Wild, rebellious children, and sin going unopposed should be a shame to any people, and yet it is the order of the day for many. We need to get back to the purity of God’s standard.

**They refused to walk in the old paths** (Jeremiah 6:16). There are those who are clamoring for change and for that which is new. However, we must realize that the Bible says now what it said in the beginning. In the area of New Testament Christianity, we must realize that the church and the message are more than 1900 years old. We need to seek the “old paths” of God’s Word.

We can learn great lessons from the Old Testament if we will. May we keep these things in mind as we study our Bibles much, much, more. †

**Don W. Walker preaches for the Shenandoah congregation in San Antonio, TX, USA.**

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Romans 15:4).

# How Are We to Live in our Hostile Environment?

Ron Bryant

**1 Peter 1:3-25; 2:1-12**

- A. As those who have been "*begotten by God unto...hope*" (1:3f.)
- B. As those that are "*kept by the power of God*" (1:1-5)
- C. As people possessed of genuine faith (1:6-9)
- D. As people who rest fully upon God's grace (1:13)
- E. As obedient children (1:14)
- F. As holy before God (1:15,16)
- G. With the deepest of reverence (1:17)
- H. As redeemed ones ( 1:18,19)
- I. As those who have purified their souls (1:22)
- J. As those who have been "born again" (1:23)
- K. As those who love one another with purity and fervor (1:22)
- L. As those who abstain from the things that destroy (2:1)
- M. As those who long to grow up in Christ (2:2)
- N. As those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious (2:3)
- O. As those who embrace Christ as a living stone and precious (2:4)
- P. As living stones, themselves, being built into a spiritual house (2:5)
- Q. As a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God (2:5)
- R. As those who unashamedly put their complete trust in Christ (2:6,7)
- S. As a chosen generation (2:9)
- T. As a royal priesthood (2:9)
- U. As a holy nation (2:9)
- V. As God's own special people (2:9)
- W. As those who live to proclaim God's praises (2:9)
- X. As those who are the people of God (2:10)
- Y. As those who have obtained mercy (2:10)
- Z. As sojourners and pilgrims (2:11,12)

†

Ron Bryant is the preacher for the Camelback congregation in Phoenix, AZ, USA.

# Faith Is the Victory

Betty Tucker

## 1 Samuel 17

The battle scene was set! Saul and the men of Israel were gathered on a mountain, ready to engage the enemy. The Philistines were gathered on another mountain, and there was a valley between them (1 Samuel 17:3).

Goliath was the champion of the Philistines. He was nearly ten feet tall! He wore a heavy suit of armor and was protected by a brass helmet on his head.

This huge warrior had offered a challenge to the armies of Saul. "Send one man to do battle with me, and the one who wins, that army shall be declared the winner and the other shall serve them" (Paraphrasing 1 Samuel 17:8,9).

All of the valiant soldiers heard the mocking tones of the giant who dared any to fight him. However, none came forth to accept the challenge, for they were afraid (17:11).

David, the youngest son of Jesse, came upon this scene. His father had sent him to check on his brothers. By this time, Goliath had defied the soldiers for forty days.

### The Challenge Is Accepted

David, who was but a youth, accepted the invitation of the formidable warrior from Gath. Saul declined David's offer, for he thought he had no chance against the awful giant. The shepherd boy recounted how he had killed a lion and a bear, protecting his sheep (17:36). Finally, Saul agreed to let David fight. Refusing Saul's offer of armor, the lad went forth to meet the Philistine.

Verse 40 tells us that David's weapons included his staff, his sling and five smooth stones he had taken from the brook.

David approached Goliath with great assurance. He declared in a loud voice that "*this day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee...for the battle is the Lord's*" (17:46,47).

We thrill as we read the exciting climax in 1 Samuel 17, verses 49-51.



David's aim was true, and the small stone found its mark in the center of Goliath's forehead. The big soldier fell upon his face to the earth.

David took Goliath's own sword and cut off his head! The Philistines, seeing their champion discomfited, fled. They were not very brave, with their great warrior subdued.

David had no fear of the man who was so large, and trained in the ways of war. We learn his secret to success in 1 Samuel 30:6, "*David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*" His great faith in God was his victory. †

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

# The Paradoxes of the Cross

## JESUS CHRIST:

### **Came Into the World**

1 Timothy 1:15; Matthew 20:28

### **Was Born In Flesh**

John 1:14; 1 John 4:2,3

### **Was Born of Woman**

Galatians 4:4; Isaiah 7:14

### **Became Son of Man**

Philippians 2:5-8; Luke 19:10

### **Was Rejected of Men**

John 1:11,12; Isaiah 53:3

### **Became Man of Sorrows**

Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 23:37

### **Was Made Sin for Us**

2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22-24

### **Was Put to Death**

Luke 24:46; Matthew 16:21

### **Was Cursed on Earth**

Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:7,8



## That We May:

### **Enter Into Heaven**

John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:1

### **Be Born of Spirit**

John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22

### **Be Born of God**

John 1:11-12; 1 John 5:4

### **Be Sons of God**

1 John 3:1-2; Galatians 4:6

### **Be Accepted of God**

Ephesians 1:6; Acts 10:34

### **Rejoice and be Glad**

Philippians 4:4; 1 Peter 4:13

### **Be Righteousness**

1 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:7

### **Be Made Alive**

Galatians 2:13; Ephesians 2:1

### **Be Blessed Above**

Galatians 3:14; Revelation 14:13

# Joshua's Farewell

## (Joshua 24)

Ken Tyler

**Purpose:** To learn from Joshua the attitude that will take us to heaven.

- I. *"...fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth"* (Joshua 24:14).
  - A. Fearing God and keeping His commandments is the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
  - B. We are here to be servants (Matthew 23:11; Mark 10:45).
  - C. Sincerity and practicing the truth are the two great characteristics that we must possess to please God (John 4:23,24).
- II. *"...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15).
  - A. Have we chosen to serve Christ (Matthew 12:30)?
  - B. The great need is for each one of our families to serve the Lord (Genesis 18:19).
  - C. How are our families doing today?
- III. *"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died..."* (Joshua 24:29).
  - A. The common lot of mankind is death (Luke 16:22).
  - B. Every person will also be judged (Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
  - C. We must make sure that we die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13).
- IV. *"And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua..."* (Joshua 24:31).
  - A. In these statements we can see the Godly leadership and influence of Joshua (Joshua 1:1-9).
  - B. The church needs the same kind of leadership and influence today (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14,15).
  - C. Our works live on (Revelation 14:13).

**Conclusion:** If you said farewell today, where would you go? †

Ken Tyler preaches for the Lord's church in Arab, AL, USA.



# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

E. Claude Gardner

## 1 Introduction:

*“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.*

*Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.’*

*So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’*

*Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS” (Matthew 1:18-25).*

*“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son .... He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they [the angels]. For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son,*

## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

*Today I have begotten You'? And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son'?*

*But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' ... ..to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom'." (Hebrews 1:1ff)*

- A. The Bible gives no instruction on how to observe the birthday of Christ. The first century church did not observe it. Note Colossians 3:17.
- B. Without celebrating the birth of Christ as a holy day, what is significant about His birth?

### II. Discussion

- A. Jesus was born — a fact. (Matthew 2:1-12.)
  - 1. Communists and some atheists deny that Jesus was an historical person.
  - 2. He was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-20; Micah 5:2), not in Jerusalem as the Book of Mormon states in Alma 7:10.
- B. What was significant about His birth?
  - 1. He was born to poor parents (Luke 2:7, 23, 24; Leviticus 12:2,6,8; Hebrews 4:15).
  - 2. His birth was in the "*fullness of time*" (Galatians 4:4,5).
  - 3. He was born as the seed of Abraham (Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:23ff; Genesis 12:3).
  - 4. His birth was in fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6).
  - 5. He was born as the Immanuel — the God-man; the suffering Servant (Matthew 1:23; John 1:14, Isaiah 53; Philippians 2:6-9).
  - 6. He was born to be king, ruler and Savior (Matthew 2:6; Luke 1:32-33; 2:10,11).

### III. Conclusion

- A. The birth of Jesus is one of the greatest events of history.
- B. If Jesus had not been born, obviously there would have been no death and resurrection, and consequently there would have been no salvation for humanity (Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). †

**E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, USA.**

# Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

## Romans 2:28-29

The true Jew is recognized as one who is led to Christ by faith in the word of God, both in the Old and New Testaments — God's Jew is not merely a fleshly son of Abraham. See Galatians 3:26ff; Matthew 3:9.

Outward religious acts are meaningless without faith. Read closely Matthew 23. No person can boast his baptism if it is not followed by such a life that demonstrates he has been baptized "into Christ." Colossians 2:11,12.

*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

Outward circumcision only cuts away flesh, inward circumcision cuts away sins in the heart and spirit where ungodliness breeds. See Acts 2:37.

Obeying the letter of the law in circumcision was not profitable if it was not followed by a righteous life of faith. This is equally true about such things as baptism today. See Romans 6:3ff.

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" John 12:42.

Fenter Northern

## When Was Saul Saved?

Frank Chesser

Prior to his conversion, Saul (later called Paul) was an avowed enemy of Christ and Christianity. He described himself as doing "many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). He was a "blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious" (1 Timothy 1:13).

However, on the road to Damascus, he met and acknowledged Jesus as Lord (Acts 9:1-6). Many people believe that Saul was saved at that point. But even a casual reading of the text will reveal that such is not the case. If Saul was saved at that very moment:

**(1) He didn't know that he was saved.** Instead of rejoicing in his salvation, he inquired of Jesus, "What wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Whoever heard of a man being saved and yet not knowing it? Saul's very question is proof of his recognition that something remained for him to do in order to be saved by divine grace and blood.

**(2) God Himself didn't know it.** Instead of informing Saul that he was saved by his "faith only," God instructed him to "go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Note the terms "must" and "do." Contrary to the

thinking of many, man has to "do" something to be saved. That's not *human interpretation*; that's just what *God* said.

**(3) Saul didn't act like a saved man.** Instead of expressing great joy and happiness over his salvation, he was "three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:9). That's a strange way for a just-saved man to act. Saul knew he was not yet saved. He had asked what to do. God said he would be told, though giving him no specific time. Saul waited in darkness, in prayer and fasting for three anxious days.

**(4) Ananias the preacher didn't know it.** Instead of arguing that Saul was already saved by his "faith alone," he went to Saul and told him what he needed to do (Acts 22:12-16).

**(5) He was saved while still in his sins,** for God through Ananias told him to "arise and be baptized." He was still in his sins, for he had to be baptized to have his sins "washed away."

Why does Scripture connect baptism with the washing away of sins? Because of some special power in the water or in the act of baptism itself? God forbid! The

## BIBLE QUESTIONS

power to wash away sins is in — and *only* in — the blood of Christ! But **when** is man cleansed by that blood? When he completes his obedience to the Gospel in the act of baptism. Baptism is the culminating act of obedience that puts one into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3,4) where Jesus shed His blood (John 19:33,34) in order that the penitent believer might have his sins washed away by that blood.

WHAT washes away sin? Only

the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5). **WHEN** does the blood of Christ wash away sins? When one completes his obedience to the Gospel in baptism (Acts 22:16).

Saul was not saved by grace and blood until his faith moved him to complete his obedience in this divinely ordained act. †

**Frank Chesser preaches for the Panama Street church in Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A.**

### Grace and Obedience

Psalm 85:10

#### Owen Cosgrove

Mercy and truth are met together  
And in that tender tryst  
Of grace and deeds, of law and love,  
Righteousness and peace have kissed.

Mercy given and grace received,  
Heaven's enduring pair;  
God's grace reached down, man's faith reached up  
And found salvation there.

And in that faith that follows Christ,  
And in that Heaven's grace  
Is found the joy of lovers true  
In Heaven's meeting place.

# What Does "Private Interpretation" Mean?

Jerry L. Davidson

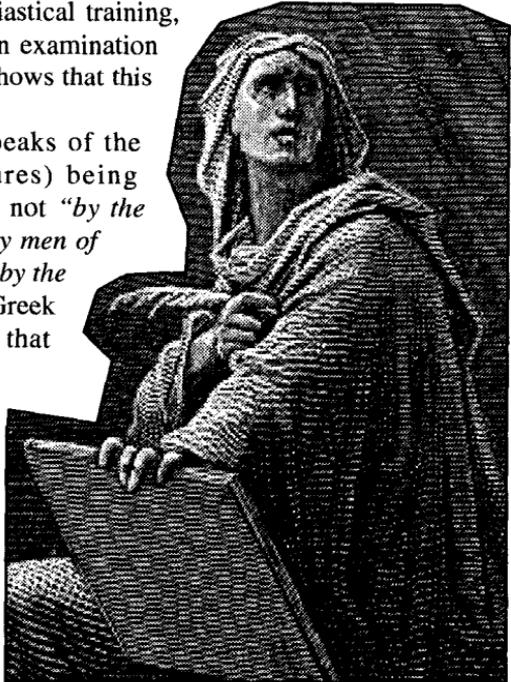
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*"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation." (2 Peter 1:20.)*

Well-meaning people in the religious world have avoided reading and studying the Bible because they have been led to believe that they are unable to interpret the Scriptures for themselves. In fact, many religious leaders point to 2 Peter 1:20 as a proof text for teaching that individuals can't understand the Bible unless it is interpreted for them by those who have had ecclesiastical training, or by the church. However, an examination of the context of this passage shows that this is not the case.

In this passage, Peter speaks of the "prophetic word" (Scriptures) being "made more sure" (verse 19) not "by the will of man," but through "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (verse 21.) The Greek word for "moved" is a word that means "borne" or "carried along" as the wind moves or carries along a ship. The clear meaning is that the Biblical writers were **led** or **inspired** in their writings by the Holy Spirit.

The writers of the New Testament expected their readers to understand their



## BIBLE QUESTIONS

writings, as the following passages indicate: *"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

*"...by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ"* (Ephesians 3:4).

*"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren"* (1 Thessalonians 5:27).

2 Peter 1:20 shows that the Scriptures were not of human origin. The Scriptures were not written by the invention of men, writing their own thoughts and creating their own laws, *"but holy men of God spake (wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

Therefore; 2 Peter 1:20,21 is an explanation of *how* the Scriptures were transmitted to man from God. *It does not speak of whether Bible readers can understand its message.* Many passages in the Scriptures make it abun-

dantly clear that God intended for His Word to be read and studied, and understood.

The apostle Paul wrote: *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). †

**Jerry L. Davidson is a preacher and teaches at International Bible College in Florence, AL, USA.**

### Scripture Bees

Be converted . . . . .	Acts 3:19
Be renewed . . . . .	Ephesians 4:23
Be obedient . . . . .	Ephesians 6:5
Be comforted . . . . .	Colossians 2:2
Be content . . . . .	Hebrews 13:5
Be sober . . . . .	1 Peter 1:13
Be thankful . . . . .	Colossians 3:15
Be gentle . . . . .	2 Timothy 2:24
Be pitiful . . . . .	1 Peter 3:8
Be courteous . . . . .	1 Peter 3:8
Be wise . . . . .	1 Corinthians 3:18
Be diligent . . . . .	2 Peter 3:14
Be zealous . . . . .	Galatians 4:18
Be temperate . . . . .	Titus 1:8
Be vigilant . . . . .	1 Peter 5:8
Be ready . . . . .	1 Peter 3:15
Be glad . . . . .	1 Peter 4:13
Be holy . . . . .	1 Peter 1:16
Be perfect . . . . .	2 Corinthians 13:11
Be Christ's . . . . .	Galatians 3:29
Be steadfast . . . . .	1 Corinthians 15:58

FROM THE HEART OF ...

# KOREA



**W**ith a recorded history dating back to the 1st century B.C., Korea is one of the older kingdoms of the world. At times it has been associated with the Chinese empire, but at the end of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95, Korea was given complete independence. In 1910, Japan forcibly claimed and occupied the country.

In July of 1945, at the Potsdam conference at the end of World War II, the 38th parallel was designated as the dividing line between the Soviet Union and the American troops occupying the country. The Soviet military promoted Communism throughout north Korea and thereby blocked

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

efforts on the part of the Korean people to unite their country. This division resulted in the formation of the **Republic of Korea** in the south in 1948, with Seoul as the capital. Dr. Syngman Rhee was the first President.

North Korea became a hotbed of Communist guerrilla activity, sending troops to attack the South in June of 1950 and initiating the Korean War. UN troops, under the leadership of the US military, supported South Korea in the struggle. An agreement was reached three years later, leaving Korea still divided along the 38th parallel, and seething with anger and distrust.

North Korea has been in the throes of economic disaster and potential starvation for a number

of years. Limited reports and photographs of dying children aroused the sympathetic aid of many nations of the world. Only time will tell what the final outcome of the brutal and repressive regime may be.

At various times in its history, South Korea has been rocked by violence because of authoritarian leadership and revelations of rampant corruption. A \$57 billion bail-out from the International Monetary Fund averted default on its indebtedness, and new elections put Kim Daw Jung in office as President.

### Church History

**S**uk Kee Dong, a Korean national who later changed his name to Ding Dong Bell,



*Korean young people gather for a time of prayer.*

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

became a Christian in 1927. Returning to his village in North Korea in 1930, he began to preach the gospel and was able to begin seven congregations. Later, due to the division of the country and the ensuing persecution of Christians under Communist rule, many of the Christians moved to South Korea.

or short stays, but at the present time there is only one full-time American family — the Malcolm Parsleys.

There are 105 congregations of the church of Christ scattered over virtually all parts of the country, with about 30% of the membership concentrated in Seoul. There are three US military congregations in Korea.

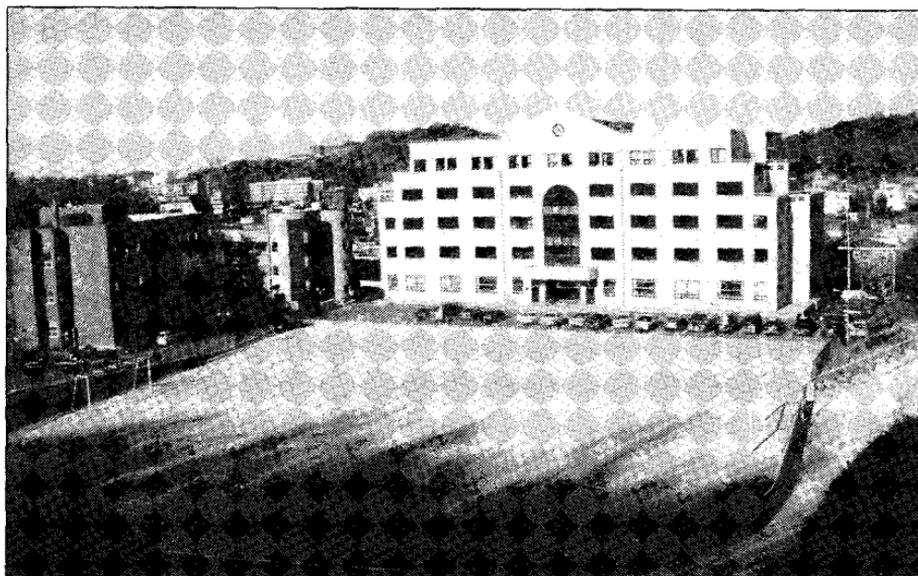


***Staff and facilities of Korea Institute of Biblical Studies, begun in 1995 after many years of planning and preparation.***

In 1954, under the oversight of the 16th and Decatur church in Washington, DC, the first missionaries began to arrive. The Dale Richardsons were soon joined by the Haskell Chesshirs, and later by the A.R. Holtons. Altogether, about 38 families and singles came for long

### **Avenues of Work**

**P**rimary avenues of work are **Bible Correspondence Courses, Korea Christian University** (1,100 enrolled), **Deung Chung Middle School** (659 students), and **Wha Gok Kindergarten** (80 students).



*Partial view of the campus of Korea Christian University, established in 1958 by Haskell Chesshir in Seoul. One of the purposes of KSU is to provide a fully accredited Korean University degree program. A Bible program and six night schools are currently taught, with a total enrollment of more than 1000 students.*

**Korea Institute of Biblical Studies** provides intensive Bible training for ministers and Christians who want to deepen their knowledge of the Scriptures. Since 1998 this program has taken a new outreach, via the Internet. Our web site ([www.Christ.or.kr](http://www.Christ.or.kr)) carries 400 tracts in English, 60 in Korean, 12 study books from J.C. Choate Publications (and permission to use 100 additional titles). Materials are translated as time and man-power are available. This is becoming one of our most valuable teaching tools.

### Current Needs

**O**ur needs are for **prayers for unity** on a biblical basis between the liberal and conservative elements that divide the church. There is a great need for more **missionaries and local men to preach the Gospel**. Finance is also needed to promote the web site and the other organized programs of work. Help us reach 45 million souls with the Gospel. †

**Information was supplied by Malcolm E. Parsley, missionary in South Korea since 1960.**

**Dear Sirs:**

I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume \_\_\_\_.  
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Please use my special contribution to send more copies of this issue to the mission fields of the world.

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Suggested uses for individuals and churches for

**THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL:**

- Use them for family devotionals at home.
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- Use them in your personal work and in visiting newcomers; give to workers in banks, post offices, restaurants, and other business offices.
- Give a copy to each member of the congregation.
- Draw from them for bulletin articles.
- Keep them on display in libraries, hospitals, doctors' offices, barber shops, beauty parlors, and other public places where there is a magazine rack.
- Send them to your WBS students.
- Give subscriptions as birthday, anniversary, etc., gifts.
- Encourage the young men in the congregation to draw materials from them for their public devotionals.

(Return this form in an envelope with your check to the following address)

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**Springfield, MO 65803**

**Att. Byron Nichols**

## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

### *Verse Search* — 23 (from page 38)

1. The sound of a mighty wind and the appearance of what seemed to be tongues of fire, as the Holy Spirit was poured out from God.
2. Because they heard the apostles speaking in the languages of their birth.
3. 15.
4. Words the hearers could understand, explaining the wonderful works of God.
5. Spirit; Joel.
6. *on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* The sun would be darkened; other disturbances in the heavens; at the crucifixion.
7. They had taken Him by lawless hands and crucified Him and put Him to death.
8. Through miracles, wonders and signs while He was on the earth.
9. Death.
10. God would not leave His soul in Hades, nor allow His Holy One to see corruption.
11. *Exalted to the right hand of God; having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit.*
12. *Assuredly; God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*
13. *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*
14. *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..."*
15. *Gladly received His word were baptized; about three thousand souls were added to them.*
16. The church.

### Who Am I? (page 46)



Joshua

### The Book of 1 John, page 83

Thistle; Money;  
Rage; Favor;  
Dust; *This is the  
testimony, that  
God gave us eter-  
nal life, and this  
life is in His Son  
(1 John 5:11).*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**



## Republic of Korea



**Government:** Republic of Korea

**Head of State:** President Kim Dae Jung

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil

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### Secular Facts:

**Location:** In northern East Asia. The country is mountainous, with a rugged east coast, and many islands and harbors on the west coast.

**Land Mass:** 38,023 square miles, slightly larger than Indiana.

**Population:** 46,416,796; density per square mile, 1,221.

**Major Cities:** Seoul, Pusan, Taegu.

**Language:** Korean.

**Literacy:** 98%; education is free and compulsory.

**Religion:** Christianity, 49%; Buddhism, 47%.

**Ethnic Groups:** Korean.

**Economy:** *Industries:* Electronics, autos, chemicals, ships, textiles. *Chief crops:* Rice, barley, vegetables. *Arable land:* 19%. *Livestock:* Cattle, chickens, pigs, fish.

*Hospital beds:* 1 per 229 persons; *Infant mortality rate:* 8 per 1000. *TV sets per 1000 population,* 233; *radios,* 928 per 1000; *daily newspaper circulation:* 405 per 1000.

**Monetary Unit:** Won.

### The Church:

**Congregations:** 105 congregations with a total membership of approximately 6,000.

**History:** Suk Kee Dong, a Korean national living in the US and studying for the ministry in the Methodist Church, was converted in 1927. Returning to his home, he began the first congregation of the Lord's church in North Korea in 1930. By the time of the beginning of the Korean War he had trained preachers and started seven churches. Under communism, Christians suffered great persecution, so many of them moved to freedom and safety in South Korea.

At the close of the war there was a great interest in evangelizing South Korea. It seemed a field ripe unto harvest. The 16th and Decatur congregation in Washington, D.C. took the lead in sending resident missionaries. Dale Richeson, Haskell Chesshir, A.R. Holton, Daniel C. Hardin, Bill Richardson, Malcolm E. Parsley and others have worked along side local men to spread the Gospel.

Bible correspondence courses (offered via the postal system and internet), Korea Christian University, and Korea Institute of Biblical Studies provide biblical education.