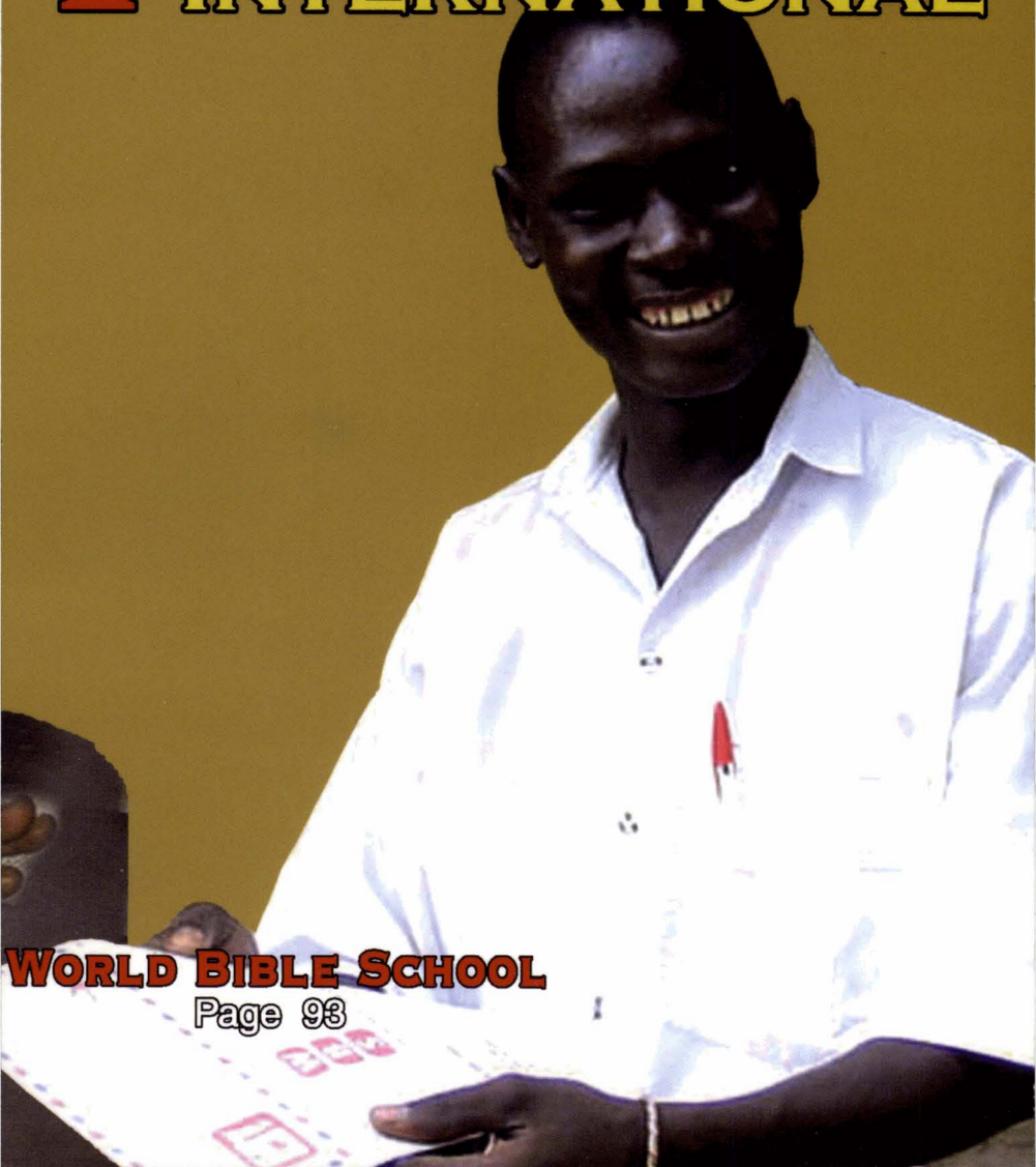


VOLUME FIFTY-FIVE

V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL

Page 98

A Plea for New Testament Christianity

There are two rival conceptions of the church held by many today. One believes that the church is a conglomerate of sorts, being composed of all Christ-believing individuals, regardless of the “church” to which they belong. The other view maintains that while the church is composed of every saved individual on earth, only those who have done just what the Bible requires are, in fact, saved. Which view is correct?

It cannot be denied that Christ desired unity among His followers. In the shadow of the cross, the Savior prayed that His disciples might be “one,” so “that the world may believe” that He was sent from the Father (cf. John 17:20,21). The early church was a model of this prayer for unity. “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32).

Sadly, the religious world today is anything but united. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of competing religious bodies, each vying for our attention and subsequent allegiance. Most, if not all, teach conflicting doctrines and practice varying rituals. From a rational vantage point, it seems the only unity that can rightly be claimed for all such endeavors is superficial at best.

In stark contrast to the present state of affairs, there is a beautiful simplicity to Christianity. When the apostle Paul delineated the heart of the gospel, he did so in this fashion: **Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day.** When the same apostle wrote to the Romans, he indicated that we submit to a “form” of this teaching (cf. Romans 6:17) when we die to the unrestrained practice of sin, are buried with Christ in baptism, and then raised to walk in “newness of life” (cf. Romans 6:2-4; Colossians 2:12). All who have done so are members of the body of Christ, the church of Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18,24). The name God would have us wear is “Christian” — nothing more, nothing less.

— Brandon Renfroe

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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU

(ROMANS 16:16).

The Master's Garden

Help me cultivate Thy garden;
Help me plant, row by row;
Keep me sowing, gracious Master,
That every seed may thrive and grow...

Help me cultivate Thy garden;
Help me plant each precious seed;
Hope and faith and love and mercy —
All the things my soul doth need...

Help me cultivate Thy garden;
Blessed Master, stay Thou near;
Help me water it and watch it
As each seedling doth appear...

Help me cultivate Thy garden;
Keep me sowing, oh my
Lord —

Help me labor in Thy
garden
Where every flower
is a reward!

— Hope C.
Oberhelman





**THE LORD'S
PEOPLE NEED
TO BE
PERSONALLY
CHALLENGED!**

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

By God's grace, my wife and I have invested more than forty years of our lives in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India. We have also worked in several other countries to spread the cause of Christ.

During those years we have used the printed page (with more than 20 monthly magazines, in numerous languages, and hundreds of book titles), as partial follow-up for radio work in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines, the U.S.A., and we have helped send the Lord's word to many people by short wave in Swaziland and other African countries. We currently have TV programs in India in several languages. And, besides publicizing **Gospel Broadcasting Network** verbally and in print, we personally send a monthly contribution of \$100, adding our bit to help them get a worldwide satellite program developed.

We have printed hundreds of books here at home, not for our own profit but simply to provide tools for teaching and personal study of the Gospel, and we've sent those books throughout the world. *The Voice of Truth International* — this quarterly magazine — has been shipped free of charge to many thousands in foreign countries during the four-teen years of its existence.

In addition to our regular contributions, we are presently and personally mailing 1000 copies of the *House to House and Heart to*

Heart publication, bi-monthly, to contacts here in Winona. We have purchased with our own money 100s of DVDs from **World Video Bible School** and have given them to interested people. We have also purchased, up to now, 120 of Dave Miller's DVDs on **The Silencing of God in America** and have given them to people we felt needed to see and share them.

I could go on and on referring to the things in which we have personally been involved through the years, in our desire to help evangelize the world. While it is true that most of the funds for paying these bills have come from brethren who shared our concern, we invested our time and energies in raising the funds and then preparing the printed materials and radio programs to bring the work to fruition. No one required us to do any of this; we got involved because our consciences responded to the critical needs we saw. And we have tried never to ask brethren to support something which we were not willing to support financially ourselves.

Why have I said these things? to boast? to impress on you what we have done and are doing? No, I've said these things to illustrate that there is a desperate need for every one of us — EVERY Christian — to be challenged to see more and to do more.

Churches of Christ should have evangelized the world long ago. That is our reason for being in this world. That is our command from our Savior. If each Christian, and each eldership, and each congregation had had their eyes on that goal, what a difference there would be in the spiritual conditions in congregations, in our country, and in the world!

When we first started raising funds to go to the mission field, brethren throughout the church were in major building programs, moving from small buildings to more impressive ones. The frequent response to my appeal for help to go to a foreign field was, "As soon as we get our building paid off, we'll be able to help with mission work." Now, forty years later, we are still in building programs, adding "Family Life Centers" or building multi-million-dollar facilities — or, in some cases, closing the doors because the membership has dwindled to nothing while we were involved in building *buildings* instead of building *churches*.

If our focus had been on evangelizing, the Lord would have been with us and would have helped us to do it. Instead of congregations

going out of existence, and the over-all membership in the church shrinking as it has in the last four years, we would have maintained that distinction of being the fastest growing religious body in America. And the world would have felt the impact. There might not have been an Iraq, and we might not be faced with the Islamic terrorist movement throughout the world. Because of the materialism, immorality, humanism, and secularism in our country, and because of the failure of the Lord's people to be evangelistic in combating these encroaching evils, we are being engulfed by them. What will it take to turn things around? Will it be necessary for us, as it was for Israel, to face a "Babylonian captivity" in the form of Islamic terrorism, to correct our vision and to put us on the course of obedience?

Listen! Going to worship is not enough to be faithful to the Lord! Being "good" morally is not enough to be counted as faithful. Jesus said, "Every branch in Me that does not **bear fruit** He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2). Most of us have been among the privileged few to have heard the Gospel all of our lives, but **what are we doing with it?** If you went to college all of your life but never used the knowledge you acquired to make a living, what good would it be to you? No wonder we hear people talk of being bored with going to the assembly — forty or fifty years of repeat classes that have not been put to use *ought* to be boring! And because Christians are not out using the Gospel and helping others to be converted and to grow in Christ, in their shallowness of conviction they find themselves looking for something that is "new" — not boring — so, many are easily led into liberalism.

Let me challenge all of us to *wake up* — elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, old people, young people — all members and all congregations of the Lord's church. **WAKE UP!** This is our only hope — *if* it is not already too late for us to be moved out of our lethargy.

Don't wait for someone to ask you to do something. Become a volunteer! Find something to do, and do it!

Elders, develop a program of work with vision toward real evangelism, not just entertaining the members and involving them in "busy" work. Entertainment-type activities take up a lot of time, and they don't make strong Christians or produce much fruit. If people

are kept “involved” through being pandered to and fed and entertained, we’re fooling ourselves into thinking we’ve accomplished something. Real Christians, according to the Scriptures, are **soldiers, trained to endure hardship, persecution, even the threat of death.** The methods we’ve been using will not develop that caliber of saints.

Deacons need to **work** — yes, that is the word — with the elders to involve the entire church in programs of evangelism, outreach, seeing and filling the needs of hurting people in the community. Don’t be interested only in the “good” people or the “lovable” people; *see* the sick, the blind, the maimed, the rejects, as Jesus did. How can we change the world for better if we don’t try to help those who need help the most?

Teachers, develop classes that will educate and inspire your students to be active in the Lord’s work. Teach the children and young people that the Bible is their guide to life, not just a history book. Help them to see that its message will provide answers and hope for their peers, so that they will want to share the Gospel with others. Encourage and inspire the young men to become Gospel preachers and missionaries (and the young women to be faithful co-workers with preacher/missionary husbands), helping them to realize that this is the most noble use of the life God has given them. How can sports and games or a moneyed-career compare with such an emphasis when it comes to giving our children spiritual strength throughout their lives?

Did you know that statistics show that we are actually losing 70% of our own children after they go to college and out into the world? How can the American church survive at that rate? And, listen! This unbearable loss is taking place even in these good times! What will happen to the half-converted and the untaught if there is a Muslim onslaught in this country? Do we realize what critical times we live in today? Do we see any urgency, any need to prepare ourselves and our children for the oppression that may be in the future?

Regardless of what any foreign power is able to do, we know that Satan is continually at work, and his goal is to spiritually destroy every soul that is not equipped to defend itself in this life-or-death struggle. How seriously are we dealing with the threat? Are we letting the days casually slip by as though there is no evil in the world,

no eternity, and no souls — our own, our children’s and those of our family and loved ones — that are in jeopardy of being lost forever?

What has happened to our **evangelists**? Today we have pulpit preachers who never move into the community to reach the lost. The policy has become, “Let the lost come to us if they want to be saved.” And then because they don’t come, we’ve swallowed the lie that no one is interested in religion, and at a time when there are mushrooming “mega” churches! When preachers and Christians go to work among the people of their communities, they will find those who are looking for the truth. They will be able to set up home Bible studies, and people will again be converted, and the church will grow.

Brothers and sisters, what are you doing, personally, as a Christian? Why not become a World Bible School teacher, if you are hesitant about your ability to defend your faith in one-on-one studies? On paper, you will have time to locate the answers and Scriptures, and this will soon equip you to handle any study situation. Take tracts and Christian magazines to local hospitals, medical clinics, waiting rooms of all sorts and other public places. In an era when bookstores have booming businesses, stop making the excuse that no one reads any more, and offer those you meet something *worthwhile* to read. Look for openings to bring up spiritual things in conversations with friends and relatives. Nurture relationships, with the goal of sharing the Gospel with that person, praying for them earnestly.

Did you know that our young people have a much greater sense of fulfillment when we give them *work* to do than when we simply keep them occupied with food, fun, and games? Sports activities will not get a single soul to heaven! Where is baseball authorized in the Scriptures as a work of the church? Let’s not play our kids to spiritual death! Let’s teach them how to really *live*!

Teenagers and college students can participate in community work projects, doing repair and clean-up jobs as a group for the sick and elderly who need their help. They can spend the summer in campaign work in some mission field, or in door-knocking campaigns in cities and towns in the US — even in their own town — finding contacts to teach and helping weak congregations to grow. Or help can be given with vacation Bible schools in churches that are small and need an infusion of teachers. They can divide up into manageable-

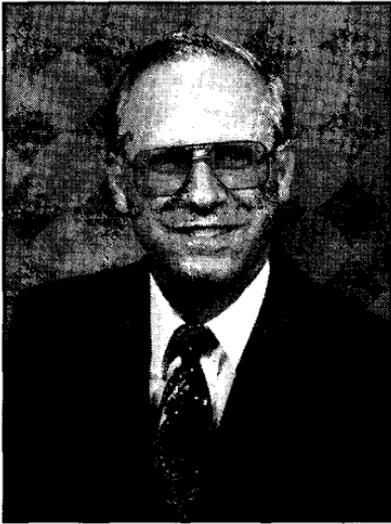
sized groups and go to the homes of the elderly, sick, and shut-in for a Wednesday night devotional, or Sunday afternoon visits. They could form a Saturday morning work group to do maintenance jobs around the church building and in the community.

I have a wonderful idea! Why not have a Gospel meeting with time enough for some substance? I tell people that, in these days of meetings that are so short they are only a gesture, we say, "Hello" the first night, "How are you?" the second night, and "Goodbye" the third night, and the visiting preacher spends much of his time resting in a hotel! Years back, when meetings were effective, the local preacher and the visiting preacher called on contacts in the community each day, having personal studies with them and encouraging them to continue the studies in the nightly services. In this age of apathy, how much foot-work is done during the day? And there's not enough time to build momentum and interest in the evening lessons, so it's no wonder we've killed the effectiveness of such meetings.

This is the era of building bigger and bigger congregations, calling for another building program for a bigger auditorium. Wouldn't it be better to plan to begin a new congregation in an area of the city or county where none exists, bringing the church to another neighborhood so that its influence for good can be felt by more people?

Or, as a congregation, **start the church in a mission area** of the United States. Develop the idea among the members, encouraging several families to band together and move to the new location. Remember the "Exodus Movements" of the 70's? They worked then — why not now? The home congregation can help with campaigners, initial funds for rent for a place to meet, and perhaps provide other tools for getting started. But such a commitment will give the moving families opportunity to develop in leadership, teaching ability, personal work, and faith. **Believe me, when the Lord commanded us to go and teach the Gospel, He had our own spiritual growth and development in mind as much as the needs of the untaught!**

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to look at your life. Is your "work" in the church only nourishing yourself through worship and fellowship? That isn't *work!* Those things are our *privileges*. Our work is to be **bearing fruit**. *What are you doing, in preparation for eternity?* †



**“... IMMANUEL,
GOD WITH US”
Byron Nichols**

The Bible tells us that Joseph, betrothed to Mary, was reluctant to follow through with his plan to marry her, due to the fact that it became known that she was pregnant out of wedlock, and certainly not by him. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him, *“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” (Matthew 1:20,21). Matthew then explains for us that all of this that was taking place was a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 7:14, *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,”* which is translated, *“God with us”* (Matthew 1:23).

At this point, let me just ask each reader, Can we really comprehend what is being said here? “Immanuel — God with us.” I submit to you that the more we think about this the more mind-boggling it becomes!

It is indeed astounding for an ordinary citizen of any country to actually experience seeing their President, Prime Minister, and whatever title is worn by the one who is the one and only top official of their country. I have a friend who had the honor of being the official greeter of our President on a visit made to our city. Not only did he get to greet the President, he visited for several minutes with this man who is the most powerful person in the world, and all of this was at the request of the President himself! Do you suppose my friend has forgotten about that encounter? Do you suppose that he will ever forget it? I doubt it very much! I’m sure that it is safe to assume that he will always treasure that experience and feel inexpressibly blessed by it.

Here is another question, one that hopefully will elicit an immediate and

simple response — How does this event in the life of my friend rank in comparison to the visit by God in the form of His Son to the entire world? Surely we would all have to agree that there is actually no comparison. As great as the leader of any nation is or ever has been, none has ever even remotely approached the greatness of God!

Immanuel – Jesus – was Deity, yet He took upon Himself humanity. *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory”* (1 Timothy 3:16). Paul wrote of this again in Philippians 2:5-8, *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

John, in John chapter 1, wrote about all of this and he referred to Jesus, not as Immanuel, as Matthew did, but as “the Word”. In John 1:1,2 we read, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”* In verse 14 John leaves no doubt whatsoever as to whom he is referring: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* The Word, then, was Jesus Christ, *“the only begotten of the Father.”*

Jesus of Nazareth thus was not merely a remarkable figure in the history of mankind; He was indeed Immanuel, God with us; He was the Word, God in human form. Immanuel revealed to us what God is like (John 1:18; 14:8-9; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). Here is the ultimate demonstration of greatness through self-humiliation, the Creator of the entire world being willing to change His form into that of a lowly servant, and willing to endure the ridicule and rejection of nearly all of mankind, whom He had created.

The greatest thing that ever happened is NOT that man has gone to the moon, but that GOD, the Eternal Word, Deity, has come to earth in the person of JESUS CHRIST! IMMANUEL did indeed come, as had been foretold centuries before; John did not lie, nor did he exaggerate — the WORD did become flesh and did dwell among mankind and did come to earth to *“save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21)! Hallelujah! What a Savior!

†

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOD

- Of What Did Jesus Empty Himself? Tom L. Childers.....13
The Importance of Christ's Resurrection Sunny David15

THE WORD OF GOD

- Do We Really Need the Bible? Bill Dillon18
Bible Reading Plan Philemon Rajah19

EVIDENCES

- The Old Testament in Archaeology Rex Banks22

SALVATION

- God's Fervent Wish..... David A. Sargent.....28
Mourning for Sin Robert H. "Tex" Williams30

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

- Jesus Christ, the Eternal Sacrifice Betty Burton Choate33
Attributes of Biblical Miracles Kevin L. Moore36
The Relationship of Grace and Baptism Frank Chesser38

THE CHURCH

- The Challenges of Leadership J.J. Turner.....39
The Church and the World Ardron Hinton42
The Devil's Mess of Goods Joe W. Nichols44

CHURCH GROWTH

- The Secret to Waking John-Mark Wilson46
Work Is Good for You!..... Jimmy Ferguson50

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

- Prison Work in Zambia Ruth Orr52
You Are the Seed.....Malcolm Parsley.....57
Three Views of Life Owen Cosgrove58
The Great Commission..... Charles E. Burch59
Dying Without God Charles Box60

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

- Three Desires of the Devil Jimmy Young.....64
The Abundant Life of Stewardship Demar Elam66
Aiding and Abetting Stan Mitchell68
"You Are My Disciples if ..." Charles E. Cobb69
I'll Live for God Selected70

HEY, YOU KIDS!

What's in a Name?	PFC Alex Gibson	72
What Is a Square?	Selected	74

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

At Your House	Anonymous	75
Marriage Is for Life	Dalton Key	76
Train Up a Child	Lewis G. Hale	77

PROVERBS 17:22

Humor		78
-------------	--	----

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

The Promises of God	Loy Mitchell	80
Israel's Journey to Canaan	John Thiesen	81
Changes that Occur During	Reuben Emperado	82

TEXTUAL STUDIES

The First Gospel Sermon	Albert Gardner	83
The Role of Works in Salvation	Wayne Jackson	85

BIBLE QUESTIONS

What About the Sabbath?	Gary Workman	88
Questions About The Role of Women	Jimmy Jividen	90
What Does It Mean to Call ...?	Randy Kea	91
How Can I Grow As a Christian?	Ken Tyler	92

FEATURES, POEMS AND FILLERS

A Plea for New Testament Christianity ...	Brandon Renfroe	1
The Master's Garden	Hope C. Oberhelman	2
Editorial: The Lord's People Need	J.C. Choate	3
Editorial: "... Immanuel, God with Us" ...	Byron Nichols	9
Bible Find		27
Verse Search	Jerry Bates	62
How Do You Measure Up?		71
5-Minute Bible Study	Paula Bates	87

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL

The History of World Bible School	John Reese	93
World Bible School: The Concept	John Reese	99
One Teacher's Story	Ruth Orr	101

CORRECTION FROM VOLUME 54:

Treasure of Truth web site is WWW.TreasureofTruthRadio.com

Of What Did Jesus Empty Himself?

Tom L. Childers

Philippians 2:5-11 has been called a theological diamond which shines brighter than any other scripture. "It describes in a simple, but profound way, how the second person of the Deity became human to live and die for the human race" (MacArthur). The passage is also one of the most controversial passages due mainly to the fact that it addresses the nature of Jesus before, during, and after His incarnation.

The King James Version expression "made himself of no reputation" comes from two Greek words, "emptied himself". The issue is: "**Of what did Jesus empty Himself?**" Did He lay aside the attributes of deity when He came into the world as a man?

Of this passage, Cottrell says, "Though the Logos continued to be equal with God in his nature, as the incarnate Son of God he voluntarily laid aside the prerogative, privileges, and advantages of deity and chose instead to experience the limitation of human life, even in the role of a servant" (249). Grenz wrote, "The Kenosis Theory claims the Son laid aside all the divine attributes. The modified Kenosis Theory



claims Jesus 'gave up the independent exercise' of his divine powers. He knew about Nathanael, but He did not know the time of His second coming" (306-07).

An illustration of this self-emptying of the Son of God is found in John 13:1-17. While seated at the table, Jesus is Lord and Master just as He was in His preincarnate glory, but when He girded Himself with a towel and washed the feet of the disciples, He took on the outward expression of a servant. While He is kneeling on the floor, Jesus is still

deity even though He has taken on the role of a slave. When He finishes washing the disciples' feet, He puts on His outer garments and resumes the role of Lord and Master to His disciples. In similar fashion, while on earth He takes on the role of a servant and goes to the cross, but after His resurrection He resumes His reincarnate glory.

MacArthur says Jesus set aside His privileges in several areas:

(1) Heavenly glory — while on earth He gave up the glory of a face-to-face relationship with God and the continuous outward display and personal enjoyment of that glory (cf. John 17:5);

(2) Independent authority — during His incarnation, Christ completely submitted Himself to the will of His Father (see note on v. 8; cf. Matthew 26:39; John 5:30; Hebrews 5:8);

(3) Divine prerogatives — He set aside the voluntary display of His divine attributes and submitted Himself to the Spirit's direction (cf. Matthew 24:36; John 1:45-49);

(4) Eternal riches — while on earth Christ was poor and owned very little (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9);

(5) A favorable relationship with God — He felt the Father's wrath for human sin while on the cross (cf. Matthew 27:46).

The expression that Jesus "emptied himself" is a critical statement about the nature of Christ, both in

His preincarnate position and His human nature as "*God with us*". The expression counters the heresies of the Gnostics, who denied the *humanity* of Christ, and the cults who deny the *deity* of Jesus.

While the passage is a theological diamond which provides a grand description of both His deity *and* His humanity, the original intent of the passage was to challenge the Philippian church to take the cross and serve Him and others while manifesting the attitude of Jesus both before His coming to earth and His conduct while here. The Christians at Philippi were urged to "*look not on their own things, but on the things of others*" (Philippians 2:4).

There is encouragement, knowing that just as the humble service of Jesus brought exaltation from the Father, so faithful Christians will be exalted when they receive citizenship in heaven, and will be conformed to the glorious image of Christ (Philippians 3:20,21). †

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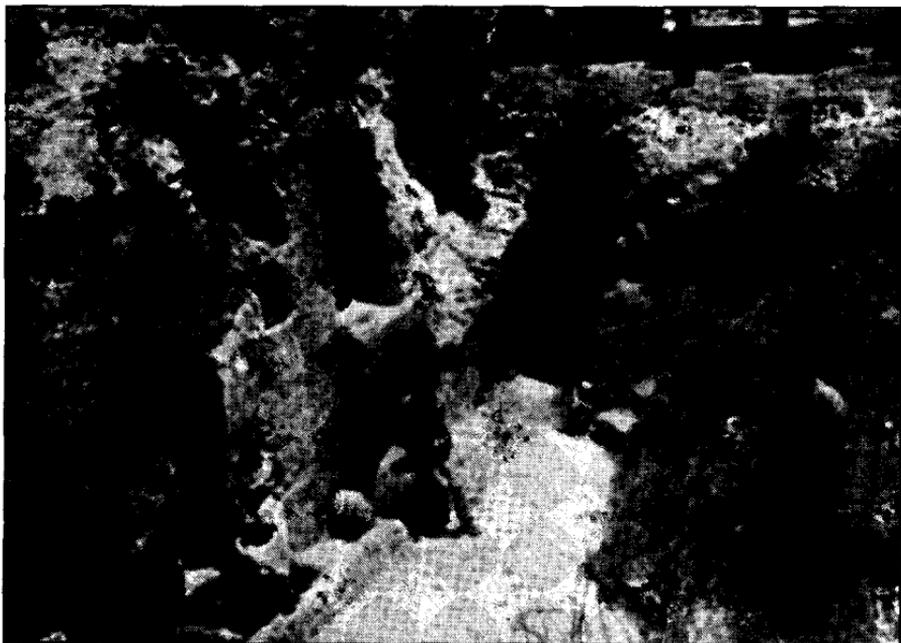
The resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from the dead is the central theme of Christianity. The Romans and the Jews, who were the enemies of Jesus, were instrumental in crucifying Him. They knew about His claim that He would rise again after three days (Matthew 27:63). They would have prevented Christianity from being established, even at the very beginning if, yes, if they could

have produced the dead body of Jesus and displayed it before the people.

But the fact of the matter is — and the Bible emphatically says — that the body of Christ was not found in the tomb in which He had been buried three days before. The tomb had been sealed and Roman soldiers were guarding it at the request of the Jewish leadership, since they feared that the body of

The Importance of Christ's Resurrection

Sunny David



Jesus would be stolen and that claims of His resurrection would then be made. Yet, on the third day, His body *was* missing. Where did the body go? Though the soldiers had guarded it continuously, it was not there in the tomb! Christ had risen, as the angel of the Lord had informed those who were looking for His body, early on the third day (Matthew 28:1-8).

Throughout the centuries, attempts have been made in various places by numerous people to disprove the resurrection of Christ, since it is the foundational stone of Christianity. All kinds of theories have been imagined. Some even believe that Christ did not actually die on the cross, but that he merely swooned — fainted into unconsciousness — and that later He revived and came out of the tomb. The Ahmadias, an Islamic sect, believe that Christ escaped to Kashmir in India where He lived with His wife and children and worked as a shepherd. They say that when He died He was buried there, and that His tomb is there to this day.

Movies have been made and books have been written to show that Christ did not die on the cross, as the Bible says, but that through a conspiracy between Jesus and His disciples and the Roman authorities, He was drugged to reduce the trauma of being on the cross, that He survived

the crucifixion, and that His death was faked as a cover to allow Him to escape His enemies. Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judaea who had sentenced Christ to death — they say — had aided and abetted the mock execution because Christ had told the Jews to pay their taxes to the Romans.

The writers of the **The Jesus Papers** and **The Da Vinci Code** claim that, after recuperating, Jesus and His wife (they speculate that He was married to Mary Magdalene) traveled to upper Egypt and later may have reached France where they lived with their daughter.

The point is that all such people who write highly imaginative books and make greatly speculative movies have only one agenda: to disprove the Bible's most profound teaching concerning Christ's death on the cross for sinners and His subsequent resurrection from the dead in order to be man's Savior and Redeemer.

But this is not a new problem. The same thing was true in the beginning, and in the days of Christ's apostles. Some were denying the resurrection even then. In response, the apostle Paul wrote this to them: "*Now, if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*" (1 Corinthians 15:12).

On some occasions, the apostles had traveled into certain places and had preached the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. But then, later, others had gone to the same people and had preached something entirely different.

Again the apostle said to them, *"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:6-8).

The fact of the matter is that there have been people who perverted the truth, even from the Garden of Eden! They try to distort, change, and corrupt the Gospel truth of Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead as the Bible teaches. John, another apostle of Christ, seeing the seriousness of the prevailing situation, warned the people of his generation by saying: *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets [teachers] have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). Jude, also around the same time, wrote: *"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you con-*

cerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the Saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3,4).

The conclusion of the matter is that the Bible is the only authentic and genuine source for the truth of everything concerning Christ. It has stood the tests and challenges of two thousand years, and is even now continually being corroborated by random archaeological finds.

So, if we are wise, we will search the Scriptures and let honest and open-minded cross-study of the prophecies concerning Christ and their fulfillment convince us of the truthfulness of that God-given message. Whosoever teaches anything different from that Book must be rejected out-rightly. Test any teacher by what the Bible says about Christ and about every other truth related to God's revelation to man in the Scriptures. *"Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar"* (Romans 3:4). †

Sunny David preaches the Gospel in New Delhi, India and via Radio Sri Lanka, in the Hindi language.

Do We Really Need the Bible?

Bill Dillon

The book known simply as “The Bible” is the most powerful weapon for the renewal of society that the world has ever seen or history has ever known. That’s an incredible statement, considering that in the last few decades we have had the greatest explosion of education and technology since the beginning of time. Jet age travel, space exploration, and government programs are realities in the 21st century, yet down in the hard, bitter reality we call life, we have to ask: are these things really changing human lives for the better? Despite our progress, in the world terrorism, hatred, violence, and turmoil seem to be winning the day!

If a man is hungry, we should give him something to eat. However, this is of help to him strictly on the horizontal level. It isn’t enough to meet only the physical needs of man, because man is more than a physical animal. This explains why individuals of great wealth, who are not in material need in any way whatsoever, are far from happy. That’s why J. Paul Getty, at one time the world’s richest man, often pro-

claimed that he was unhappy and would be willing to trade his wealth for simple contentment and happiness. Man needs more than a horizontal relationship fulfilling his physical needs. He also must have his vertical relationship fulfilled so he can look beyond himself to God. This is why we need the Bible! This is why the Book of the Ages will never grow obsolete or out of date.

The Bible tells you to get out of the “What’s in it for me?” mold. It teaches that beyond our horizontal needs, we have the sure and certain demand of an understanding from God’s point of view, namely, that God so loved us that He sent His Son to die for us that we might live eternally with Him.

The Bible, therefore, is the most powerful means of changing hearts in a hard and terroristic world. It’s God’s prescription for right living. It contains the guidelines we need so desperately in order to live as God intended us to live. †

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Bible Reading Plan

Philemon Rajah

Song:

The best book to read is the Bible!
 The best book to read is the Bible!
 If you read it every day
 It will keep you all the way,
 Oh, the best book to read is the Bible!

Memory Exercise:

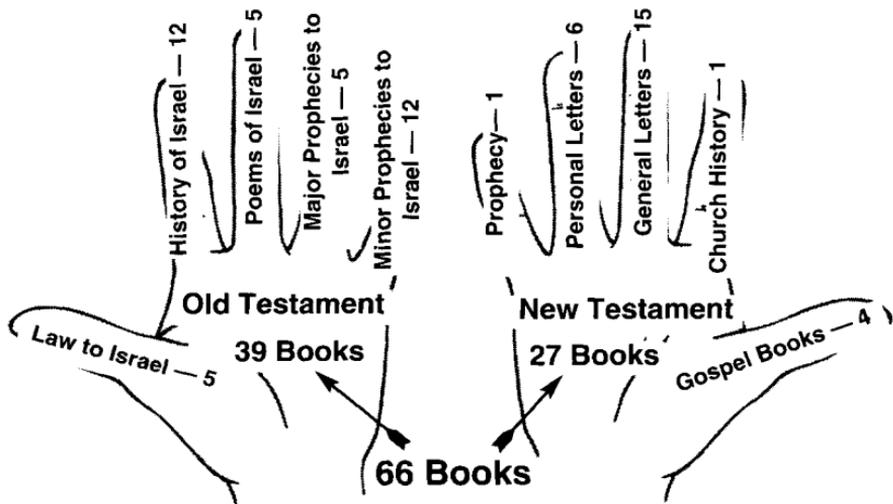
Thank God He has given us two hands! Using our hands, we can divide the Bible into two parts, that is: **Old Testament** and **New Testament**. Always you remember the Old Testament is our left hand. The New Testament is our right hand because we use it much more often — on a daily basis! That is how often we should turn to God's Word and study it, learning much

from the Old Testament, but giving the New Testament more time and study because it is the new will and testament of Jesus our Saviour.

We have 5 fingers on the right and 5 on the left hand, so we can make the Old Testament into 5 divisions and the New Testament into 5 divisions!

In the **Old Testament** we have: **Law to Israel** — 5 books; **History of Israel** — 12 books; **Poems of Israel to their Jehovah** — 5 books; **Major Prophecies to Israel** — 5 books; **Minor Prophecies** — 12 books. Altogether, it is **39 books**.

The **New Testament** can also be divided into 5 types of writings:



Gospel books — 4 (Be sure you don't say **four GOSPELS!** There is only **one Gospel**, but we have four *accounts* of the one Gospel, written by four inspired men); **Church History** — 1 book, Acts of the Apostles; **General Letters** — 15 books; **Personal Letters** — 6 books; **Prophecy** — 1 book — Revelation.

In the early times God spoke to our forefathers in divers manners: "*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets.*" (Hebrews 1:1) In some cases **God spoke personally** to the heads of households, during the **age of the Patriarchs**. He spoke to Adam, telling him not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To Noah He gave instructions to build an ark. Abraham was commanded to circumcise all of the male children in his family. In these and many other cases, God spoke directly to the forefathers, to the leaders of the individual families. Sometimes He also communicated through dreams and visions.

With the giving of the **Law to Israel**, God spoke through **Moses**, the judges, and various kings of Israel. During much of Israel's history, God sent **prophets** to be His messengers. Such men as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Daniel spoke God's words to the entire nation.

Hebrews 1:2 continues to ex-

plain that God "*has in these last days spoken to us by His Son*" During what is called the **Christian Age**, we learn much from the words and examples in the Old Testament, but it is in the New Testament that we find the message God has given us through His Son, **Jesus Christ**.

We can divide the whole Bible into three ages: **the Patriarchal Age, the Mosaic Age, and the Christian age.**

Read from Genesis, chapter 1, to Exodus, Chapter 19, to learn about the age of the forefathers or the **patriarchs**.

From Exodus 20 to the Book of Acts, chapter 1, is the **Mosaic age** or the age of the Ten Commandments.

Acts, chapter 2, to Revelation chapter 22 is the age of Christ, or the **Christian Age**.

In this way you can easily divide and study the Bible.

About the New Testament:

(A) **If you would like to know about Christ**, read **the four Gospel books**. Even though Jesus lived and died under the Old Covenant (with His death He nailed that law to the cross, thus ending its authority, according to Colossians 2:14), the Gospel accounts are filled with His message about how people would live in His *kingdom*, His *church*, when it would be established on the earth.

(B) **If you would like to become a follower of Jesus Christ**,

to be converted and become a Christian, read the book of **Acts** (Church History)

(C) If you would like to live as Christ, as a Christian, to learn what to eat and drink, how to dress, how to work, with whom you can have fellowship, how to think, how to talk, how to behave toward God, toward your family, your friends, your enemies, your country, you can find the answers in the **Gospel accounts** and in the **letters** written to churches and to individuals.

(D) If you would like to know the benefits or rewards of being a Christian, or the danger and punishment for not being a Christian, read the book of **Revelation**.

Trivia Quiz

O.K. Do you know how many chapters in the New Testament? There are 260, and if you divide them by 30 it will be 8.6; o.k., if you round it, it will be 9. So if you read 9 chapters per day (maybe 3 in morning and 3 in the noon and 3 in the night) you will complete reading the whole New Testament in one month's time!

Revelation 1:3 says those who read and hear and obey the Word of God *will* be blessed. Jesus said if you *know* the truth, the truth will set you free (John 8:32). 2 Timothy 3: 16,17 says, "*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."

And you *will* be equipped if you read the Bible and keep it in your heart and life.

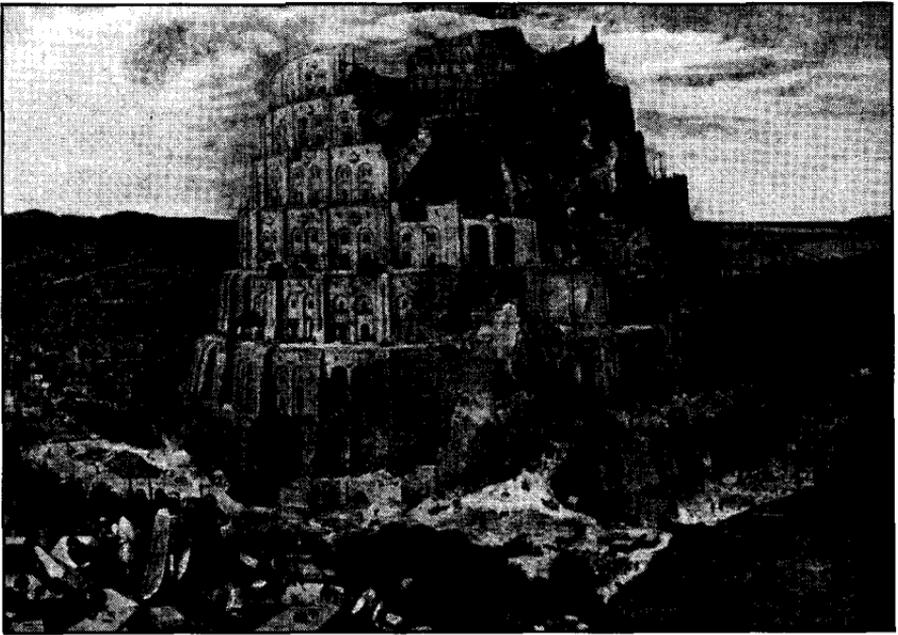
Did you know that one honey bee goes to 400 different flowers to collect nectar to have one tablespoon of honey? Psalm 19:10 says the word of God is sweeter than honey. Read it, read it, read it, read it, and again, I say, read it! And keep it in your life, and you and your household will be blessed forever.

A Word to Parents

Fathers and mothers, you teach your children their school lessons. With the same seriousness, sit with your children and keep teaching them the Word of God. Help them to memorize a verse from the Bible, one a day. Think about in the whole life how many Scriptures will be in their brain! The Word of God will surely guide them and guard them if you as parents plant it in their hearts.

If you spend 71 hours you can complete reading the whole Bible at one time. Maybe the church could plan a marathon reading, fasting and praying, instead of eating and fellowshiping. Try it and you will be blessed. †

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The Old Testament in Archaeology

Rex Banks

Scripture has one central theme, namely, the glorification of God through the redemption of man by means of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament prepares for the coming of Christ through the chosen nation of Israel, and Genesis, chapter 11, records the birth of Abraham, the father of the Israelite people. Abraham, a descendant of Shem, is born about 2 millennia B.C., some three centuries after the Flood, and Genesis, chapters 12-50, focuses upon his history and the early history of the chosen line.

Isaac, Abraham's son, is the father of Jacob, whose twelve sons become the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus Genesis, chapters 12-50, provides vital information about the inception of the nation of Israel. Understandably this portion of scripture has received a great deal of attention from friends and foe alike.

At the end of the 20th century, Julius Wellhausen declared that the Biblical accounts of the so-called “patriarchs” — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis, chapters 12-50) — were not accurate records of historical characters and events by those who witnessed them, but rather the creations of later generations of Israelites who projected these stories backward into their own history.

Predictably this view has been repeated again and again in certain scholarly circles ever since, and the Genesis account has been examined in the minutest detail by those seeking proof for this position. In his **Lands of the Bible**, J.W. McGarvey points out:

“A fictitious narrative, located in a country with which the writer is not personally familiar, must either avoid local allusions or be found frequently in conflict with the peculiarities of place and of manners and customs. By this conflict the fictitious character of the narrative is exposed.”

Following Wellhausen, many scholars have argued that erroneous historical details, anachronisms, incorrect geo-political details, and such like, provide ample proof of the fictitious character of the narrative in Genesis, chapters 12-50.

In the middle of the twentieth century, in particular, this position was challenged by such scholars as William Albright and Cyrus Gordon, who successfully demonstrated that the patriarchal narratives harmonize beautifully with what we now know of the ancient Near East, and as a result many were led to revise their negative view of the Genesis account. Then in the 1970s a persistent group of scholars re-examined the evidence used by Albright and Gordon, and insisted that this evidence did not support the historicity of the patriarchs. In turn they were answered by archaeologists such as Kenneth Kitchen (e.g. *The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?* BAR [March/April 1995]) who take the Patriarchal and Exodus accounts in Scripture seriously.

Clearly, then, the patriarchal narratives have received a great deal of attention from the scholars over the past century and, clearly, two differing world views have influenced the assessment of the archaeological information which has come to light during this period. In the following paragraphs we will look at some of the evidence which has convinced many scholars of the essential historicity of the Biblical account of the life and times of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

EVIDENCES

Mesopotamia

In Genesis 8:4 we read that, following the Flood, the ark “rested upon the mountains of Ararat.” Ararat is a “mountainous plateau in western Asia from which flow, in different directions, the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Aras, and the Choruk rivers.” (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)

Henry Morris tells us that “Modern computer studies have shown ... that the geographical centre of the earth’s land areas is located within a short distance of Mount Ararat,” adding that this is “a ‘coincidence’ that can hardly be other than providential” (**The Genesis Record**).

Sometime prior to the confusion of languages (Genesis 11:1), the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth “journeyed east” (NASB) or “moved eastward” (Genesis 11:2) and “found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.” This is a better rendering than the KJV’s “from the east”.

Nimrod

Scripture identifies the “land of Shinar” as Babylonia (Daniel 1:1,2) and the city of Babylon was located on the banks of the Euphrates River. Evidently the journey from Ararat was circuitous, since Shinar is southeast of Ararat. Anyway, under the leadership of Nimrod, son of Cush, the people resolved to build a city and a tower in the land of Shinar so as to make a name for themselves and to avoid being scattered over the face of the whole earth (Genesis 10:8; 11:4). We are told that “the beginning of ... (Nimrod’s) kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Caine in the land of Shinar,” (10:10) and that from that land “(Nimrod) went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah and Resen between Ninevah and Calah; that is the great city” (Genesis 10:11,12).

So, according to the Biblical record, it was here that Nimrod “founded the domination which was the first distinguished by the name of a kingdom on the face of the earth” (Adam Clarke’s **Commentary on the Bible**).

In his book, **After the Flood**, Bill Cooper says: “Moreover there is much evidence to suggest that he, himself, (i.e. Nimrod) was worshiped from the very earliest times.” Cooper reminds us of Nimurda, the Assyrian god of war, and others. Too, Bacchus, the Roman god, bears a name which is derived from the Semitic “bar-Cush”, meaning son of Cush; so here we have another example of the preservation of the name of an early ancestor in the legends of his descendants.

Shinar

Now, do archaeological discoveries have anything to say about the rise of civilization in the land of Shinar? Indeed they do. In their **Streams of**

EVIDENCES

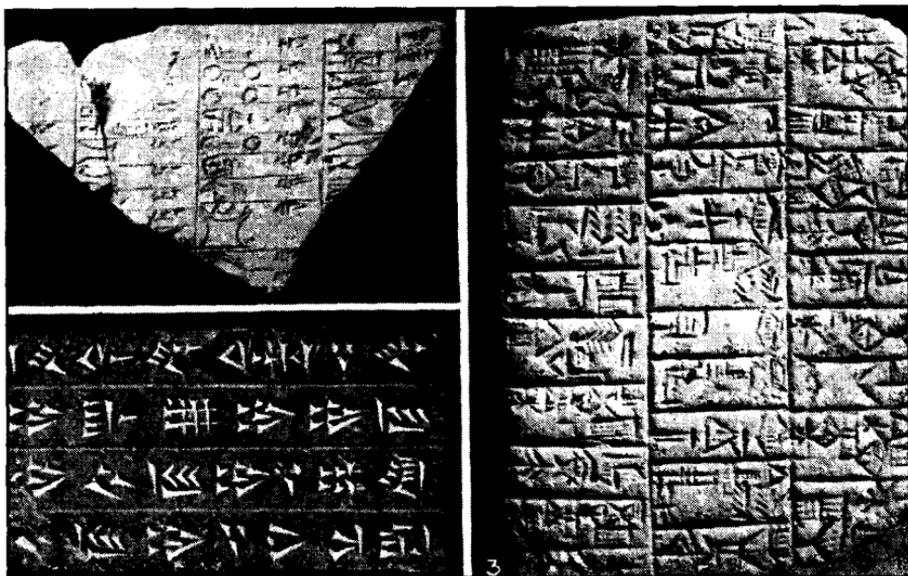
Civilization, Albert Ilyma and Mary Stanton have the following:

“The area of Mesopotamia was part of a great curving plain known as the Fertile Crescent. This plain was one of the few areas in the Middle East with enough water to allow successful farming. Three Rivers provided water for the Fertile Crescent. The two major Rivers were the Tigris and Euphrates, while the tiny Jordan River watered the area known today as Israel It was in the south-eastern corner of the Fertile Crescent that Sumer, the oldest known civilization in the world, developed. Many scholars believe that Nimrod, one of Ham’s grandsons, founded this civilization.”

Sumer

Under the heading **Sumer**, Encyclopaedia Britannica has:

“(Sumer is the) ... site of the earliest known civilization, located in the southernmost part of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, in the area that later became Babylonia and is now southern Iraq from around Baghdad to the Persian Gulf They bequeathed their culture to their Semitic successors, and they left the world a number of technological and cultural contributions, including the first wheeled vehicles and potter’s wheels; the first system of writing, cuneiform; the first codes of law; and the first city-states.”



EVIDENCES

In light of the reference to the construction of the tower of Babel, it is interesting to find the following in Britannica under the heading Ziggurat:

“(A) ... pyramidal, stepped temple tower that is an architectural and religious structure characteristic of the major cities of Mesopotamia (now in Iraq) from about 2200 until 500 B.C. The ziggurat was always built with a core of mud brick and an exterior covered with baked brick. It had no internal chambers and was usually square or rectangular.... Approximately 25 ziggurats are known, being equally divided in number among Sumer, Babylonia, and Assyria”

Of course reference to ziggurats, covered with baked brick, reminds us that the Babel tower was also constructed of bricks which had been burnt thoroughly (Genesis 11:3,4). It is interesting to note that Mesopotamia did not have the same quantities of stone as other areas in the ancient near east, hence the mention of “brick for stone”. Burning bricks makes them stronger still.

Concerning the tower of Babel, James Montgomery Boice makes the following good comment:

“The text speaks of the top of the tower as ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘with’, or ‘by’, the heavens (all four being possible translations of the one Hebrew preposition). This could mean that the top was dedicated to the heavens as a place of worship (the view of Morris) or



even that it had a representation of the heavens (a zodiac) upon it. I think this last possibility is the real meaning, for the reason that astrology — which focuses on a study of the zodiac — originated in Babylon. Turn to any book on astrology and you will find that it was the Chaldeans (another name for the inhabitants of Babylon) who first developed the zodiac by dividing the sky into sections and giving meanings to each on the basis of the stars that are found there.”
(Genesis: An expositional Commentary). †

Rex Banks preaches and works in Hamilton, New Zealand. His web site is <http://www.angelfire.com/80s/rjdb/coc.html>. This excerpt is from Banks' book, Archaeology and the Bible.

BIBLE FIND

Cities of the Bible

C B E T H L E H E M D I Y I H
Y B X Y E O R A A O U E Y L B
L I A R Q H G R E A L A S J A
F L J E R U S A L E M G U R B
W O E R A P S N R C O L C V Y
S T R O A S T Y O A R T S Y L
L E I I A T Y A C T K F A D O
A D C A P E R N A U M C M A N
C A H A N O E U E E O R A O N
E R O M E I C A S H D O D M G
N A M S A O W O A A Y H A A U
T I E Z L W T A R S U S V A N
A G A W L S G T E F R O N J V
I G V N S Y C H A R J A J A H
I G K H Z J X M M X C A E O Q

JERUSALEM — city of David

BETHLEHEM — birthplace of
Jesus

CAESAREA — home of
Cornelius

CANA — site of first miracle

BABYLON — capital of the
Babylonian Empire

TROAS — Paul stayed to worship

LYSTRA — Paul was stoned

HARAN — Terah died here

UR — birthplace of Abraham

SYCHAR — near Jacob's well

ROME — capital of the Roman
Empire

DAMASCUS — Paul's baptism

CAPERNAUM — on Sea of Galilee

TYRE — Hiram was king

JERICHO — the walls fell down

GAZA — gates taken by Samson

ASHDOD — Azotus in the
New Testament

TARSUS — birthplace of Saul

NAIN — widow's home town

DAN — a city in the extreme
north of Palestine

God's Fervent Wish

David A. Sargent

Mary Ann Bird was born with multiple birth defects. She suffered not only from her physical impairments but also with the emotional trauma of being "different" from others. Here is her story in her own words from her personal memoirs entitled



The Whisper Test:

"I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate, and when I started school, my classmates made it clear to me how I looked to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech.

"When schoolmates asked, 'What happened to your lip?' I'd tell them I'd fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. I was convinced that no one outside my family could love me.

"There was, however, a teacher in the second grade whom we all adored — Mrs. Leonard by name. She was short, round, happy — a sparkling lady.

SALVATION

“Annually we had a hearing test. Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class, and finally it was my turn. I knew from past years that as we stood against the door and covered one ear, the teacher sitting at her desk would whisper something, and we would have to repeat it back — things like ‘The sky is blue’ or ‘Do you have new shoes?’ I waited there for those words that God must have put into her mouth, those seven words that changed my life. Mrs. Leonard said, in her whisper, ‘I wish you were MY little girl.’”

The Deformity that Is Sin

Because of our sin, YOU and I are in a dreadful condition — not because we are different from others, for ALL of us share this common malady (Romans 3:23). The prophet Isaiah described our condition well: “*ALL of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6).

Yet because of His GREAT love for us, God says to you and me, “I wish you were My child.” And, because of His GREAT love for us, He has provided a way for us to be cleansed from our sins and “adopted” into His family. This provision came at a terrible price: the death of His Son, Jesus, on a cruel cross. “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive ... the adoption as sons*” (Galatians 4:4,5).

God redeems us and “adopts” us into His family when we:

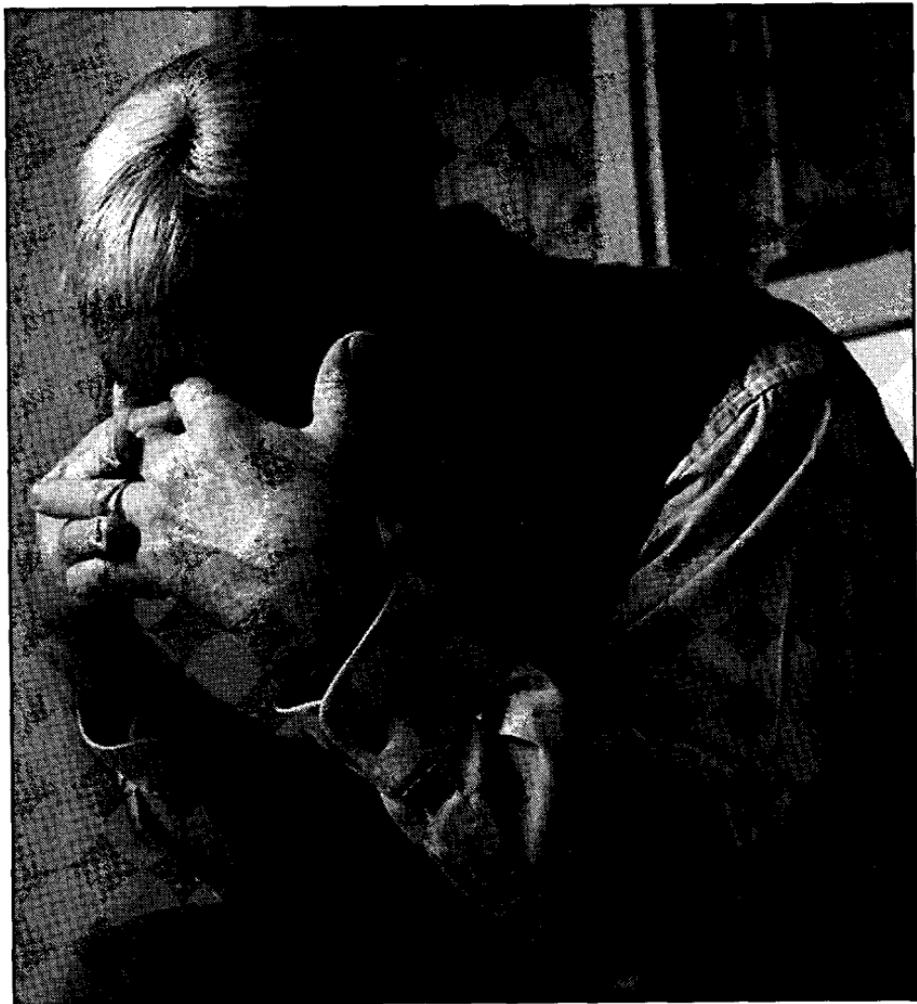
- ◆ have faith in Christ (Acts 16:31),
- ◆ turn from our sins in repentance (2 Corinthians 7:9,10),
- ◆ confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9,10),
- ◆ and are baptized (immersed) for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Then, as His “children” we are instructed to follow in the steps of Jesus for the rest of our lives (1 John 1:7).

It doesn’t matter how badly you have messed up your life. God’s wish — His desire — is for YOU to become His child.

Your acceptance of His offer will change your life — forever! †

David A. Sargent works with the Creekwood Church of Christ in Mobile, Alabama, USA.



Mourning for Sin

Robert H. "Tex" Williams

Jesus' statement, "*Blessed are they that mourn, for they will be comforted,*" in Matthew 5:4 is somewhat confusing to some and at

the same time encouraging to others. The teaching is not about morbidity, or a negative or a pessimistic outlook! It is not about self-pity by

one who feels that life has short-changed him. It is not a natural sorrow as expressed in Romans 12:15 where the apostle Paul wrote, *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”* The Lord is not speaking about the bliss of those who smile through tears, though God has promised us comfort in the time of natural sorrow which inevitably comes to all of us.

The kind of mourning the Lord is commanding is expressed first of all when one develops a sorrow for sin in his own life, due to an understanding of and confrontation with the Biblical teachings regarding purity of life. David expressed its meaning well when he wrote, *“I confess my iniquity: I am troubled by my sin”* (Psalm 38:18).

The attitude of mourning for sins was also expressed very well when Joel recorded God’s pleadings with Israel in Joel 2:12,13: *“‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate.’”*

A prime example of such mourning for sins is found in the teachings of Jesus in Luke 18:13, in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector: *“... but the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat*

his breast and said, ‘God have mercy on me, a sinner.’”

One of the things that prompts such a deep sense of sorrow, a mourning, for sin is when one compares himself or herself with the example of the perfection of Christ during the time He spent here on earth. and His concern for each one who is His follower. In Hebrews 4:15 the writer described our Lord’s empathy for humanity by saying, *“We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin.”*

Christ understands our temptations and problems and will help us in our struggle against the sin. *“Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens”* (Hebrews 7:26). Every Christian should develop a passion to purge whatever sin is in his/her life and make a special effort to overcome every temptation that comes their way.

The Lord taught that Christians should mourn because of the weakness that is shown when sin overcomes a desire for purity. Such mourning prompts a commitment to not sin in such a way again. We also should be aware of the consequences of not mourning over our defeats by Satan. These failures

hurt God, and continuing to have willful sin in our lives weakens us spiritually.

Not only should a Christian mourn because of his own transgressions, but we should also feel grief because of the sins of others. Such mourning is the motivation for evangelism, for reaching out to the lost with the gospel. God has a concern for all who are separated from Him by the wall of sin. That is vividly expressed when one reads all of Isaiah 53.

We have a commission to take the message of salvation to the world, because sins that have not been forgiven will bring condemnation of the sinner when judgment comes. We may choose to ignore the sins of others, or we may seek to save them, but our own eternal future will also be affected by our choice, because ignoring God's commission is, in itself, a sin.

Paul wrote: *"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel"* (Romans 9:2,3). John also referred to this when he wrote concerning the sacrifice of Christ: *"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also the sins of the whole world"* (1 John 2:2).

Four ways in which mourners are comforted:

(1) We have peace in salvation:

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1,2).

(2) We have the assurance of continual pardon.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin" (Romans 8:1,2).

(3) We have the assurance of heaven.

"And you were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13,14).

(4) There is great joy in the salvation of others.

"For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy" (1 Thessalonians 2:19,20). †

R.H. "Tex" Williams has retired from the presidency of World Bible School.



Jesus Christ, the Eternal Sacrifice

**The Reigning Lord,
Part two**

Betty Burton Choate

God Rules in the Spirit World

The fact that God overrules in nature and in governments has been true also of the parallel world we cannot see: the spiritual realm. It is populated with angelic beings and the souls who have been separated from their physical bodies in death, both the righteous and the unrighteous.

The description is given of the angelic host of heaven:

... I heard the voice of many angels around the throne ... and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ... (Revelation 5:11).

2 Peter 2:4 says in contrast, of the disobedient angels:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment

Jesus painted the scene that follows the death of the human body in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31:

... So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hades, he lifted up his eyes

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Revelation 6:9-11 shows more of the heavenly scene, as it involves the spirits of humans who have died:

... I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes ... (Revelation 7:9).

Two Kingdoms in the World

Within the universe two kingdoms exist, by the tolerance of God which allows man the freedom of choice. One of these is Satan's domain. He has been the lord in his kingdom since the rebellious angels and, later, Adam and Eve, chose disobedience instead of righteousness. This kingdom is made up of fallen angels, demons, the disobedient dead and the disobedient living.

The other kingdom belongs to God. It is comprised of the angels who worship at the feet of God and who do His bidding, and the righteous dead, as well as the righteous living. Abraham was, and is, a part of this kingdom. So were Enoch, Elijah, Daniel.

Jesus was born in the flesh to make it possible for the kingdom of heaven to flourish even in the world in the form of His church. Thus, when we are born into the Family, we enter the kingdom of heaven. We live in that kingdom now, having been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Light — the kingdom which is the body of Christ, the church of Christ. (Colossians 1:13,18; Romans 16:16) When our spirits leave this physical world we will enter the spirit world of the kingdom.

Philippians 2:5-9 explains that, because Christ *emptied* Himself and humbled Himself in obedience,

... to the point of death, even the death of the cross God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is

above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

As One of the Godhead, the Word has overruled in the world from the beginning. But, having emptied Himself and relinquished the inherent rights of authority as God, having subjected Himself by being born in the flesh and being made sin for man, and having been obedient unto death, now He is exalted by God. It is His name that is above all others. At His name — Jesus — every knee will bow someday.

Looking closely, we can see the changes that have come as the result of Christ's oneness with man. Even though He has overcome death and has returned to the heavenly glory He shared from the beginning [the glory that He requested that His brethren be allowed to share in the kingdom: "*And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one...*" John 17:22], He doesn't reclaim His inherent rights. Instead, He is glorified because God gives Him that glory; He is seated at God's right hand because God has placed Him there; He has all power and authority on earth and in heaven (Matthew 28:18) because God gives it to Him; He is King of kings — the One who rules over the entire universe, both the physical realm and the heavenly realm — because the kingdom was given to him (Daniel 7:13,14). He is the Lamb ... the Lord of lords and the King of kings (Revelation 17:14). He is Jesus Christ ... the ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5).

As the ruling Lord, this word picture is painted of His authority:

And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:31).

The host of His angels — ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands — as well as all the elect in the spirit world and on the earth are His to command. Only one power supercedes His:

... But when He says, "All things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted (1 Corinthians 15:27).

Jesus Christ rules today, by authority derived from God!



From Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice by Betty Burton Choate.



Attributes of Bible Miracles

Kevin L. Moore

A miracle is a supernatural phenomenon; something that cannot be explained purely on the basis of natural processes. God's miraculous intervention was necessary in the New Testament era to communicate and to confirm His message during a time when the Bible was still incomplete (cf. Mark 16:20). However, upon its completion near the end of the first century AD these miracles had served their purpose and were no longer needed to aid in revealing truth and producing faith (cf. Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Today the ability to work miracles is claimed by many ardent religionists, including highranking clerics, charismatic evangelists, psychic healers, tribal witch doctors, and Eastern spiritualists. But when compared to the authentic miracles recorded in the Bible, modern day miraculous claims simply do not measure up.

There are at least five identifying characteristics of true miracles which may serve as a basis of comparison.

Doctrine to Live By

First of all, Bible miracles were immediate. Two Greek words translated “immediately” (eutheos, parachrema) occur in the New Testament no less than twenty-nine times in conjunction with miracles. Gradual progression or extended waiting periods do not characterize the instantaneous miracles of the Bible (cf. Matthew 8:3; 20:34; Mark 1:31,42; etc.).

Secondly, Bible miracles were verifiable. The person on the receiving end of a supernatural experience was often well known to those who witnessed it, and the reality of the miracle could therefore not legitimately be denied (cf. Mark 2:12; Acts 3:10; 4:14,16; etc.). Moreover, no one on earth today can reproduce an indisputable miracle, like raising the dead (Acts 9:36-42), walking on water (Matthew 14:24-29), restoring a severed body part (Luke 22:50,51), or calming a storm (Mark 4:39).

Thirdly, when a miraculous healing occurred it was always complete. Even when the Lord healed a blind man in two stages (Mark 8:22-25), apparently as an object lesson to show the difference between limited and full understanding (vs. 17-21), the healing was still complete. There are no instances of partial or imperfect healings in the Bible (cf. Mark 5:29,42; 7:35; Acts 3:7-10; etc.).

Fourthly, when group healings were performed, they were comprehensive. No one was left untreated, irrespective of the severity of the ailments (cf. Matt. 8:16; 9:35; 12:15; Luke 4:40; 6:17-19; Acts 5:16).

Finally, a number of miracles were performed on unsuspecting recipients who had no discernible faith at the time. Jesus healed a blind man who did not even realize who Jesus was until after the miracle had occurred (John 9:1-7,25,35-38). The lame man at the temple’s gate was merely expecting a monetary gift, so the “faith” that enabled his healing was not his but that of Peter and John (Acts 3:2-5,16; cf. Matthew 17:20). When individuals were raised from the dead, obviously their faith was not a prerequisite (Luke 7:15; 8:54,55; John 11:43,44; Acts 9:40; 20:10).

If any miraculous claim does not demonstrate features of Bible miracles, it cannot be regarded as genuinely from God. *“Test all things; hold fast what is good”* (1 Thessalonians 5:21). If a person needs to see a miracle today in order to develop faith, that person’s faith is misplaced. The miracles already recorded in the Bible *“are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”* (John 20:31). †

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The Relationship of Grace and Baptism

Frank Chesser

Salvation by grace, through blood appropriated to one's soul in the *obedience* of faith, includes baptism. Jesus joined baptism with faith as a part of Gospel obedience essential to salvation (Mark 16:16). He put water in the new birth, and man has been trying to remove it ever since (John 3:5). Peter joined repentance and baptism, and he declared both to be "*for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). Preaching Christ involves preaching baptism in water (Acts 8:35,36).

As a penitent believer, Saul was instructed to "*arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins*" (Acts 22:16). Baptism is an integral part of the salvation process (1 Peter 3:21). Salvation is *in* Christ and "*as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:27). Jesus shed His blood in His death (John 19:34), and Paul specified baptism as the consummating act of Gospel obedience that puts man *into* the death of Christ so as to be cleansed by His blood (Romans 6:3,4). Newness of life, and freedom from sin by grace and blood, come *after* one has been baptized into Christ, *not before* (Romans 3:6,7).

There is not a single verse in the

New Testament, in which baptism and salvation are both mentioned, **where salvation comes before baptism**. In every example of conversion, those deserving salvation were baptized immediately. Thus, we read of baptisms "*that same day*" (Acts 2:36-41); *on a deserted road* (Acts 8:26-40); *on Saturday* (Acts 16:13-16); and *at midnight* (Acts 16:25-34).

Is baptism a work of merit that nullifies grace and transforms salvation from being a gift into a divine debt? God forbid! *Baptism is an act of faith that appeals to God's grace and the blood of Christ for salvation. Baptism is faith at work; faith complying with God's instructions; faith entreating God for salvation through grace and blood.*

Biblical baptism is irrevocably tied to the cross of Christ. It is a **symbolic reenactment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ** (Romans 6:3-5), which is the very heart of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Baptism is an integral part of the obedience of faith whereby man appropriates to his soul the *provisions of divine grace*. †

Frank Chesser preaches for the Panama Street Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

The Challenges of Leadership

J.J. Turner

President Woodrow Wilson, (1835-1919), said: "You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand." Wilson's words speak even now to the challenge confronting all leaders, both inside and outside the church.

Today's church leader faces unparalleled challenges as well as opportunities. The global population is a staggering six billion, seven hundred and forty-four million, plus. The threat of terrorism hangs like thunder clouds over our planet.

Local churches are wrestling with issues from A to Z, and in the meantime people are going into eternity every second, unprepared to meet God. The old "Ship of Zion" is being abandoned as crew members are seeking passage on "luxury cruise ships" with pick-and-choose buffets. Once-powerful battle ships are now docked, ears of the military



deaf
to the
orders to
advance.
We are rust-
ing in the harbor.

The brigade of soldiers of Christ who once stormed the strong-hold of Satan by spreading the Gospel now sit behind closed church building doors, hoping an expert will bring some new plan to help them once again be victorious in the battle for souls. It's not happening!

We have never had more money in our accounts; more stuff to enjoy, or more wants than needs. Yet, the cry of the lost is going unheeded because we must take care of the home front instead of working to evangelize the people around us or sacrificing to send mis-

THE CHURCH

sionaries into the world. Teaching on giving is about as popular as a barking dog in the night.

When some who preach and serve as elders cannot name the books of the Bible, much less spell them, we know we are poised to be described by these words of Hosea: "*My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge*" (cf. Hoses 4:6-8). When rows of chairs and pews are filled in congregations with persons who don't bring their Bibles, we know knowledge goes begging in the streets.

Church leadership has never faced the diversification within the congregations as it faces today. The transgenerational makeup of most memberships is a major challenge. How do we minister effectively to the various age groups in the church? Retired members don't have the need, for example, to be taught parenting skills as those in the midst of raising their families. Those members born between 1900 and 1920 have different needs than those born between 1960 and 1980, etc.

Yet, in many congregations we are using the shotgun approach, hoping to hit as many as we can. There has always been an ongoing challenge for members to be grounded in the faith; to contend for the oracles of God once delivered to the saints (Jude 3; 1 Peter 3:15). As previously stated about ignorant

leaders, there is a major dumbing down within the ranks of members. Many don't know in Whom they believe, or why they believe. The traditional teaching of first principles has been abandoned for lessons that tickle the ears (2 Timothy 4:1-6).

Few challenges are greater than the one related to respect for authority, both for local church leaders as well as for the authority of the Scriptures (cf. 2 Timothy 3:15-17). The spirit of political correctness has invaded the thinking of many Christians, and has fostered an attitude of "I'll do my own thing." The Lordship of Christ (Luke 6:46) has been exchanged for the lordship of *self*. With members doing that which is right in their own eyes, the mission and message of the church are neglected, if not abandoned altogether.

Then there is the challenge of the dwindling ranks of leaders. Fewer and fewer men want to step up to the plate and assume the awesome responsibility of leading God's people to heaven. The church is where it is today because this is where leaders have brought her; the church will be where she is tomorrow and next year because of leadership. But what if there is no real, Biblical leadership, which will occur if men are not being trained today to meet the needs of tomorrow? The church has the responsibility for equipping the Body of

THE CHURCH

Christ with competent leaders. We can talk about, pray about, study about and do many things relating to the problem of leadership, but it takes planned *action* to train and fill the ranks of elders, deacons, preachers, and teachers.

The challenges of today and tomorrow must be faced by men who are committed to the mission of the church. They must be spiritual men who are working on the essential skills needed to equip self and others. The church needs men of character, not men who are characters. Followers are looking for examples and for leaders of integrity that they can trust. The challenges of a dying or declining congregation must be met by men who are alive and excited about the mission given by God to preach the Gospel. They must be prepared to edify the saved and equip the

church for ministry. They know where they are going and how to take others with them. Leaders who face today's challenges will be men who mentor others by *showing* them how to work in the kingdom as well as *working* side-by-side with them. Together, the mission will be accomplished.

The challenge for today's leaders is an exciting one. It is a challenge that can be faced and handled to the glory of God (Ephesians 3:21). The call is clear: Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armor on and march forward in the battle, with competent leaders marking the way. †

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TITUS 1:7,9 — For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, ... holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

ACTS 20:28 — Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

HEBREWS 13:17 — Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

The Church and the World

Ardron Hinton



A statement in Romans 1:22 sums up the root cause of the moral and ethical decline in America: *“Professing to be wise, they became fools”* A majority of the people living in America at this point in time would seem to be among the guilty regarding this accusation. What we want to notice are some of the dangers this human conceit and claim to wisdom have caused.

1. Under a banner labeled “freedom” numerous groups have pushed laws and rules that are rapidly eroding genuine freedom. The family, the church, educational entities, and traditional standards are all taking blow after blow. National organizations actually fight against parental rights and at the same time, against restrictions on freedom of access regarding li-

THE CHURCH

barriers, the internet, etc. These same people then turn in the opposite direction and seek to restrict, even silence, any who do not share their viewpoints. Churches are far more vulnerable today in this regard than most people realize. The same regulations of government bureaucracies or rulings by courts that have proved to be a threat to many organization and businesses are at the door of the church building also. Even meritless lawsuits could ruin a congregation financially.

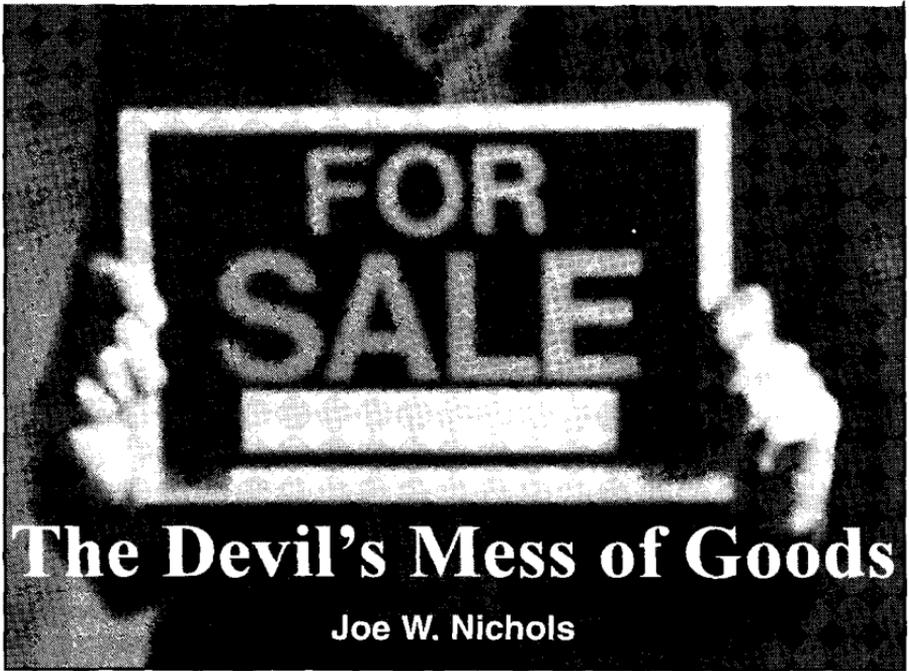
2. Under a banner labeled “progress” we are being dragged into the same excesses of self-indulgence, sexual licentiousness, and senseless violence that destroyed other nations in the past. Biblical morality may be out of style to this generation, but it is still the only standard we have for avoiding the total ruin produced by these “politically correct” notions of our day. Whether we realize it or not, the astounding expansion of the communication industries which has fueled the “progress” creates the most dangerous social climate the world has ever faced.

3. Under a banner labeled “scholarly wisdom” we see the role of God in human affairs being either ignored or completely denied in educational circles. Humanism, with its claim to superior wisdom and knowledge, holds untold power in political and social realms, even as evidence mounts that its ideas are extremely damaging to a people and to society as a whole. Throughout history, we see that human conceit and vanity led to the pursuit of policies and practices that undermined the social or political structure of the time until it collapsed.

How shall we respond? not with apathy but with resolute determination and commitment to righteousness; not with blindness to the facts but with a dedication to truth and to truth-seeking. †

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Why has the crime rate risen so dramatically in the past forty years? Why have immorality, divorce, adultery, immodesty, sexual and physical abuse of spouses and children risen so dramatically in the past forty years? Because “Humanism” has become the god of many throughout the world. Will we, as Christians, rise up in arms to combat this evil, or apathetically allow it to destroy our culture and eventually ourselves?



The Devil's Mess of Goods

Joe W. Nichols

Many people who seek religion accept doctrines contrary to God. The New Testament warns of false doctrines and practices that plagued the church of Christ of the first century and would continue to endanger it:

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ ..." (Colossians 2:8);

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy ..." (1 Timothy 4:1,2);

"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17,18);

"... withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6);

THE CHURCH

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine..." (2 Timothy 4:3,4).

It is evident that the devil has sown his seed (Matthew 13:38b,39). He offers today:

- ◆ denominations of your choice;
- ◆ religious experience for his plan of salvation;
- ◆ unscriptural forms of worship;
- ◆ and perverted "Bibles".

To be the true church of Christ, we must *"Hold fast the pattern of sound words"* (2 Timothy 1:13), and condemn the product of the devil. Timothy was exhorted to *"Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching"* (2 Timothy 4:2). This means that error and false teachers must be exposed. It also means that some feelings will be hurt, some losses sustained, and that there will be some who will take the side of the devil against the truth of God.

By way of illustration — what if an antique car salesman tried to sell you an antique 1936 Ford coupe and, upon closer investigation, you learned the following: (1) the body hull was Ford; (2) the front fenders and grill were Mercury; (3) the motor and drive train were Plymouth; (4) the wheel hubs and rims were Nash; (5) the steering wheel was DeSoto; (6) the seats were Dodge, (7) and, the dash and instrument panel were Chevrolet?

Most assuredly, if you were knowledgeable about such matters, you would conclude that somebody was trying to pass on to you a mess of goods rather than the real thing — a genuine antique car.

We have a New Testament pattern for the church's organization, plan of salvation, worship, and work. If we study and learn God's perfect plan for the church, then we will be able, upon close investigation, to discern when someone is trying to sell us a mess of goods in place of the genuine article. †

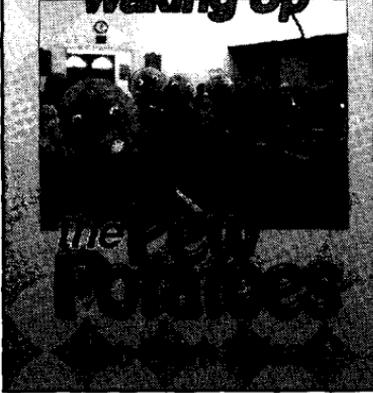
Joe W. Nichols is a gospel preacher living in Bastrop, Louisiana, USA.

What is the church?

The Church is the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5).
The Church is the Body of Christ (Colossians 1).
The Church is the Kingdom of Christ (Matthew 16:18).
The Church is the Sheepfold of Christ (John 10).

**How
many
does
He
have ?**

The Secret to Walking Up



3 Follow-Up Studies

Which Testament is Binding Today?

Galatians 4:21-31:

The bondmaid is the _____ covenant.

The free woman is the _____ covenant.

Vs. 24 The first covenant from Mt.

Sinai gendereth (or puts one in) _____.

Vs. 30 The bondwoman and her son were to be _____.

Vs. 31 Do we want to be children of the bondwoman or the free? _____

The Old Law was _____ them and us (Colossians 2:14).

The Old Law was taken away by Jesus' death on the _____ (Colossians 2:14).

(This includes: The Law of Moses, laws

of the Sabbath, laws of clean and unclean meats, laws of the priesthood, annual trip to Jerusalem, sacrificial laws, etc.)

God said, "The days come when I will make a _____ covenant" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Jesus is the mediator of the _____ covenant (Hebrews 8:6,7).

The faults, or imperfections of those under the Old Law remained, because that law did not provide an eternal remedy for sin: (True) or (False) _____ (v. 7).

The Old Law had a separate priesthood that was changed through Jesus.

Because of this, there also is a change of _____ (Hebrews 7:12).

Jesus' Testament began taking effect after His _____ (Hebrews 9:15-17).

The first Testament was _____ away that the New could be _____ (Hebrews 10:9,10).

The Bible compares the Old Law, the New Law and Marriage in Romans 7:1-4.

***When the Law of Moses was done away at the cross (Colossians 2:14),
we were then free to be joined to Christ!***

The Lord's church is the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2).

What is the value of the Old Testament for the Christian today?

The Old Testament was written for our _____ (Romans 15:4).

The Old Law was added because of _____ (Galatians 3:15-23).

CHURCH GROWTH

It would last _____ the seed (Christ) should come (Galatians 3:19).
The Law was a schoolmaster (one who brings us to truth) to bring us unto _____ (Galatians 3:24).

That we might be justified by _____ in Christ (Galatians 3:24).
After faith is come, we are _____ under a schoolmaster (Galatians 3:25).

We are no longer under the Old Law, but by studying the Old Testament we can see the nature of God, which does not change. Also, we can learn about the prophecies concerning Christ and His church.

What are we to be called as followers of Christ?

God's people under the Old Testament were called _____ (Genesis 35:10).

God said one day His people would be called by a _____ name. (Isaiah 62:2).

God said this would happen after the _____ saw God's righteousness. (Isaiah 62:2).

God's righteousness was shown in sending His _____, in whom we can have faith (Romans 3:22).

Christ's Gospel first went out to _____ only (Matthew 10:6).

In Acts 11:18 Peter and those with him understood that God, from that day onward, had granted repentance not only to the Jews but also to the _____. *This fulfilled the prophecies in Isaiah 62:1,2, Isaiah 65:15.*

When people understood that anyone, Jew or Gentile, could be saved, it was time for God's new name for His people to begin to be used. The new name comes in Antioch, after the fulfillment of this prophecy. The record is found in Acts 11:26. The disciples were first called _____ in Antioch. God wants all of us to be called simply Christians, because it glorifies _____ (2 Thessalonians 1:12).

Christian means "follower of Christ".

You cannot spell it, say it, or write it without mentioning Christ!

Many people claim to be Christians and yet they teach different doctrines. If we are true Christians, as the New Testament defines the term, can we add things to this name given by God? *(Some examples would be: Catholic-Christian, Baptist-Christian, Methodist-Christian, etc.)*

CHURCH GROWTH

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 answers this question. The answer is _____.
Should we ever wear a man-made name? _____ (1 Corinthians 1:12,13).

In the New Testament, we are the _____ or tabernacle of God (1 Corinthians 3:16).

The church (or called-out people) are also called the _____ of God in Ephesians 2:21.

The tabernacle or temple of the Old Testament was an _____ or _____ of things to come in Christ (Hebrews 8:5 and Colossians 2:17).

According to Hebrews 8:5, was the tabernacle (or, today, the church) to be built according to the pattern of God? _____

We are the church or temple of God! Therefore, shouldn't we call ourselves what we are told to call ourselves, according to the pattern? _____

If we leave the pattern of doctrine, we have not _____ (2 John 9).

“Back to the Bible” Study

(Understanding Spiritual Gifts)

We must not deny what God's Word says on this vital subject.

Spiritual gifts include the following: Supernatural faith, knowledge, healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, wisdom and prophecy. These are listed in 1 Corinthians 12,13 and Ephesians 4.

There are 3 reasons for spiritual gifts and miracles:

1. They are written in the Bible that we might _____ (John 20:30,31).
2. The word of the Lord was _____ by miracles given by God (Mark 16:20).
3. They were for *“the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: _____ we all come in the unity of **the faith**”* (Ephesians 4:12,13a).

“Till” or “until” sets a time limit on supernatural spiritual gifts. **The faith** has now been once and for all _____ (Jude 3).

They were to last till the church was mature. We are to grow in knowledge *“unto”* or **toward** a _____ man. The church was to _____ up into Christ (Ephesians 4:13,15).

How did people receive miraculous gifts of the Spirit?

In Acts 8:14-17, _____ had two apostles lay their hands on them. They had already been baptized and had therefore received the Holy Spirit

CHURCH GROWTH

as indicated in Acts 2:38. “_____ and be _____ for the _____ of sins and you shall receive the _____ of the _____.”

In Acts 6:1-6 Philip had the apostles’ _____ laid on him for a specific purpose. After this, he could perform _____ (Acts 8:12,13).

Timothy was told to stir up the spiritual gift which was given by _____ (2 Timothy 1:6).

If supernatural spiritual gifts were given only by the apostles’ laying on of hands, to fulfill a specific purpose, “*edifying of the church till*” — remember the limiting time — (Ephesians 4:13), then we can understand that when the purpose was accomplished, and when the apostles died, miraculous gifts ceased. God says the spiritual gifts were only _____ (1 Corinthians 13:9).

When that which is _____ is come, the things in part shall be _____ (1 Corinthians 13:10).

The perfect (or complete) has come. It is the _____ law of liberty (James 1:25).

This is the completed revelation for man today; _____ have now been given (2 Peter 1:3).

The apostles were guided into _____ truth (John 16:13).

Therefore, there are no more revelations for the Spirit to confirm.

Scripture is _____ and _____ furnished (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Now abideth _____ and _____ (1 Corinthians 13:13).

The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of these words *after* He said supernatural spiritual gifts would _____ (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

He did **not** say supernatural spiritual gifts would **abide** (True) or (False) in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

We don’t need miraculous gifts today because we have the confirmed Word of God which is able to give us _____ things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

The Spirit still does non-miraculous things for us today: **Comforts** — 1

Thessalonians 4:18; **Teaches through the Word** — 1 Corinthians 2:13,

John 20:31 and John 6:63; **Helps in our prayers** — Romans 8:26; **Convicts men of sin** — John 16:8.



From The Secret to Waking Up the Pew Potatoes by John Mark Wilson; can be ordered from J.C. Choate Publications, P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

WORK IS GOOD FOR YOU!

Jimmy Ferguson

Haven't you heard the old adage, "Work is good for you!"? We have tried to instill this into our children through our words and our examples. Of course, there are those who could not tell you much about work because they have never really become acquainted with it. Others, no doubt, would argue that work is not good for you, and they try to stay far away from it.

Generally speaking, people who have worked diligently all their lives live longer than those who don't exercise their bodies. Work prevents one from becoming lazy (in mind and body). It gives one an incentive to live from day to day. Statistics indicate that the mortality rate greatly increases immediately following retirement. This certainly does not mean that one should never retire. But it does indicate that one should have regular activities in which to engage even after retirement.

But consider also that if you are a Christian, work in the church is good for you (spiritually). Perhaps you are familiar with the term "benchwarmer". This usually refers to those who attend worship services, but that is all they do. Such an

individual is usually content with doing nothing. If there is work to be done (visitation, Bible studies, evangelism, etc.) someone else will have to do it. He may try to fall back on excuses such as, "I work long hours"; "I'm tired at the end of the day"; "I'm not very good at that"; or he may simply say, "I know I need to be more involved", but that is about as far as he gets.

If the term "benchwarmer" describes someone reading this article, may I ask you something? How can you possibly be satisfied with yourself? Do you not feel that there is something missing in your life? If you talk to a diligent worker in the church, he/she will probably tell you how wonderful it is to know that you have brightened someone's day by visiting with them in the hospital; or how exhilarating it is to know that perhaps you have helped to lead a wayward brother or sister back to faithfulness or have helped to lead someone to the way of salvation.

Work not only benefits the church but it is good for the individual. We are instructed to "... be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). We are to be "... always abounding in the work of the Lord"

1 Corinthians 15:58). We have been "... created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

Work not only causes the church to grow (spiritually and in number), but it strengthens the one working. It will cause you to grow spiritually. As you work in His vineyard, you will find that you are drawing closer to the Lord and to your brethren. And, as if this is not enough, consider the fact that in the Judgment you will be judged by your works: "*And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which*

is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12). The "one talent man" in Matthew 25 was condemned as being a "... *wicked and slothful [lazy] servant*" (Matthew 25:26).

If you are a "benchwarmer", or if you find that you have become lax in your work in the church, dear brother/sister, you need to make a change for the sake of your soul! And I believe that I can guarantee that your life will change for the better, for eternity. †

Jimmy Ferguson works with the Stage Road Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee, USA.

Do Not Let Yourself . . .

Worry – when you are doing your best.

Hurry – when success depends on your accuracy.

Think evil – of a friend until you have seen the facts.

Believe – a thing impossible without trying it.

Trust – an elastic conscience.

Waste – time on unimportant matters.

Imagine – that good intentions are satisfying excuses.

Harbor – bitterness in your heart toward God or man.

Continue – in things the Scriptures condemn.

Avoid – things that are pleasing to God.



PRISON WORK IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

Ruth Orr

Three years ago I received the name of a man in the Kabwe prison in Zambia, Central Africa. At that time I had no idea how the name came to me as I did not have any World Bible School students in Zambia. Today I know it was by the providence of God.

The student's name was Sitali Sitali. I wrote him a long letter and sent two WBS lessons. Within no time he sent them back for grading and I then mailed him two more lessons. When they were returned,

he wrote that he was teaching 45 other inmates in the prison. He said he had learned so much from the lessons he wanted to teach others what he had learned. Knowing he was not yet a Christian I was deeply concerned about what he was teaching so I sent him many tracts and materials to study. After the lesson, "Born of Water and Spirit", he requested baptism and, after a few weeks, he was granted permission by the authorities and was baptized for the remission of his sins.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

By this time he had sent me many names of prisoners, asking me to teach them, but he was still personally teaching the original 45, though some things he had not understood correctly. Many of that group were disturbed over his “new religion”. I asked him to send me all 45 names so I could enroll them in WBS, which he did. Today those 45 are all New Testament Christians.

Sitali’s wife had died while he was in prison and he pleaded with me to help his children — 14 year old twin boys and an 11 year-old girl — who were left alone. I was at a loss as to what to do except pray, and that I did. Soon a Catholic priest who had met Sitali in prison wrote me. He had seen the children and commented on what a horrible situation they were in and asked if I could help. He helped me contact a Mr. Banda Bawne in the far northern area of Zambia. He was the only person he knew that was “Church of Christ”, he said.

Coincidentally — or providentially? — Banda had been a WBS convert of mine many years ago when he was living in Malawi! I contacted him, sending money so that he could travel the ten hours to Kabwe and see about the children and visit Sitali. He found the children with a lady who had taken them in and all were living in severe poverty, no schooling for the chil-

dren, and eating anything they could find from the streets. Banda was just a poor farmer, himself, but he was also a great Christian man, and he and his wife agreed to take the children until Sitali was released from prison. But the children were happy with the lady who had taken them in, because this kept them closer to their dad and enabled them to visit him when permitted. So with Banda’s help we got clothes, food, and medicine, because one of the children was sick, and we also sent money for their schooling. Banda has seen after them since then with visits and buying things they need.

The Kabwe prison is made up of medium, maximum, long term, condemned, death row, and ladies sections, with over 3,000 inmates in this prison alone. Today, the prison also houses many WBS students, all because of Sitali and his love for the Lord and the other prisoners.

This past July, David Harper of the Concord Road Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee and I traveled to Zambia with the purpose of working mainly in this prison and two others in the Lusaka area.

It takes months and mounds of paper work, and signatures of endless people, to even begin to get into one of these prisons and we had done none of this preparatory work except writing a letter of request. We were turned down when we got

to the prison, with the statement that it would take at least a month to get the paper work done. I was almost in tears and begged to have just a few minutes with my students, but we were told to come back tomorrow.

Finally we found someone who helped speed the process and we were granted permission to go into all three prisons in Lusaka — one a day for the next three days. We thanked God for opening the door.

On Monday we went to the Lusaka Central prison which housed 800 prisoners. We were permitted to speak with all of them and then to spend extra time with the WBS students. They were so excited to see us. One was a former policeman whose bullet had gone astray while he was on duty, killing an innocent person. He is in the condemned section, awaiting execution. He became a Christian after completing the WBS lessons in prison. He pleaded with me and David to help his wife and children.

We visited them and found them in the worst poverty you could imagine. They had been staying with her sister and then she had died and left them with nowhere to go. We immediately set out to find them better living conditions and to get the children back in school. With the help of the Mapepe Christian school we found better housing nearby, so they would be close to the church

and also near a school for the children. The wife has also been baptized but is going to need a lot of encouragement and help to cope, with her husband being gone a long time or never coming back.

The second prison housed about 300 prisoners, plus 35 juvenile delinquents from the age of 8 to 16. The boys were there for stealing. They weren't criminals, but hunger had driven them to steal, the warden said. He asked me if I would teach each of them as they would have to be in a prison of some kind for at least the next four years. He got all their names, addresses and their criminal description for me so I could start each on the WBS lessons. My heart breaks as I remember their little faces and sad eyes, staring at us as we left.

Finally we were allowed into the Kabwe prison which is the largest in Zambia and houses the most dangerous criminals. As we walked in the officials said, "No white woman has ever been allowed in this prison before." But all the officials and guards praised WBS and the impact it had had on those inmates who were taking the courses and those already Christians. They said the morale among the WBS students was greatly improved and they thanked us over and over for making a difference in their lives. As we went into the last

office to sign more papers we introduced ourselves and when I said, "I am Ruth Orr," the officer said, "I believe I have heard that name a few hundred times around here!"

We were treated with the utmost respect and consideration and although we were not allowed to speak to the entire prison population, we were thrilled to see about 300 WBS students. Many of these had already become Christians, and as they gathered they sang several songs, welcoming us with hand shakes. Again the officials praised the WBS lessons and the teaching they were receiving.

David and I were both allowed to speak to them for a few minutes and then we were permitted to mix and mingle and talk with them for as long as we wished. It was wonderful to put faces to letters I had been receiving. We heard over and over, "If it had not been for my being in prison and receiving the WBS lessons, I would not be a Christian today." Most of these knew nothing about Christ before studying the WBS lessons. Twenty-nine of the group of WBS students in the maximum security prison, and four from the condemned section, asked to be baptized. Their requests were passed to the officials and baptism will follow in about two weeks. Nine in the condemned section had been baptized just before our visit.

Most of the prisoners in the medium section were working in the fields and we were allowed to see only three of those, Sitali being one of them. Sixty-three of this group are already Christians and meet to worship every Lord's Day. Forty-two in the condemned section also have weekly worship assemblies. So three groups are meeting every Sunday to worship, partake of the Lord's supper, sing, pray and teach.

As I talked to Sitali, I praised him for the great work he has done in teaching so many of his fellow-prisoners. Because of his good behavior, his Christian influence, and his social worker cooperating with him, he is allowed outside, raises a big garden, and is over the kitchen duties. In fact his social worker had written me before I got there, asking me to help others as Sitali had been helped and encouraged.

Sitali will be released from prison in January, 2008. He will then take classes at Mapepe Christian School and begin finding his way back into his children's lives and making his way in the outside world that put him in prison three years ago.

God has worked in mysterious ways in the Kabwe prison. We started three years ago with one student, Sitali. Today we have over three hundred WBS students (most are Christians) in the Maximum

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Section, forty-two in the Condemned Section and sixty-five or more in the Medium Section.

We carried enough soap, shirts, shoes, Bibles and some food for all the WBS students and those already Christians. We also bought grape juice and flour for them to make the bread for the Lord's supper.

Working together with God we will take one prisoner at a time who is a Christian and who will be released soon and help his family, and him, to adjust to the world and the problems they will face. The Mapepe College is a wonderful place for some of these. As they prove themselves, many can benefit greatly here where they are around Christians and in a Christian atmosphere.

Sitali will be our third one to help this year. Pearson was released in March and will begin school there in January 2008. Sitali will begin classes in May, Lord willing.

Thomas Sakala, at age 23, was married with one child. Growing up as an orphan, he was pushed from one place to another, not being loved or knowing how to love, he said. One day he stole some strawberries because he was hungry. He spent six years in prison, never being able to lie down to sleep once because of over 100 men packed into a cell at night that should have held twenty-five. He saw many of his friends die during the night and

he endured horrible living conditions that are unimaginable to us.

But by the grace of God Thomas survived. He and I studied WBS while he was in prison and he was baptized there. I helped him get into the Mapepe College and he will graduate this year. Because of his Christian faith and his capabilities, he has been hired to work at the college after his graduation. His wife left him while he was in prison and married another man. Thomas has custody of his eight-year-old son and he and Peggy, a wonderful Christian lady, plan to be married sometime next year. Thomas is one of the very fortunate because he not only now has a church family but he has someone he can call "mom"—me!

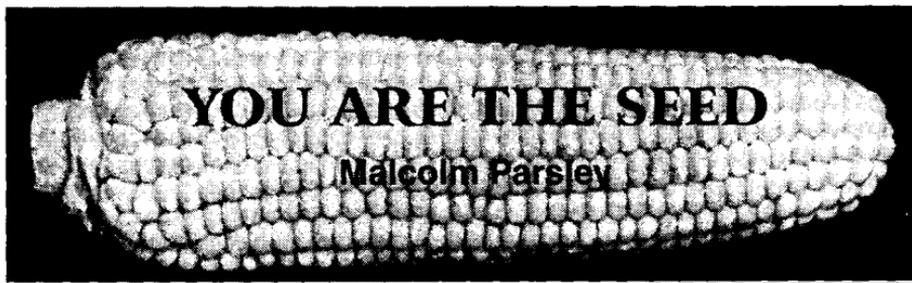
Thank you, God, for giving David and me the opportunity to visit first-hand these WBS students in horrible circumstances, suffering terrible treatment and yet remaining faithful to You, knowing that this is their only hope. The changes that are made for eternity are worth the effort we must make.

Matthew 25:36 states: *"I was in prison and you came to visit me."* Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for others, even those who are in prison. †

Ruth Orr works with thousands of World Bible School students, making follow-up trips each year to study personally with them. She lives in Tennessee, USA.

There are different kinds of spiritual seeds — the seed of Christ, the seed of the Word, and the seed we are — and each seed has its purpose.

example for the lives of others — and there **it grows in their hearts and speech and actions**. We are always *planting* and we are always



Christ is *the seed of salvation*. The Word is *the seed of the knowledge of Truth*, for through it comes the understanding of all that is good and eternal.

Though **God's word** is called the seed of the kingdom ("*The seed is the word of God*" Luke 8:11), **Christians** are also seeds sown into the world by Christ: "*the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom*" (Matthew 13:38). Christians not only sow and harvest the seed of God's Word, but in a very real way we *become the seeds* that are planted, that sprout, grow, and are harvested.

We plant **our actions** in the sight of others' minds, and there they grow. We plant **our words** in the ears of others and there they grow. We plant **what we hear** in our **hearts** and there it grows into **our thoughts** and then into **our actions** and **our speech**, into our

harvesting. That is our life.

The gratifying thing is that the good seed we sow is the good that sprouts up in others, as our words and actions fall into the lives of those over whom we have influence. The sowing can make many around us like unto ourselves, for it, too, reproduces after its kind, and its kind is what it has seen, heard, and experienced from our personal actions.

In this way, we help to create our own environment. When we are good, the world around us becomes good or, at least, better. When we are not good, our world is worsened. Then our cycle of sowing and reaping shapes our environment negatively and — in turn — influences us to become worse.

Though it sounds selfish — and the motive need not be — the result from godly lives is that the one who benefits the most is ourselves! Our

influence returns unto us what it was to those around us, and the chain of righteousness is kept strong. As the circle becomes broader and broader, our influence becomes greater until we find ourselves in the midst of a vast number of wondrous people, all of whom love God and His unfathomable way of life.

When we have practiced this kind of seed sowing long enough, we will eventually find ourselves in the midst of the circle composed only of the righteous. When and how will that be? When the center of our goodness is God Himself, for we are in heaven, the home of all of those who came before us and after us who were wise enough to live lives, **planting the seed or being seeds** of righteousness. †

Malcolm Parsley has served God and the people of South Korea for decades. He lives in Seoul, South Korea.

THREE VIEWS OF LIFE

Owen Cosgrove

One lived because he was afraid to die —
 No hope inspired his soul;
 Life in this world was all he sought;
 He had no other goal.
 He had no thought of hell's dark depths
 Or heaven's glory bright.
 He stepped from this life's lowly scene
 Into eternal night.

Two died because he was afraid to live.
 Life's heavy burden store
 Weighed greatly on his weary soul
 'Til he wanted life no more.
 He took the life he could not bear
 And snuffed its candle out,
 And walked death's valley dark and deep
 With sadness and with doubt.

Three lived because he sought life's hope
 And thought of God's great love,
 And treasured all Christ's blessings here
 And heaven's home above.
 And when the death-call bade his soul
 To heaven's golden shore,
 He went to live with God above
 In peace forevermore.

The Great Commission

Charles E. Burch

After our Lord's resurrection, He gave the great commission:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, 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 alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).

His command is called the *great commission*, due to the enormous task involved in taking the gospel to all nations. It is easy to become discouraged today, because it seems that no one is interested in serving the Lord. Many of us can think back a few years and remember when it was much easier to baptize people into Christ. But it has always been true that when it is hard to reach people in one area, another area opens up. The following is part of a letter from Tex Williams, from World Bible School, in Austin Texas:

"In the West African Country of Nigeria, a student in a Catholic high school began taking a World Bible School Correspondence Course. Other students asked for the course until a large number were involved.

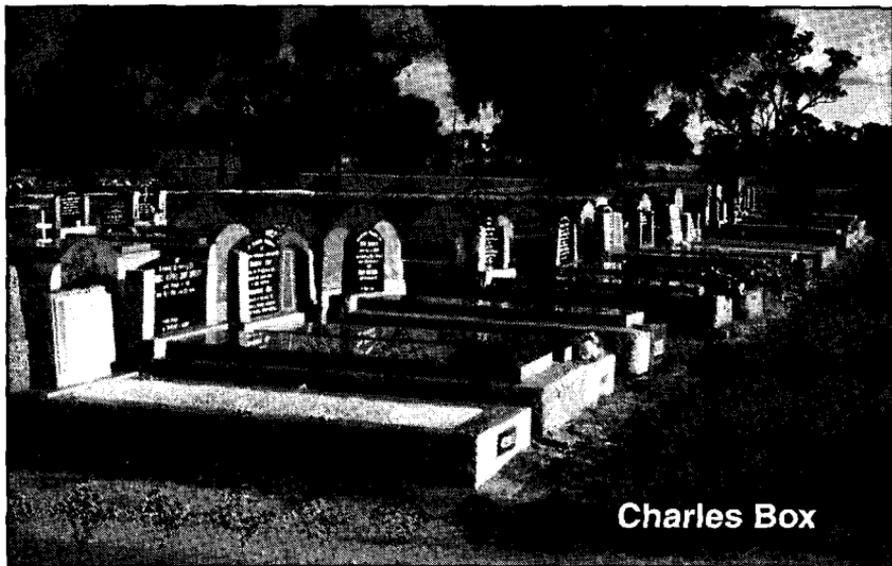
"What the students were learning began to be discussed in their Bible classes. Some of the teaching nuns asked for the WBS course and passed on copies to the local parish priest who also became a student. He wrote WBS and asked for enough copies of the lessons to use in their high school Bible teaching program.

"A local Nigerian evangelist visited the school. After a lot of teaching, he baptized the priest, the nuns and most of the high school students. A New Testament church was begun. Fifteen months later they wrote that they had baptized over 500 new converts and started five new congregations in the area."

Thank God for the power of the gospel of Christ! When it lodges in honest and sincere hearts, it does produce fruit. So let us never become discouraged, but sow the seed at every opportunity. God will give the increase. Think of someone you would like to lead to Christ this year. †

Charles E. Burch, retired preacher of the Gospel, lives in Mobile, Alabama, USA.

DYING WITHOUT GOD



Charles Box

Some person you know and love is going to die unprepared for death and judgment. They will die without God and without hope. And remember these are people who are precious to you. This is the tragedy of all tragedies.

These precious lost ones do not have to perish (2 Peter 3:9). Christ Jesus gave His life to redeem the lost from sin. *"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons"* (Galatians 4:4,5). He lived without sin and then died on a cross to save sinners (Hebrews 2:9). If it was not for the death of Jesus, God would have no choice but to punish all men for sin, but Jesus died as our sin-substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The gospel is God's power to save: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation ..."* (Romans 1:16). You must share this salvation message with as many as you can. Your love, prayer, concern and effort may lead them to the "Lamb of God" so their sins can be forgiven. *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and*

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).

Are you making an honest effort to win the souls of others for Jesus? Do you want to face God in eternity having done any less than your best in reaching the lost? Do you want to sit by and allow people you love, people who are precious to you, people you work with or even strangers, to die without God and without hope? Do you want to look into the cold, lifeless face of a fellow human being and be left with the awful thought that you might have done something to save him or her from hell if only you had tried?

If souls are to be won, specific action must be taken. These are the steps we suggest:

- (1) **Select six people** who, with God's help, you will try to win for Jesus. **Write their names** on a list, a bulletin board in your bedroom, or in a note book in which you can keep notes of your **prayers** for them, your **studies** with them, and the **progress** you feel they are making.

<p>The six are: _____, _____,</p> <p>_____ , _____,</p> <p>_____ , _____.</p>
--

- (2) **Pray** for them daily by name.
- (3) **Encourage** these lost ones to attend the services of the church. Pick them up for the assembly and sit with them during worship.
- (4) **Have them in your home** for a meal and also visit in their home.
- (5) **Study** the Bible with them in an organized way on a set schedule, if possible.
- (6) **Be a true friend** to these lost ones.

Do not give up. Be persistent in the things listed above and in other things you can do to bring these souls to Jesus. *"Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him"* (Psalm 126:5,6). †

Charles Box works with the church in Greenville, Alabama, USA.



Romans 3:1-20

Jerry Bates

1. What advantage did the Jews have over the Gentiles? (vs. 1,2)
2. Would the unbelief of some of the Jews nullify God's promises? (vs. 3,4)
3. Where is the quote in 3:4 found in the Old Testament?
4. Many today contend that God would be unjust if he punished man. What did Paul think of that argument? Is it a true argument? (vs. 5,6)
5. What did some charge Paul with teaching? (v. 8)
6. Where is the quotation in 3:10-12 found in the Old Testament?
7. According to the Scriptures, are there any who are *good*? What does that do to the argument of men that they will be saved because they are good people? (vs. 10-12)
8. When Paul says that no one is righteous, what would it take for man to be righteous? (v. 10)
9. What is the root cause of all the sin in the lives of men? (vs. 17,18)
10. What was the purpose of the law? (v. 19)
11. What did the law bring to men in regard to sin? (v. 20)
12. What is the point of this whole section in regard to man's salvation?

(See inside of back cover for answers.)

What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? **2** Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. **3** For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? **4** Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged." **5** But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) **6** Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? **7** For if the truth of God has increased through my life to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? **8** And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"? — as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. **10** As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; **11** There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. **12** They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one. **13** Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips; **14** whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. **15** Their feet are swift to shed blood; **16** Destruction and misery are in their ways; **17** And the way of peace they have not known. **18** There is no fear of God before their eyes." **19** Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **20** Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:1-20 — New King James Version

NOTE:

This paragraph answers anticipated questions and objections, especially from Jewish readers. After briefly, but yet pointedly, answering the objections, Paul includes numerous Old Testament quotations which prove that all humanity is under sin and, therefore, all stand condemned before the judgment of God.

3 Desires of the Devil

Jimmy Young



The devil hates you and wants to destroy you. Before you go any further, please take time to study these verses (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 4:27, 6:11; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8).

I question at times if some really believe the devil exists. I fear that many think he is a figment of the imagination, or a figure of speech. Folks, he is not a figment of the mind — he is real! He is the evil one!

Satan's desire is to keep you ignorant of God's Word.

If you aren't a Christian, he desires to keep you out of the church. The apostle Paul said, "*Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*" (1 Timothy 1:13). Prior to obeying the Gospel, the devil's desire was fulfilled — Paul was "ignorant" and did bodily harm to the church. But he wasn't alone. The Athenians were worshiping in *ignorance* (Acts 17:23). Times haven't changed; the religious world as a whole is *ignorant*.

Everyone will have to hear, study, and know the truth to obey God (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; John 8:32; James 1:22). The fact remains, if Satan can keep one ignorant, he can keep one lost. He knows the importance of the church (Acts 20:28). He knows Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). He knows if he can keep one out of the church, that person is lost.

The Devil desires to get Christians back into the world.

Christians know that we are *in* the world, but not *of* the world. We are instructed not to love the world (1 John 2:15; James 4:4). It isn't possible to serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Peter gives a horrible picture of those who try. He speaks of the dog and the sow (2 Peter 2:20-22). Remember the prodigal son in Luke 15? Satan knows we cannot continue in sin (Romans 6:1,2; 12:1,2). He knows if he can get one back into the world and keep him there, then that soul will be lost.

Satan desires to render Christians worthless to the Lord and to the church.

His focus is on those who are determined to remain faithful. For them, his goal is to work in such a way that we will be fruitless and worthless to God (2 Timothy 2:26). Often, lack of involvement and discouragement are the tools he uses.

Satan's advice would go like this: "You're a member, that's enough! All you have to do is just live a good moral life. You are too busy to give so much time to the church. You have too many expenses to give more money to the church. Why be concerned about the lost or weak? They have a Bible, and they know where the church meets."

The fact is, all Christians "*ought to be teachers*" (Hebrews 5:12-14). Do not allow the devil to fulfill his desires. *Each Christian must work for the Lord. Each Christian must bear fruit* (John 15:2). Christians must remain faithful to God and to His cause (Philippians 2:12).

You haven't allowed Satan to get to you, I hope. If you have, you must repent. You must remain on guard continually. The devil never gives up (1 Peter 5:8). The only way to stay ahead of him and escape him is to be determined to serve God. Always remember this — **God loves you** (John 3:16), and the **devil hates you** (1 Peter 5:8). If you disappoint anyone, let it be the devil. †

Jimmy Young preaches for the Nettleton Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

The Abundant Life of Stewardship

Demar Elam

Potiphar — an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian — bought Joseph from the Ishmaelites (Genesis 39:1). Joseph was successful in Potiphar's house because God was with him. Potiphar had observed that God blessed Joseph and made all that he did to prosper in his hand. Because of this, Potiphar appointed him overseer of all that was in his house.

Joseph was given a stewardship. He was entrusted with everything that Potiphar owned. Stewardship involves management, overseeing and being in charge of something not your own.

Joseph had been empowered with all the possessions of the Egyptian and with the responsibility and trust that come with it. Stewardship demands faithfulness: *"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful"* (1 Corinthians 4:1,2).

Stewardship involves integrity and accountability: Jesus also said to His disciples: *"There was a certain rich man who had a steward,*

and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him. 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship for you can no longer be steward.'" (Luke 16:1,2)

Joseph was faithful with what had been entrusted to him. He possessed integrity, a characteristic needed by all good stewards. Potiphar's wife cast her eyes on Joseph because he was *"handsome in form and appearance"* (Genesis 39:6). She asked Joseph to lie with her but he refused, saying, *"Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in his house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Genesis 39:8,9) Joseph was faithful regarding the stewardship that Potiphar had given him.

Christian Stewardship

Christians have a stewardship of their earthly possessions. Christ intended for His children to enjoy

the abundant life of stewardship. Jesus said, *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10). Being good stewards of God will bring great happiness to our lives.

Try being a giver rather than a getter. Poor stewardship results from a lack of faith in the promises of God. God has given awesome promises to good and faithful Christian stewards. The first step to abundant living is to realize that God owns everything and has only entrusted His children with a stewardship regarding material possessions (Genesis 14:19; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Job 41:11; Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12; Haggai 2:8). The term "mine" is an accommodative term.

Christians need to pray, "Oh, Lord, increase my faith!" Faithful stewards believe the word of God relating to material blessings. God promised, *"Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first-fruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine"* (Proverbs 3:9,10).

Christians have God's assurance: *"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudg-*

ingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Jesus assures the joy of abundant living by saying, *"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom, for with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you"* (Luke 6:38). Sufficient faith will cause faithful Christians to act, thus receiving the promised blessings. Give and it will be given to you!

God challenged those living in Malachi's day: *"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it"* (Malachi 3:10).

If one is not enjoying the abundant life of stewardship, perhaps he needs to ask himself, "Why? Am I, perhaps, the obstacle to all that God would do for me?" †

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AIDING AND ABETTING

Stan Mitchell

Play an imaginary game with me for a moment. Let's imagine that we live in another time and place, and that we have different friends and acquaintances than we do now.

What would it say about you if you lived in Germany in 1940 and one of your friends was Hermann Goering? What if you lived in Russia in the 1920's and you counted as one of your friends Joseph Stalin? What if you lived in California in the 1960's and one of your friends was Charlie Manson?

"Now wait a moment," you might protest. "Just because we were friends doesn't mean I was guilty of the evil things they did!" And you're right. But friendship with those people would still say something about your character, wouldn't it? Like it or not, our friendships say a lot about us.

"You adulterous people," James declares, "don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?" (James 4:4).

When there is a war going on, it is hard to remain friends with both sides. In our imaginary world, being friends with Winston Churchill would probably put a strain on your relationship with the ubiquitous Mr. and Mrs. Goering. And vice versa. There must have been Christians in James' day who felt they could remain on friendly terms with the "world" and retain their relationship with God.

Being friends with the world has nothing to do with whether or not you are an environmentalist; it refers to society to the extent that it is antagonistic toward God. There is a war going on, and there are casualties. The "body bags" are being brought home all the time; and we speak here, not of something so temporary as physical death, but of spiritual loss. These casualties affect eternity. Little children are led astray by our compromises. Teenagers are influenced by our lack of commitment to Christ. Weak and young Christians are confused by our insistence on fraternizing with the enemy. Is it possible that even we are being unwittingly affected and weakened?

You can't "aid and abet" the enemy in a time of war and expect your own side to look kindly on it. The problem is that we so easily forget what is at stake, and the enemy is very successful at convincing us that we are not at war.

So, who are your friends?

†

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“You Are My Disciples If...”

Charles E. Cobb

The word “if” can be a giant. It can rid us of delusions and bring us face to face with fact.

The fact here is that one cannot be a disciple of Jesus if one does not continue in His (Jesus’) Word (John 8:31). To be a learner/follower of

Christ provides one with the greatest challenge, opportunity, duty, privilege, and hope. All true disciples know of the sweetness and greatness of the Christian life because they follow the teaching of the Word and enjoy the rich and

wonderful blessings of God.

The Word of God is not the object of the disciples' worship, but the God of the Word is the One to be worshipped (John 4:23,24). As disciples are led, counseled, and commanded by the Word of God, they become ever more like Jesus and radiate true discipleship in their daily walk of life.

To be a disciple of Christ provides us with many opportunities to minister. We must want to serve or we cannot be the true disciples of the Savior. The Word teaches us to have this attitude: "*He that is greatest among you shall be your servant*" (Mat-thew 23:11). Again, Jesus said, "*Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many*" (Matthew 20:28).

To enter the world of discipleship, one submits to the will of God by believing, repenting of all sin, confessing faith in the Son of God, and being immersed (baptized) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins. One must follow the teaching of the Word into Christ and then, as a true disciple, continue in the Word until life on earth shall be no more. "*Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10). †

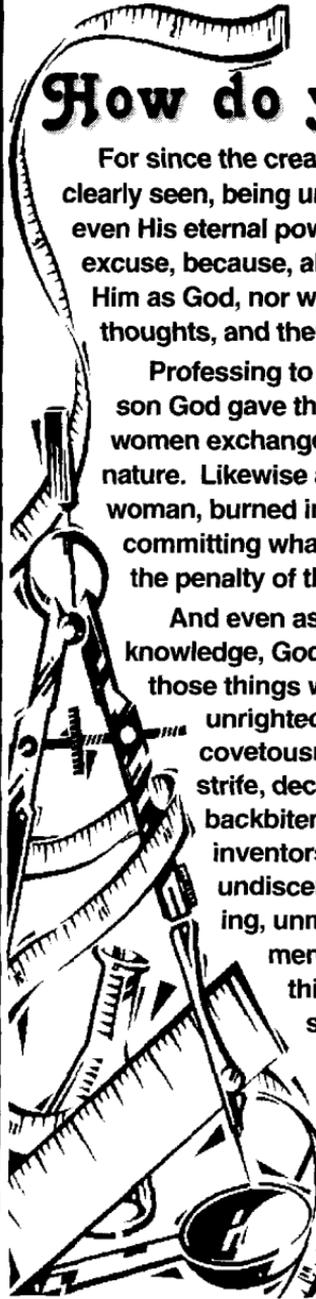
Charles E. Cobb, gospel preacher, is now deceased.

"I'll Live for God; I'll Die for God"

I saw the above quote on a man's cap as I stopped for dinner. And the very first thing I thought was, "Would he really?" And then I remembered that the apostle Peter made the same statement to Christ, just in a different terminology. Would I die for God, and am I living for God? These are very sobering questions.

How closely are we following to God? Are we followers as Peter was? One of the first things we notice about Peter's fall was that he followed afar off. Just how close do we have to follow to be followers? When I am 5 miles behind a car that I have never seen, am I still following? Too many have never been close enough to Christ to know who He is and what He really is like. We say we know Him, but we don't act like Him. We say we know Him, but we don't care for others like He does. Are we followers?

— via Farmington
Church of Christ



How do you measure up?

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools For this reason God gave them up to vile passions, for even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:20-32



HEY! YOU KIDS!



So, what is your goal in life? Is it to have money? Power? Love? Respect?

Whatever it is, I'm sure it is evident in how you *act*. The thing is that whatever your goals are in life will ultimately reflect on your name.

You see, your name is your own. When you pay for something with a credit card you are asked to sign the receipt, that is to put your name on an agreement that you will pay. When you build a solid credit history it tells people that you are *reliable* and it makes your name more trust worthy.

What's in a Name?

PFC Alex Gibson

I am an infantryman in the U.S. Army, so when I am out and about I must act in a way that brings respect to my position. But this is a two-way street: By serving in the military I am also automatically given the respect which that position merits.

When people who know you hear your personal name spoken, they get a picture of you in their head and will react with respect or disapproval. So why is a name important? Because it is the label that identifies *you*. Sadly, many people do not realize this today. They take the line of "What's in a name? 'That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.'" But that is dead wrong! Names *are* important. Your own name is a personal title, identifying you and separating you from everyone else, and you should be proud of it. Even in heaven names will still be a thing to be valued, as God will give us a new name, known only to ourselves and to Him (Revelation 2:17).

Shouldn't this principle of valuing and safe-guarding the name apply to the title "Christian" as well? But that name is one that few seem to care for

today. Many people will say they're Christian just to avoid admitting they don't have a religious background. When did they become ashamed or unconcerned about their profession of being "Christian"? I don't know about you, but when I was baptized I was born into a family of believers, not a group of undecided people too lazy to bother with seeking God.

Now I started this discussion by asking what your goal in life is. Whatever your goal is — that is, whatever you want in life — will dictate how you *act*. Look at those who are powerful. True, they have power, but they must use it to fend off the enemies they made while gaining that power, be it military, political, or otherwise. Look at those with money. Isn't it strange that they must spend a great deal of their time, effort, and money trying to keep others from taking their cash?

Or how about love and respect? You would think these safe, yet people are always floating from relationship to relationship, or doing one stunt after another to get the attention of others.

These are a few of the goals in and of the world. So what should a Christian's goal be? The answer most people would say is "to get to heaven". And most would also be expecting some of that heavenly benefits right here in this world.

WRONG! The correct answer is "God". God, Himself, should be the goal of every Christian. Follow me on this one. If heaven is a place of comfort and bliss and my goal is to get there after I die, am I not putting *my* satisfaction first? But if my goal is *God* — namely a relationship with Him, now and in the next life — then it doesn't matter if I'm comfortable or not in this world, as long as I'm with Him. Sounds like something a love-struck person would say; right? Well, are we not told to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength? Then why should we care if we are comfortable at all, if only we can be with God?

If, then, you abandon your search for *comfort* and make *God* your goal, you are going to get hit with a few things. First come some hard times because you have entered into a war with Satan. Stay focused on God, you'll live, and as long as you're alive you've got something to work with. The wonderful thing is that after the hard times you will find you've gotten stronger because of your trials.

What happens next is that you will find you learned something as well. When you put your faith in action and lean on it, you will grow and God will help you. In fact, the more you make Him your goal in life and lean on Him, the more He'll be there for you. Or, rather, the more you will realize how much *He*

has always been there for you, and at some point you may feel silly looking back and realizing just how blind you were to Him in the past.

Christians are supposed to be held to a higher standard. They are to act as God would want them to act. That is part of taking the name. God will help you, but you owe it to Him to bring honor to His name. The greatest commandment is to love Him with all that you are and have, make Him the goal of your life. Treat it like a long-distance relationship.

The problem with long distance relationships today is that people are not patient anymore. They want instant gratification ... like, *now*. Bear with me, but as a soldier I would rather have a patient and faithful girl at my side than one who needed to be continually entertained and would have problems with being faithful were I not there. God wants that kind of faithfulness from us. However, God loves us enough to be faithful even when we are not. He understands that we are but shadows and dust and we are weak. True, I fall often, but the important thing is not that I fall, but that I keep trying. If I was dating a girl who kept cheating on me, but coming back each time, I should as a Christian forgive and take her back, because God does the same for me.

Right. Well, I'm done for now. Mull these things over for a bit and

see if you can apply them. I'll write more later, If you want to send me some feed back I'll leave my address. God bless. †

Alex Gibson's email address is zex1@hotmail.com

WHAT IS A SQUARE?

Everybody knows a few squares. I know one. He's that strong, polite, God-fearing young fellow who freely admits that he prays, weeps for joy, plays with little kids, kisses his mother, goes to Dad for advice, thinks old folks are beautiful, and blushes. He wears jeans he can bend in, puts savings in the bank, cuts his hair, likes school, can't imitate all the television comics, avoids dirty discussions about sex, goes to worship, drinks milk, drives 30 miles an hour in a thirty mile per hour zone, is in bed by ten, won't smoke, doesn't dance, and expects purity in girls.

As a result of his odd and outlandish behavior, he suffers the loss of gang companionship; but he gains the gratitude and devotion of his parents, and he earns school honors, family respect, unjaded imagination and spiritual security.

I know him; he is a strange fellow, but I like him.

— Selected

AT YOUR HOUSE . . .

What priorities will be established in your children when ...

- * You are early for their ball game, but late for worship?
- * You check their homework regularly, but never check on their Bible class lessons?
- * You won't let them miss school even though they don't want to go, but let them miss church worship services?
- * You won't let them stay up late on school nights, but let them stay up late on Saturday night?
- * You know the names of all their school teachers, but do not know who is teaching their Bible classes, nor what they are studying?
- * You will serve as room mother or volunteer at school, but will not help with classes, activities, or programs which involve spiritual matters?
- * You attend open house at their school, but do not visit their class room in Bible school, or even know where the class meets?
- * You support, attend, or even participate in their sports activities (baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, etc.) but regularly miss activities involving the church?
- * You will not go on vacation during school days, but go on vacation during a VBS, a lectureship, or a gospel meeting?
- * You go to work even though you do not feel like it, but stay at home on Sunday when you feel the same way?

With such situations prevailing, what priorities are being established in the hearts of our children? †

— Anonymous



Marriage Is for Life

Dalton Key



From a yellowed country newspaper of yesteryear comes this curious blurb, found buried among similar inquiries, under the heading, "Personal. Bachelor with forty acres of excellent land would like to make acquaintance of lady with tractor; matrimony in mind. Please send picture of tractor."

We're left to wonder whether the prospective groom was more interested in marriage or farm machinery.

Marriage should be looked upon as something profoundly serious. When a man and woman enter into marriage, they are making a life-changing, lifelong commitment. The selection of a spouse is not a choice to be made lightly, as one might decide upon a suit of clothes or a new car. Choosing a marriage partner requires maturity, judgment, much thought, and much prayer.

We must admit that ours is a world that views marriage lightly. Too many couples enter blindly into

what might be termed "disposable marriages", in which spouses are discarded or traded with as much frequency and as little thought as professional athletes.

However, the Bible teaches otherwise. Jesus instructed, "*Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*" (Matthew 19:4-6).

If a tractor is what you have in mind, don't lose sleep over your decision. Tractors can be replaced. But when the time comes to select a husband or wife, be careful! A marriage partner is chosen "till death do us part". †

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

“Train Up a Child”

Lewis G. Hale

“*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*” (Proverbs 22:6). This is a very familiar scripture and is often used to prove that some parents failed in their duty when some of their offspring go astray. Misconduct of a child may mean that a parent *has* failed in duty, but not always. The general rule is that we do not depart from our training. Any other result must be regarded as exceptional.

Parents must not discount the value of early training. Many parents excuse the lack of such molding by claiming the child is too young for it. Of course, they brag about how smart their children are, and at the same time protest they are too young to be trained in right conduct! A child can be very cute while misbehaving. He may be young, but he picks up on it quickly when the parent or grandparent cannot conceal his amusement at such

capers. He may not yet have learned to talk or walk, but he reads your “body language” quite well.

Our children are not computers that can be programed, with the output as a foregone conclusion. God allows us to make choices, good or bad. Sadly, we are very wilful and often make bad choices.

Most of us see the words, “*When he is old, he will not depart from it*”, but overlook the stipulation “train”. Many parents do a lot of talking and little training. We must *tell* children what they need to know. But, we must do more. We need to provide *experiences* which *put into practice* what we *tell* them. They need to be *trained* to act right and also *trained* to feel right. When our correct knowledge and our emotions run parallel, we will do right.

Let’s *train* our children. †

Lewis G. Hale works with the Southwest Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA.



The most beautiful sight from the pulpit is a whole family seated together in a pew. The worship service is not a convention to which a family should send a delegate.



Have you heard of the 50-50-90 Rule? Here's how it works. Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.



There's this woman who is always late. I guess she really can't help it, though. It runs in her family. Her ancestors arrived on the Juneflower.



If you do not learn from your mistakes, making them is a total loss.



Plan ahead! It was not raining when Noah built the ark.

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter with me on my afternoon rounds. The various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, unfailingly intrigued her.

One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"



Husbands have never been accused of being too smart, but I know one fellow who responded rather wisely to his wife's complaint that he forgot her birthday by saying, "How do you expect me to remember your birthday when you never look any older?"



When we were kids we didn't have many toys or games to entertain ourselves with, so we had to be creative and come up with ideas of our own. One of our favorites was to catch some worms, tape them to the sidewalk, and watch the birds get hernias.

A man was chosen for jury duty, and he wanted very much to be dismissed from serving. He tried every excuse he could think of, but none of them worked. On the day of the trial he decided to give it one more shot. As the trial was about to begin he asked if he could approach the bench.

“Your Honor,” he said, “I must be excused from this trial because I am prejudiced against the defendant. I took one look at that man in his fancy blue suit and with those beady eyes and that dishonest face, and I said to myself, ‘He’s a crook! He’s guilty, guilty, guilty!’ So, your Honor, I cannot possibly stay on this jury!”

The annoyed judge replied, “Get back in the jury box. That man is the defendant’s lawyer.”



We had a big family reunion recently, and I had a chance to visit with my cousin Claude. He told me that he hasn’t spoken to his wife in years. I asked him why. He said that he doesn’t want to interrupt her.



Law of the Telephone: If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal.

One day I happened to hear part of a religious program on the radio. The preacher was a wise, grandfatherly type with a calm reassuring voice. A lady called in to pour her heart out to the preacher. She had obviously been crying. She said, “Preacher, I was born blind, and I’ve been blind all my life. I don’t mind so much being blind, but I have some well-meaning friends who tell me that if I had more faith I could be healed.”

The preacher asked her, “Tell me, do you carry one of those white canes?”

“Yes, I do,” she answered.

“Well then,” he said, “I would suggest that the next time someone says that to you, hit them over the head with the cane. Then tell them, ‘If you had more faith that wouldn’t hurt!’”



Just a few of the less-than-brilliant actual headlines that have appeared:

- ◆ Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says
- ◆ Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
- ◆ Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
- ◆ War Dims Hope for Peace
- ◆ Fasting and Prayer Conference Includes Meals.

The Promises of God, A Lesson in Scripture and Song

Loy Mitchell

Introduction

- A. A promise is an oral or written agreement to do or not to do something.
- B. A vow is a solemn pledge or promise usually made to God or to a spouse.
- C. Has God made promises? Does He keep them? What are they?
- D. Do we make promises to God and others?

I. God Has Made Many Promises.

- A. He promises help to endure (James 1:12; 5:12). **Song:** "Blessed Assurance"; **Song:** "Be Still and Know"
- B. He promises to hear our prayers (Psalm 20:1; Luke 11:9). **Song:** "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind"; **Song:** "Did You Think to Pray?"
- C. He promises blessings (Malachi 3:10; Matthew 6:33). **Song:** "Be With Me, Lord"; **Song:** "God Is So Good".
- D. He promises cleansing from sin (Isaiah 1:18; I John 1:7). **Song:** "Though Your Sins Be As Scarlet"; **Song:** "Sunlight".
- E. He promises comfort (Isaiah 51:12; 2 Corinthians 1:3). **Song:** "Whispering Hope"; **Song:** "There Is a Place of Quite Rest".

II. God Keeps All His Promises (2 Peter 3:1-9). **Song:** "Standing on the Promises".

Conclusion

- A. God keeps His promises.
- B. Do we keep ours?

Loy Mitchell, lifetime missionary to Zimbabwe, makes annual preaching trips back to that country. He lives in Dyersburg, Tennessee, USA.

**Israel's Journey to Canaan,
A Type of The Church's Journey to Heaven**

(1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

Nation of Israel

John Thiesen

The Church

Bondage in Egypt (Exodus 3:7,8)

Pharaoh the Oppressor (Exodus 1:5-11)

Moses Sent as Deliverer (Exodus 3:10)

Passover Lamb Slain (Exodus 12:21-23)

Crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 14:28-30)

Israel in the Wilderness (Exodus 19:1,6)

Covenant and Law (Exodus 24:3,4,7,8)

Tabernacle Worship (Hebrews 9:1-4)

God Met their Needs

(1 Corinthians 10:3,4)

Temptation — Some Fell

(1 Corinthians 10:5-12)

Faithful Entered Canaan (Joshua 1:1-3)

Bondage in Sin (John 8:31-36)

Oppressed by Satan (Hebrews 2:14,15)

Christ Saves from Sin (Acts 13:38,39)

Christ "Our Passover"

(John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7)

Baptism into Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1,2)

The Church in the World (1 Peter 2:9-11)

The New Covenant (Hebrews 5:6,7; 9:15)

Christian Worship

(John 4:21-24; Acts 2:41,42)

God Meets our Needs (Matthew 6:31-33)

Tempted — Some Fall

(1 Corinthians 5:11)

Faithful Will Enter Heaven

(Matthew 6:19,20; 2 Peter 1:10,11)

Changes that Occur During and After Baptism

Submitted by Reuben Emperado

Before Baptism	After Baptism
A Change of Condition	
Lost — Luke 15:4-7, 8-10, 11-32	Saved — Mark 16:15,16
Sinner — Romans 3:23	Washed from sins — Acts 22:16
Guilty — Romans 3:19	Forgiven — Acts 2:38
Object of God's wrath — Ephesians 2:3; 5:6	Object of God's love — 1 John 4:19
Enemy — Romans 5:10	Reconciled — Romans 5:11
A Change of Location (Ephesians 2:1-14)	
Dead — Ephesians 2:1	Alive — Romans 6:1-11
Separataed from Christ — Ephesians 2:12	In Christ and in His Body — Ephesians 2:19
Excluded from the Commonwealth of Israe l — Ephesians 2:12	Fellow heir with the saints — Ephesians 2:19
Far — Ephesians 2:13	Brought near — Ephesians 2:13
In darkness — 1 Peter 2:9	In the Light — 1 Peter 2:9
Under Satan's Dominion — Acts 26:18	Member of Christ Kingdom — Colossians 2:13,14
Separated from God — Ephesians 2:12	Reconciled — Ephesians 2:16
A Change of Servitude (Romans 6:15-18)	
Servant of sin — Romans 6:17	Servant of righteousness — Romans 6:18
A Change of Relationship (Colossians 2:13,14; Acts 26:18)	
Under Dominion of Satan — Colossians 1:13	Under Dominion of Christ — Romans 6:22
Sons of Darkness — Acts 26:18	Sons of God — Romans 8:14

The First Gospel Sermon

Albert Gardner

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know ..." (Acts 2:22).

The first of anything is a model and sets an example for all that will follow. The first automobile was good, but there have been continual improvements in later models. The example of Adam and Eve produced the first sin, which should cause us to want the blessings of God through obedience.

The first gospel sermon set the example for all sermons in content, depth, and truthfulness, which will make people free. The apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), which enabled them to reveal the message of God without error. This also gave them power to perform miracles, among which was speaking in languages they did not know and had not studied, yet the people could understand in their mother tongue (Acts 2:6-8).

What is the meaning of this? Some said they were drunk, but Peter said the apostles were not

drunken, but *"this is that which was spoken by Joel"* (Acts 2:16). After answering this charge, it was time for the first gospel sermon to begin. Most of us have heard many sermons, but the first sermon is important for several reasons.

This sermon was different because the speaker was inspired. The content of the lesson would be spoken many times thereafter, but this was the first time the world had heard such a sermon.

The first point was Acts 2:22. *"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."* When Jesus was on the earth, He did many miracles designed to cause people to believe in Him.

The second point had to do with the death, burial, and resurrec-

tion of Christ. They had killed Christ, but God raised Him up (verse 24). Peter even quoted David and showed that he referred to Christ. *"He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption"* (Acts 2:31).

This entire sermon was designed to bring the hearers to believe in Christ as the Son of God, and it did just that. *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36). Once a person has heard such a dynamicsermon as this, he is compelled to make some kind of move, for he can never be the same again. He can never be neutral. Jesus said we are *"for or against"* (Matthew 12:30).

"When they heard this ...," that is, when they heard Peter's powerful sermon about Christ, *"they were pricked in their hearts ... (which means they believed it), they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* (verse 37).

This is the first time this question was asked in the Christian Age. We must make sure we get the right

answer to the question, *"What must I do to be saved?"* It is a life-or-death matter — an eternal matter.

Peter did not tell the hearers to "believe only", though many today would give people that answer. The old creed books read, "Wherefore the doctrine of the justification by **faith only** is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort." This is in direct conflict with a clear statement in the Bible. *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (James 2:24)

Peter did not tell his hearers to have a special experience, get a certain feeling, or wait for the Holy Spirit to speak to them. His reply was unmistakably clear. *"Then Peter said unto them, 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"* (Acts 2:38).

The first sermon caused people to ask what to do to be saved. They were told to *"repent and be baptized for the remission of sins."* Three thousand gladly received the Word, were baptized, and the Lord added them to the church (Acts 2:41,47). What will you do? †

Albert Gardner is a gospel preacher living in Arkansas, USA.

**Christ paid a debt He didn't owe
to satisfy a debt we couldn't pay.**

The Role of Works in Salvation

Wayne Jackson

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ... But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:14,18,26).

The term “works” has become a pejorative expression within the Protestant community. “Works plays no role in the plan of salvation,” it is alleged. A major obstacle to that position is the discussion found in James 2:14ff, where the inspired writer affirms a vital connection between faith and works in God’s redemptive plan. However, those who believe in “faith only” contend that the “works” under review in James’ epistle are those that *result from* salvation, not works that are *preliminary* to redemption. In this assumption they seriously err.

The fact is, the inspired writer is speaking of a *divine principle* that has been operative in all ages of Biblical history, one that applies to both sinners and saints alike. This

principle governs the entire panorama of redemptive history. Note the following:

(1) James begins his affirmation by raising this question (if we may paraphrase): “Can the *kind of faith* that is void of works **save** a person?” He did not ask: “Can a faith without works **demonstrate** salvation?” There is a dramatic difference. Too, the manner in which the question is framed in the Greek Testament reveals that a negative answer is expected. “No, a faith that is unaccompanied by works (i.e., obedience) cannot save!” Observe the significance of James’ use of “save” in 1:21; 4:12; 5:20. The term *sozo*, as used in this passage, denotes to “save/preserve from eternal death”, according to Danker in his Greek-English lexicon.

(2) James introduces two Old Testament examples to illustrate his proposition that faith, in order to save, must express itself in obedience — in *all* cases.

First, there is the mention of Abraham (from the Patriarchal period), the man who was living by obedient faith even before his offering of Isaac (cf. Hebrews 11:8,16). And yet, by the offering of his son, he was “justified” (verse 21). The text does not speak of a pronouncement of a justification already embraced, but of God’s act of declaring him righteous because of his obedience in *this* instance (see Acts 13:39; Romans 3:28).

Second, there was Rahab (from the Mosaic regime), a pagan woman who was “justified” (verse 25) when her faith in Israel’s God led her to conceal the Hebrew spies. Through providential events she had been instructed that the Israelites were Jehovah’s people; these men thus were to be protected (cf. Joshua 2:9ff). In fact, the writer of Hebrews contrasts Rahab with the Canaanites — who were “disobedient” (11:31; cf. “harden” Joshua 11:19,20).

James 2:14ff has been treated shamelessly by numerous religious people, because it strikes at the heart of the “faith only” theology. Martin Luther went so far as to reject the inspiration of the book.

“For as the body without the

spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). †

Wayne Jackson is the editor of *Christian Courier* (<http://www.christiancourier.com/>) and is a preacher in Stockton, California, USA.

An Accident?

There once was a cowboy who wanted to buy a life insurance policy. He contacted an agent and made his request. The agent had a few questions for the cowboy. He began by asking, “Have you ever had an accident?”

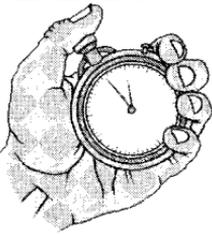
The cowboy replied, “No. But last summer a bronco kicked me and broke two of my ribs. Then a couple of years ago a rattlesnake bit me on the ankle.”

The agent interrupted the cowboy. “Wouldn’t you call those accidents?”

“Naw,” the cowboy replied. “They did it on purpose.”

Accidents do happen, but no one will accidentally get to heaven. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. In order to go to heaven, one must *want* to go and be *willing to do* as God says, to insure having a future home there. Many believe that heaven will be theirs when they die, but few are willing to obey what God says in becoming a Christian and living a faithful life thereafter.

— **Eddie Finch**



5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY RECIPE FOR JOY

Paula Bates

Romans 15:13 "Now may the God of hope fill you with all _____, that you may abound in _____ by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Galatians 5:22,23 "But the _____ is love, _____, long-suffering, kindness, _____, faithfulness, gentleness, _____."

James 1:2,3 "My brethren, count it all _____ when you fall into various _____, knowing that the _____ produces _____."

Psalms 5:11 "But let all those _____ who put their _____ in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You _____ them; Let those also who _____ Your name be _____ in You."

Jeremiah 15:16 "And Your word was to me the _____ and _____ of my heart; For I am called by _____, O LORD God of hosts."

1 Peter 1:8,9 "Though now you do not see Him, yet _____, you _____ with _____ and full of _____, receiving the end of your faith — the _____ of your souls."



Romans 15:13: joy and peace in believing; hope
Galatians 5:22: fruit of the Spirit; joy; peace; goodness; long-suffering
James 1:2: joy; trials; testing of your faith; patience
Psalms 5:11: rejoice; trust; defend; love; joyful
Jeremiah 15:16: joy; rejoicing; Your name;
1 Peter 3:10: believing; rejoice; joy inexpressible; glory; salvation

What About the Sabbath?

Gary Workman

Why should we not continue to observe the Sabbath since God instituted it at creation and since it was said to be a perpetual ordinance forever?

It is true that a Sabbath rest was mentioned in connection with creation, but not as an ordinance given to man. Let us look at Genesis 2:2,3:

"And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made."

Notice that the text says it was **God** who rested on the seventh day of the creation week. There is absolutely no mention of commanding Adam and Eve and their posterity to rest on the seventh day. The Sabbath was not given as an ordinance for man until the nation of Israel had been delivered from Egypt and was on the way to Mount Sinai (Exodus 16:22-30). A reading of the text will reveal that the Israelites knew nothing about it until Moses informed them. Shortly afterward, God inscribed the Sabbath command on tables of stone as part of the ten commandments

(Exodus 20:8-11). Later, as Moses was about to recite the commandments again to the people of Israel, he told them, "*Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb (Sinai). Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day*" (Deuteronomy 5:2,3).

It could not be any plainer than this that the Sabbath command was never given to people before it was given to Israel. But to drive the point home, Moses told the Israelites *why* they were given that command (verse 15):

*"And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: **Therefore** Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."*

As for the second part of the question, it is true that the Sabbath was said to be a "perpetual covenant" but for "the children of Israel"; God said, "*It is a sign between me and children of Israel*

for ever" (Exodus 31:16,17).

Two things need to be observed here. First, the passage says it was for "Israel" rather than mankind in general. The Sabbath command was a perpetual covenant for Israel because of being a part of the Ten Commandments, the written expression of God's covenant with them (Deuteronomy 4:13; 9:9-11,15). When Israel ceased as the people of God, that covenant ceased as well (2 Corinthians 3:6,7,12-14). So Jewish Christians were discharged from observing the Mosaic law (Romans 7:6) — the one that prohibited coveting, the Ten Commandments — in which was also embedded the law concerning keeping the Sabbath (verse 7).

Second, the word "forever" (also translated "everlasting" in some passages) simply means "for an age". Many things connected with the Mosaic law were said to be this, not just the Sabbath. Notice, for example, that there was "the covenant of an everlasting priesthood" (Numbers 25:13), yet in the New Testament we learn that the priesthood (as well as the entire law) has now been "changed" so that Christ, who could not have been a priest under the Mosaic law, can now serve as our High Priest (Hebrews 7:12). With the coming of the New Covenant, God made the first one "old" so that it could vanish away (Hebrews 8:8-13).

God Himself had it prophesied that the Sabbath would cease. "*I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts*" (Hosea 2:11).

Amos said this would happen when the sun would be darkened in the middle of the day and there would be mourning for an only son. "*And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son ...*" (Amos 8:5,9,10).

This is an obvious reference to the death of Jesus (Matthew 27:45). In that death, Jesus nailed the Mosaic law, including the Sabbath law, to the cross: "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*" (Colossians 2:14). Thus, that obsolete law has no bearing on Christians or the practice of Christianity today (verse 16). We are free, under the new law of Christ, our Lord. †

Gary Workman works in behalf of the cause of Christ in Ukraine but makes his home in Mesquite, Texas, U.S.A.

Questions About the Role of Women

Jimmy Jividen

A much-discussed question in religious circles concerns the role of women in the church. There is conflict between apostolic teachings and the contemporary culture. The Bible says: *"Let the women keep silent in the churches"* (1 Corinthians 14:34).

The issue is not about the spiritual worth of women, their importance in society, or their relationship to God. It is about the way God created gender and how He ordered it. Some would question that *"women keep silent in the church"* is a passage that is applicable today.

Is it chauvinism? No, it merely reflects the order God established at the beginning (Genesis 3:16).

Does it mean that a woman is spiritually inferior? No, she

is the final and finest of all creation. She is to make up for what is lacking in man (Genesis 2:18).

Is it just a first-century cultural thing? No, it comes by the authority of the Lord Himself. Paul said, *"If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I wrote to you are the Lord's commandment"* (1 Corinthians 14:37).

Is rejecting or ignoring this teaching so important? Yes. Jesus said, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him, the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day"* (John 12:48). †

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

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD?

Randy Kea

The phrase, "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*" appears at least three times in the Bible (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13). In Acts 2, Peter quotes Joel's prophecy of the beginning of the gospel age as being fulfilled that day (Acts 2:14-21). Paul uses it to show that both Jew and Gentile must now be saved the same way (Romans 10:12-18).

Calling on the Lord's name is not just saying, "Lord, Lord". Jesus warned that such words were not enough to be saved. "*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

Calling on the name of the Lord is not just believing on Him, because Paul indicated that *the believer is the one who calls*. Thus, believing and calling are not the same acts (Romans 10:13,14). Actually, "calling" and "obeying" are the same according to Romans 10:13 and 16.

In Acts 2, Peter told his audience how to call on the Lord to be saved — "*Repent and be baptized*

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:21,38). This phrase is fully defined in Acts 22:16; "*And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" †

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

Jesus Christ

**The LIGHT for those
in darkness.**

**The WAY for those
stumbling and lost.**

**The HOPE for those
separated by sin.**

**The TRUTH for those
surrounded by lies.**

**The LIFE for those who
face death.**

**The Solid ROCK in times
of distress.**

**The PEACE THAT PASSES
ALL UNDERSTANDING
for troubled minds
and hearts.**

— Author Unknown

How Can I Grow as a Christian?

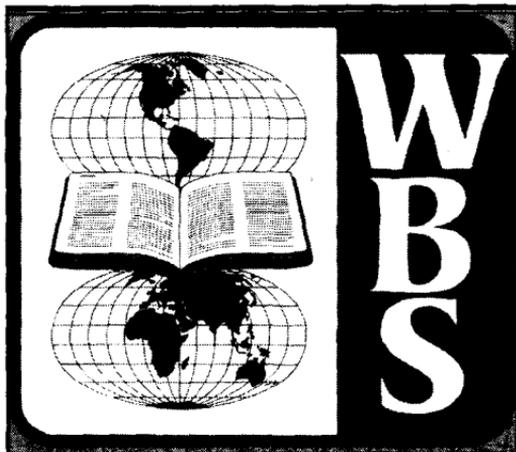
Ken Tyler

“I am trying to grow as a Christian. What are important things for me to do to stay on the right track?”

1. **Christians practice the “golden rule”.** *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”* (Matthew 7:12).
2. **Christians put the Lord and His kingdom (the church) first.** *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matthew 6:33).
3. **Christians study the Bible regularly.** *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”* (1 Peter 2:2).
4. **Christians attend every service possible.** *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:25).
5. **Christians pray regularly.** *“Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17,18).
6. **Christians are concerned about their influence.** *“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world”* (Philippians 2:15).
7. **Christians are concerned about the souls of others and do what they can to get the Gospel to them.** *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:26).

You will grow as a Christian if you will pay close attention to these seven crucial areas. †

Ken Tyler is the preacher for the church of Christ in Arab, Alabama, USA.



World Bible School

**John Reese,
Director**

The History of World Bible School

The story of World Bible School began long before that name was adopted. Bible correspondence, of course, has been used for many years. In one sense, it began when God told Moses to write His message down for future generations to read and follow. Modern Bible correspondence flourished after the invention of the printing press. Many groups have used printed correspondence with varying degrees of success. Often their method involved a staff working in an office where the sending, receiving and grading of courses took place.

World Bible School has all the basic elements essential to correspondence, with this major difference: The corresponding takes place in homes, church buildings and personal offices across the Christian brotherhood, primarily from North America. Rather than a limited professional staff, the teachers are a seemingly endless number of everyday Christians. They and their congregations purchase the Bible courses at cost and do the volunteer work that teaches multitudes of people in almost every nation on earth. Today at least 2,000,000 correspondence students are studying the Bible with thousands of these WBS volunteers. Such an impressive teamwork, however, did not come about quickly or easily. For many years it remained a dream, which God nurtured and until it gradually grew into its current form. Here is a brief account of how the dream became reality.

The founder of World Bible School was Jimmie Lovell (1896-1984), a business man who lived in California. He worked for a chemical company

and sold its line of explosive products. Jimmie's highest pursuit, however, had to do with the dynamite of the Gospel. Wherever he went, he shared God's word and advanced mission work, especially promoting evangelistic fervor through his own series of newspapers. In 1937, he launched a paper called the *West Coast Christian* in which he explored the idea of using correspondence more widely. Jimmie often helped to raise funds for various evangelistic efforts, including helping missionaries to have Bibles and courses for their work.



Jimmie Lovell

In 1944, during World War II, Jimmie added another project that would become pivotal for the future.

Many Christians were concerned for the spiritual welfare of their members who had been drafted into the armed forces and were serving in various parts of the world. Jimmie provided funds to Gordon Turner at Lawrence Avenue church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, to print Bible correspondence for members in the military.

Through an amazing series of events, these courses reached C.A.O. Essien, a retired policeman in Nigeria. He had nearly given up on Christianity as a practical religion because every group he visited claimed to follow the Bible while teaching and practicing things quite different from what he read in the Bible. In these courses from churches of Christ, Essien found teaching that matched his own studies. This confirmed for him that biblical Christianity was possible, and he immediately taught many others. Christians in Nashville received reports from Essien of a major Nigerian movement taking place toward New Testament Christianity. The Nashville church leaders asked Eldred Echols and Boyd Reese, two American missionaries in Southern Africa, to investigate. In 1950 they flew to West Africa, met with many of the new converts, and confirmed that Essien and his trainees had brought some 10,000 others to Christ. The reports from



C.A.O. Essien, a retired policeman in Nigeria, with his wife and baby.

Nigeria showed the great potential of correspondence teaching, especially when it connected American teachers with the high receptivity of Nigeria and similar nations.

Many imaginations were ignited by the ongoing Nigerian success. Jimmie Lovell particularly caught the vision of what was possible when members shared their faith through correspondence. That maturing vision found its best voice in 1962 when Jimmie launched his new missions paper, *Action*, which continues to this day under the slightly modified title *Action!* The first issue began with this prayer: "God, my Father, I pray that Thy blessing may be upon the work of this little paper.... [May it] be the means through which thousands of souls in all parts of the earth may come to know the Lord." How prophetic that prayer now seems to have been!

In 1972, Jimmie and his wife Vivian, with their co-workers Howard and Margaret Cox, started a correspondence teaching program at the Torrance church of Christ in California. They received 100 African names from Richard Kruse and Doris Pennick, and 100 Caribbean names from Jolly Meyers. The Torrance program grew as these seed students referred their friends and neighbors.

Others also began programs. Based on these experiences, the July 1973 issue of *Action* ran the headline "World Bible School All-Church

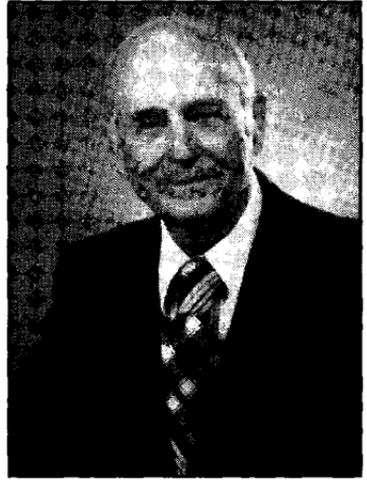
Involvement,” with the sub-head “Setting Church on Fire.” It developed the plan for churches across North America to correspond worldwide. This was the first time the name “World Bible School” appeared in such a prominent way. For this reason we count 1973 as the official beginning of *World Bible School*. By that measure, and by his own reckoning, Jimmie Lovell began his greatest work in his 77th year, after a lifetime already full of dynamic service in God’s kingdom.

Over the next two years, student enrollment reached 400,000. Beginning in 1975, the earlier *Light of the World* courses by James Tolle were replaced with the WBS course (often called “the Red Six Lesson course”) edited by Leonard Mullens. In time two more courses, “The Church” and “The Christian Life”, were added to form WBS’ early trilogy. In 1976, the logo first appeared on WBS literature. Now familiar to millions around the globe, the logo depicts an open Bible set between the Western and Eastern hemispheres of the world, with the WBS initials in vertical orientation.

As more and more volunteered to teach by correspondence, offices for ordering material were set up in the Los Angeles area of California (that office has since moved to Mission Viejo, California), in White Bluff, Tennessee, and in Garland, Texas. The latter, like the others, were manned entirely by volunteers for many years. Danny and Donna Compton, for example, began in 1976 to use their own house in Garland for handling large inventories and many orders for WBS materials. After Danny’s death, Donna continued this service, eventually accepting some support when there was no other alternative. Other volunteers included Ernest and Erin Gammon. After Ernest retired from military service, they devoted all their time between 1974 and 1999 to promoting WBS at lectureships, to training WBS teachers, and to starting WBS programs in congregations across the United States. They used their personal funds to cover all of the expenses of traveling and representing WBS.

By 1978 Jimmie was over 80 years of age. His friend Reuel Lemmons, who had long been an editor for Christian papers, helped with the writing and producing of *Action*. Thus began the move of *Action* to Austin, Texas, where Reuel lived. Also at Jimmie’s request, Jake Coppinger of Visalia, California, became the first supported American to coordinate WBS follow-up. He traveled extensively and set up a variety of methods and programs in various countries.

At the age of 87 Jimmie Lovell, who was often called “the man of action,” went home to receive his crown. That year, 1984, The WBS Board asked Reuel Lemmons to take Jimmie’s place as the Director of *World Bible School*. Reuel, however, was already advanced in age and experiencing health problems. He soon brought R. H. (Tex) Williams to Austin as the Assistant Director. Tex and his wife Mary Jane had served as long-time missionaries in South Africa, then as missions trainers and promoters with **Sunset School of Preaching and Missions** in Lubbock, Texas. That same year, 1985, John and Beth Reese became the first American missionaries on the field to devote full time to WBS follow up. They developed models for follow-up that were used across Southern Africa and beyond.



Reuel Lemmons

In 1987, Tex Williams was appointed Director of WBS. During the nearly two decades of his leadership many developments took place, including the adding of staff members. At Tex’ invitation, the Reeses moved from South Africa to Austin in 1991. Beginning in 1993, John wrote and published WBS’ new curriculum called the *Master Series*. He also assisted with student

recruiting and follow-up, as did Ron Pottberg who joined the Austin team in 1994. In 1995, WBS became one of the first ministries to use the Internet for recruiting and teaching students. Kit Lawson helped to start that exciting outreach, and continues to develop it.



Tex and Mary Jane Williams

Outgrowing the limited office space available at the Westover Hills church of Christ in Austin, in 2000 WBS moved to a building in Austin’s neighboring town, Cedar Park. With plenty of offices and warehouse



The present facilities for World Bible School in Cedar Park, Texas

room, most of the inventory and ordering eventually moved to Cedar Park. Service Centers were set up in many nations to receive mail from students who could no longer afford to send their answers directly to America. This student mail continues to be airfreighted to Cedar Park, where it is quickly sorted and forwarded to teachers.

For many years the number of new students enrolled, as measured by Introduction Lessons sent (in the main language of WBS, English), had hovered just under the 1,000,000 mark per year. In 2005 that barrier was broken. 2006 saw the launch of the WBS Children's Series. Also in 2006, Tex retired and John Reese now serves as President of WBS.

During the years covered by this brief history, many millions have learned the Gospel by correspondence, and many thousands have become children of God. The same spirit that motivated Jimmie Lovell and his early volunteers continues to carry WBS forward to fulfill its great potential for impacting the world. All of the credit belongs to God who has worked through believers willing to give themselves to Him. We invite you to join these selfless volunteers and enjoy the blessings of sharing your faith with

people who want to learn from you.

World Bible School: The Concept

World Bible School (WBS) may be summarized by this statement, which we often project in workshops:

God links WBS and a worldwide network of everyday Christians, evangelists, and churches to teach truth-seekers with correspondence studies, baptizing and integrating them into God's family.

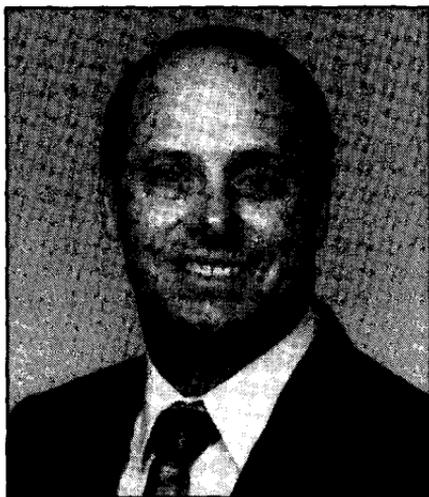
The most important person in that statement is God. It is His will we seek to fulfill. It is the Gospel of His Son we share. We depend on Him, and praise Him for the great results.

The second most important persons in that statement are truth-seekers. They hear of WBS courses from friends or campaigners. They see our advertisements in newspapers and posters. They find us by Google and Yahoo searches. Whatever the medium, the common element is that these precious persons ask to study the Word with us. And they come to us by the hundreds of thousands, over a million new students each year.

The third most important persons in that statement are everyday Christians. They are the grassroots workforce of thousands who teach millions of truth-seekers. They are qualified because they are, according to Peter's inspired description, the royal priesthood that proclaims the wonders of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

These everyday Christians use *correspondence studies* of the Bible, whether sent electronically or through the mail. WBS courses are written to let Scripture shine through because the power is in the Word of God.

God's word touches open hearts. Responsive students write to their WBS correspondence teachers asking for personal studies, or even baptism into Christ. WBS teachers then pass on those requests to the evangelists and churches that are closest to the students. For this purpose, WBS based in Cedar Park, Texas, maintains a networking data base that encompasses



John Reese

much of the world. Follow-up workers give direct, personal attention to responsive WBS students. They help them to learn more, baptizing them into Christ, and integrating them into God's family. Students learn from their mentors and from WBS courses to carry God's message to others, who will carry it to others. In this way, God uses your spark through WBS to ignite people movements among new peoples and in new places.

How effective is this partnership? An estimated 25,000,000 have studied the Bible through postal WBS. Many thousands have been confirmed as converted. We know one teacher who has over 1000 baptisms each year. In Nigeria one third of the churches of Christ surveyed reported that they started through WBS. In many nations where the church is growing, schools of Christian leadership and preaching are filled with students who came to Christ through WBS.

You can be a part of this exciting outreach. You can certainly pray for the teachers and helpers of World Bible School. You can make yourself ready to follow up when a responsive student is passed along to you. If you have reliable Internet access, you can apply to become an Internet teacher. The address for applying to teach by Internet is **www.worldbibleschool.net**. If you are a Christian, and have the means for purchasing WBS courses and mailing them to students, you can become a teacher. You can learn how to use WBS by reading the WBS Program Guide at the same web site, or by sending an email request to **info@worldbibleschool.net**, or by writing to **WBS, P.O. Box 2169, Cedar Park, Texas 78630 U.S.A.**

In North America, virtually every member of the church can be a WBS teacher. The Lord has blessed Americans in many ways. He has blessed us with life and its earthly measure, time, of which all get exactly the same amount (24 hours per day). He has blessed us all with resources, including the ability to afford the simple tools of communication. All these resources are gifts from God and rightfully belong to Him. How, then, can we ever be 'too busy' to spend our time and money (which are actually His time and money) to share the Gospel with those for whom Jesus died? What can we possibly invest in that is more valuable? And who better to share the Good News with than those who have asked us to share it with them?

God gives the harvest wherever the seed of His Word is sown. By God's grace, if you take the WBS opportunity seriously, you can be sure of bringing a precious soul to the Savior within a reasonable period. Your primary mission work will always be where you live, whether high or low in

receptivity. But at the same time, God can use WBS to plug you into some of the most receptive parts of the world, where people are eager to learn and to respond to God's Word. Modern means of connecting around the world are gifts from God, and they are surely given for his highest purpose — to reach all for those God gave His Son on the cross. †

One Teacher's Story

Ruth Orr

Thirty-five years ago, my husband, Tom, a gospel preacher and I along with our six children, ranging in age from nine months to eight years were living as missionaries in South Georgia. I loved being a preacher's wife, helping him in the Lord's work and taking care of our children. Yet, I felt a need and great desire to do more for the Lord. I read my Bible daily and prayed for ways to be of more service to Him as a stay-at-home mom.

About a year later God began answering my prayers through a man by the name of Jimmie Lovell, a Christian and retired army man who was searching for a way to teach the masses of people "lost in sin".

A friend of Jimmie's had written a correspondence course for the church where he preached. He gave it to Jimmie to use, but later Jimmie wrote his own 15 lessons to be mailed out as a correspondence course.

At first it was just used to teach people in America but soon he put an advertisement in some papers in Africa asking if they would like to study the Bible using correspondence courses. To his amazement thousands wrote in begging for the courses. Knowing he could not handle all these by himself, he asked for volunteers. Here was the door I felt God had opened to me. I wrote Jimmie and volunteered and was sent 50 names from Ghana, W. Africa. Thus began a tremendous challenge that would eventually become a lifetime commitment to teaching those outside of Christ.

I took those names very seriously. As I wrote letters and sent out lessons, I prayed for each student. I wanted to become their friend as well as their teacher. It took months to hear back from just a few, so I asked for more names and worked harder, even re-writing the first ones. Before long many lessons started coming back. They sent letters and told me about themselves and their families. They told of heartaches and hunger and young children being orphans, something I would not understand for twenty-seven more years. I could only guess at their grief. I knew their needs were great but they never asked for anything except a Bible.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

One young man said, “There is just one Bible in our whole village. We have torn each book of the Bible out and we share these so others can read.” (Years later, I would be privileged to visit that area and give out hundreds of Bibles — copies they would not have to share with a village).

My family and I worked with thousands of students in Africa, India, Poland and other places the next few years. WBS became a “work of faith” and a “labor of love” for us.

I will never forget the excitement we felt the day Jimmie let us know that a student of ours had become a Christian. We had waited a year but even today, 35 years later and having seen thousands baptized, I still get that same wonderful feeling when one is baptized into the family of God.

My Family

My WBS students were now numbering into the hundreds and I loved the mission I had undertaken. Life was very good as our children were all Christians, they were finishing college, beginning to get married and bring grandchildren into our world. Tom was preaching for a wonderful congregation and we were happy with every aspect of our lives.

Then suddenly, heartache began to overshadow us. Tom was in and out of hospitals with heart trouble, a heart attack, and eventually heart surgery. He never fully recovered from his illness and fell very sick again. This time the doctor said, “Lung cancer, no cure.” Tom’s death 14 months later left me panic stricken. I could not think of anything but his death and my life without him. Feelings of total despair and a sense of isolation came over me.

My Life’s Mission

I prayed that God would show me the big picture of my life, that He would give me a purpose to want to live again and that He would give me a mission for Him, one I could do without Tom.

As I began to heal, I poured my heart once again into teaching my students. I needed to find a congregation close by because the place where Tom had been preaching prior to his death was too far from our home for me to go there. You see, I had never even driven a car. My whole life had been devoted to my children, my WBS work and helping Tom in the Lord’s work.

God eventually led me to the Church Street Church of Christ in Lewisburg, TN. There I found a most loving congregation of about 500 Christians. They took me in and loved me, but they had never heard of WBS. Since this was a big part of my life, I began telling them what it was,

how it worked and the many souls being converted to Christ through it. In time, they became just as excited about this great work as I was and agreed to help by paying for the materials needed to teach and by paying the postage to send the graded lessons back to the students.

Now my prayer and earnest desire was that God would see fit some day for me to go and personally be able to meet and teach some of my students.

That chance came the next year when I was asked to go with David and Marion Tyree on a mission trip to Poland. Traditionally and nationally, Polish people are Catholic. This is the inherited religion of their forefathers. For this reason, most Polish people are not aware of how much they are in need of the truth. Change comes very slowly, but with God's help several were baptized that year.

The next year I had the opportunity to go to Ghana, W. Africa on another mission trip. This was where most of my WBS students were from and I was very excited over the prospect of meeting some of them. For 27 years I had dreamed of going to Africa so, with Bible in hand and in heart, I set out ready to fulfill that dream.

Dreams Come True

As our van pulled into the motel that day I felt little culture shock because of the warm welcome we received from the African Christians and



A World Bible School Seminar in Africa.

WBS students. Five young men, all my students, had been waiting two days for us to get there. So with little rest and while the others slept I found myself teaching God's word to WBS students in Ghana, Africa.

Those five boys were all baptized that day in a big fish trough at the motel. Today they are all gospel preachers and we share a close bond as they call themselves "your boys".

One of the greatest blessings of that day was a 16 year-old boy named Simon who had been one of my students since he was 12. He had told me in letters how his parents had died and an uncle could hardly care for him. He wrote of always being hungry, of eating one meal a day and having to "trade" to get that meal.. He told how he had to sleep in a chicken coop with dirt floor and no electricity because there was no room in their hut for him. There was no schooling and he didn't know where his five brothers and sisters were.



Simon, Elizabeth and baby Thomas, my grandson and great-grandson.

Now to be able to meet this young man and see him become a Christian reminded me of something I once heard, "I touch the future I teach." His uncle "gave" Simon to me saying he could no longer take care of him. My heart broke for Simon and as I left that year I hugged him and told him I loved him and that he now had a family. I promised that even though I could not bring him to America I would always be there for him and I would see that he would never be hungry again.

When Simon was 18 he enrolled in the West Coast School of Preaching with just a fourth grade education. He worked very hard and at times would say, "Mom, I don't think I can do it." I would always encourage him by saying, "Do your very best and then some, asking God to help you." I gave him a small tape recorder so he could record the lectures and could then play them over and over until he knew them. He began to excel in his studies and graduated top of his class. He went on to computer school and graduated there also.

Once while on a trip to Ghana I mentioned a young lady to Simon. I told him he needed to get to know her because she was very pretty and a good Christian girl. Upon returning home, I received an e-mail from him that said, "Mom I took you at your word and asked Elizabeth to marry me." "Simon", I said, "I did not ask you to marry her. I just wanted you to get to know her." Then I asked about her response, and he said, "She will let me know in 6 weeks." When the 6 weeks were up he wrote back and said, "Mom, she said, 'Yes!'" The next summer it was my honor to stand with him as "his mom" and sign papers for him to be married to this wonderful Christian girl.

Today Simon is a gospel preacher, a WBS teacher and our follow-up worker for all of Ghana, converting many to Christ. He is grateful that WBS came into his life at the early age of 12 years and that now he has an extended family. In the past two years Simon has found most of his brothers and sisters and has converted them to Christ. His desire is to be able to come to America and meet the rest of his church family that supports him.

Most of our team worked in the villages that year but my job was to work from the WBS office. What a joy each day to see hundreds of people coming in to be taught God's word! Those two weeks brought 43 of my WBS students to the office, with 42 of them being baptized. Those 42 new converts started meeting at the WBS office each week for worship. Samuel Oduku, a gospel preacher, helped mentor them spiritually. Soon some of these men began going out to the villages, teaching, and in one year's time they had grown so much that they started 8 new congregations in village areas, with some of these men doing the preaching. Realizing their need for schooling, the Church St. congregation agreed to sponsor ten of them in the West Coast School of Preaching.

Today that group of new converts who humbly started in the WBS office has grown to over 400 members. They have a new church building, a

full time preacher, and 40 of the original ones baptized have finished two years' training at one of our schools of Biblical studies in Ghana.

Another Opportunity

In the year 2000, Sheila Nunnally, now Mrs. Greg Hamlin, and I decided that with God's help we would go to Anambra State in Nigeria to teach about 50 WBS students with whom I had been studying.

We went over with Doug Wheeler and a group from Oklahoma, but I had already been warned that we would be on our own when we landed in Lagos. And how true that was! Doug was a busy man and he didn't need two women to hold him back. He did conduct us to a safe place to stay, then said, "Someone will come and get you." Then he left.

Well, now we found ourselves, as my children say, "in the dark continent of Africa". My heart was pounding and I was praying every breath. We were in a country in which we had never been before, with people we had never met before, leaving with a driver and preacher with whom we had only corresponded, and going to a place so far out in the bush that I wondered if I would ever see Doug or my family again. Our driver hardly said a word the six hours' drive to the motel. Then as he carried my bags in, he said, "I am one of your students. Can we study tomorrow?" He and his wife became our first converts.

A wonderful welcome was given us but we were not prepared for what we found the next day as we went out to teach. There was no church building, in fact there was no building of any kind, only an open area with a few benches without backs. The temperature was already over 100 degrees and the preacher said, "Make sure your head is wrapped."

I quickly reminded myself that I was in Nigeria and my focus must be on why we were there and the work ahead of us. We had come to make a better world for a people hungry for the gospel in Anambra State. I asked God to help me in my moments of uncertainty and to help us do the work set before us the next three weeks. We were very grateful that there were ten preachers in the area, all of whom had been converted through WBS. So with their help we prepared to teach what we thought would be my 50 students. Those students did come, but others came by the hundreds to study. Over-whelming wasn't even the word and total exhaustion soon came over us.

The ladies were asking for classes just for them, so while one taught WBS students, the other would teach ladies' classes. My heart broke as I

was speaking to a group of about 400 women and asked them to open their Bibles. There were no Bibles! They, like most all villages shared one or two Bibles, so their knowledge of God's Word was very limited, even though their hunger was great. I promised that I would get each of them a Bible when I returned home to Lewisburg, and the day after my arrival, my elders shipped 400 Bibles to those ladies. The next year when Sheila and I went back we could hardly believe our eyes. There was a great spiritual change in their lives and the Bibles we had sent were almost worn out!

Knowing the crucial need for the men to be taught also, we asked two professors from the preaching school in Ghana to come and give lessons to the men on leadership and marriage and the home. Sheila and I would continue teaching the women and WBS students. We now had over 4,000 WBS students in that area and God was giving the increase of souls by the hundreds.



Ruth and Sheila in Abagana, Anambra State, Nigeria.

One day I had taught a large group of women and I was very tired, hot, not feeling well and really needing to rest but knew I still had a question and answer session to go. I sat down, really hoping no one would ask a question. Suddenly everyone in the audience stood up. Stunned, I asked if they had a question, and almost all together they said, "What can we do to be just like you and Sheila?" I once again sat down and with tears streaming down my cheeks asked God to forgive my weakness and to help me in answering that question. My answer was simple, "You do not want to be just like us,

FROM THE HEART OF ...

you want to be yourself. God planted us in one place and you in another. We must bloom where we are planted, doing what we can, with what we have, all for the cause of Christ. Each of you has talents given by God. Use them in His service and to His glory.”

Sheila and I have been told many times, “Two women went where no man would go.” Our mission was a big responsibility but it was also an incredible honor to be used by God. The best thing we did for that area was that we took the gospel to them and we gave them encouragement and showed them Christianity in action.

Today, 7 years later, our WBS students number over 9,000 in Anambra State, and hundreds have been baptized, including 18 denominational preachers and their families. Each of these is in a school of Biblical studies. They have a daily radio and TV program and a prison ministry with over 600 WBS students studying with us. Two doctors have been converted and thousands of children are being taught in the schools using the WBS new series for children. A new church building has been built that will seat 600 and also houses a WBS office.

We have seen a great spiritual growth in the women who now count their blessings and not their troubles and have learned to live one day at a time. But most of all they have learned that they do have “worth”. If just one woman has been motivated to good works in the Lord’s kingdom, then all the effort connected with our being in Anambra State and working with them was worthwhile.

Our motto at Church Street is “Making a difference — one soul at a time”. We teach through WBS courses, our follow-up workers water, and God gives the increase in abundance.

WBS touches my life daily whether in my office at Church Street or thousands of miles across the ocean, working to touch just one more soul for Christ.

For more joy and fulfillment in your life than you can imagine, why not join the many WBS teachers in bringing the Gospel to thousands of students like these? Through WBS, anyone can share the most precious message that has ever been spoken. Nothing in this world that can compare to teaching people who are hungry for truth and seeing them become Christians. †

Ruth Orr is a World Bible School teacher who travels to all parts of the world to further teach and convert her students. She lives in Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA.

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search

(from page 62)

1. They had the oracles of God
2. no
3. Psalm 51:4
4. It was ridiculous, and Paul answered with an emphatic NO!
5. "Let us do evil that good may come."
6. Psalm 14:1-3
7. None are good and none can be saved by being good.
8. perfection
9. lack of fear of God
10. to make all men aware of their guilt before God
11. knowledge of sin
12. We cannot be saved except by God's grace.

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CORRECTION FROM VOLUME 54:
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is
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Bible Find

(from page 27)

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