

# V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



***ROMANS 1:20: "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,"***

# **GOD'S LAWS**

## **FOR CHRISTIANS:**

*(Frame this, hang it on your wall,  
keep it before your eyes at all times.)*

- *Let love be without dissimulation.*
- *Abhor that which is evil.*
- *Cleave to that which is good.*
- *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.*
- *Not slothful in business.*
- *Fervent in spirit.*
- *Serving the Lord.*
- *Rejoicing in hope.*
- *Patient in tribulation.*
- *Continuing instant in prayer.*
- *Distributing to the necessity of saints.*
- *Given to hospitality.*
- *Bless them which persecute you.*
- *Bless and curse not.*
- *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*
- *Be of the same mind one toward another.*
- *Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.*
- *Be not wise in your own conceits.*
- *Recompense to no man evil for evil.*
- *Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*
- *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceable with all men.*
- *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*
- *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*
- *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:9-21).*



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

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# THE ABCS OF THE GOSPEL

IT REALLY IS  
SIMPLE AS  
ABC!



**B**EHOLD! THE LAMB  
OF GOD WHO TAKES  
AWAY THE SIN OF  
THE WORLD! ~JOHN 1:29

ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL  
SHORT OF THE GLORY OF  
GOD. ~ROMANS 3:23

COME TO ME, ALL YOU  
WHO LABOR AND ARE  
HEAVY LADEN, AND I  
WILL GIVE YOU REST.  
~MATTHEW 11:28

**NOTE:** To “COME TO CHRIST” IS TO LEARN FROM CHRIST AND TO OBEY HIS WILL, WHICH IS THE NEW TESTAMENT. IN **MATTHEW 11:29-30** JESUS SAID, **“29) TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND LOWLY IN HEART, AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30) FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.”** JESUS REQUIRES ONE TO BE TAUGHT, HEAR, AND LEARN (**JOHN 6:45**) IN ORDER TO COME TO CHRIST. ONE MUST BELIEVE TO LIVE WITH GOD ETERNALLY (**JOHN 8:24**). ONE MUST REPENT OF SIN (TURN AWAY FROM) (**LUKE 13:3,5**). ONE MUST CONFESS CHRIST IN ORDER TO HAVE HIS NAME CONFESSED BEFORE GOD IN HEAVEN (**LUKE 12:8-9**). ONE MUST BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST (**MATTHEW 28:18-20**). ONE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO CHRIST, EVEN IF IT MEANS DYING FOR HIM (**REVELATION 2:10-11**).

# "WAS IT FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN? ANSWER ME"

## DENOMINATIONS

*ESTABLISHED BY MEN*

*BUILT ON WHIMS AND VANITY  
OF CAPRICIOUS MEN*

*NO BLOOD SHED FOR THEM*

*HEADED BY POPE, COUNCILS,  
OR CONFERENCES*

*MEMBERS VOTED IN BY MEN  
EXALT TRADITIONS & DOGMAS*

*PREACH CATECHISM, MANUAL,  
OR OTHER CREEDS*

*"SHALL BE ROOTED UP"  
MATTHEW 15:13*

## HOW MEN ENTER

☞ "FAITH ONLY"

☞ "PRAY THROUGH"

☞ "JUST RAISE HAND"

☞ "VOTED INTO CHURCH"

☞ "JOIN THE CHURCH OF  
YOUR CHOICE"

FAITH ☞  
Jno. 8:24; Heb. 11:6

REPENTANCE ☞  
Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19

BAPTISM ☞  
Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27

## THE TRUE CHURCH

*BUILT BY JESUS CHRIST  
MATTHEW 16:18*

*CHRIST GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT  
EPHESIANS 5:25*

*PURCHASED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD  
ACTS 20:28*

*JESUS CHRIST IS ITS HEAD  
EPHESIANS 1:22-23*

*LORD ADDS THE SAVED TO IT  
ACTS 2:47*

*GOSPEL PREACHED & EXALTED  
ACTS 8:5, 12; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5*

*PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH  
1 TIMOTHY 3:15*

*JESUS CHRIST ITS SAVIOUR  
EPHESIANS 5:23*



# Christianity in a Hostile and Challenging Environment

**Louis Rushmore**

## **Persecution of Jesus Christ**

**Jesus Christ Himself confronted a hostile and challenging environment,** culminating in a heartless and brutal beating – scourging – leading up to His crucifixion on Calvary’s hill (Mark 15:15). Roman scourging ignored the constraints of Jewish scourging by not limiting the number of blows administered. Romans inflicted wounds on hapless victims with “whips of leather cords knotted at the ends and weighted with pieces of metal or bone” (*Eerdmans*). In preparation for the scourging, the doomed soul was stripped of his clothing except perhaps for a loincloth, and his hands were fastened to a short post – arching his back toward his attacker. In the case of capital punishment, the Romans employed scourging to weaken the condemned so that he would not live long when fastened to a cross. Yet, the variables of the degree of scourging and the endurance of a person might permit the crucified to linger for days in unimaginable agony and relentless pain before he expired.

Following His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had a sleepless night of trials preceding the scourging, possibly also a contributing factor to the sooner than expected death of Jesus on the cross (Mark 15:44). In any case, **the body of Jesus was a tattered, bloody mess – nothing anyone ought to experience and inconceivable that the Creator in fleshly form would willingly endure such ill treatment by His creation – man.**

However, there was more to come – the crucifixion. Iron nails were



driven through the hands or wrists and through the feet of Jesus (Luke 24:39-40; John 20:25; Colossians 2:14). Next, He was hoisted upright on the cross for all the world to see and to ridicule (Mark 15:29-32) along with two criminals. There, that day, three men – naked or nearly naked – suffered horribly until they died. Everything about the scenario was shameful (Hebrews 12:2; Galatians 3:13). The prophets foretold of the shame and punishment of the Messiah (Isaiah 50:6; 53:5). Especially Isaiah 53 depicted the mistreatment and execution of the Messiah 800 years before our Lord’s gruesome scourging and horrific crucifixion. Besides the mocking and contempt, the jagged crown of thorns planted on His head, and the severe buffeting of His body through the scourging and crucifixion on the cross, **Jesus bore the weight of the sins of the whole world** from the Garden of Eden through as long as time continues. **Jesus is our example in all things (1 Peter 2:21), including how we as Christians ought to conduct ourselves in a hostile and challenging environment.**

## **Jewish Persecution of the First Christians**

**The first Christians, who were from among the Jews, were persecuted by their fellow Jews.** The Jewish leaders **threatened and forbade** the apostles to preach and teach any longer in the name of Jesus (Acts 4). Peter and John responded, “...*Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*” (Acts 4:19-20 NKJV). Acts 5 records that the apostles were arrested, imprisoned, freed by an angel, apprehended, ordered not to preach Jesus and were **beaten** (Acts 8:40). “*But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men’*” (Acts 5:29). Notice the apostles’ reflection on being arrested, threatened and beaten. “*So, they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ*” (Acts 5:41-42).

Finally, Jewish persecution against Christianity became so severe that many Christians fled Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Notice two things. **First**, though many Christians left Jerusalem, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem. **Secondly**, “*Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word*” (Acts 8:4). Rather than snuffing out Christianity, Jewish persecution

spread it throughout Palestine – “**Judea and Samaria**” (Acts 8:1).

Just how severe the persecution was that scattered Christians from Jerusalem can be observed in Acts 6:8-7:60 through the martyrdom of Stephen. Jewish persecution followed Christians throughout the Roman Empire. Saul of Tarsus (before we knew him as the apostle Paul) participated in the death of Stephen (Acts 7:58), was pleased at the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1) and pursued Christians with a vengeance as far away as Syria (Acts 9:1-2). He led persecution against Christians, causing them to be **beaten**, to be **imprisoned** or to be **killed** (Acts 22:4-5, 19). Later on, Acts 17:6 is a specimen of Jewish persecution of Christians.

*But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and **attacked** the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. But when they did not find them, they **dragged Jason and some brethren** to the rulers of the city, crying out, “**These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king – Jesus.**” (Acts 17:5-7)*

**The enemies of Christ and Christianity have always been vicious.**

Yet, note the fact that first century Christians were turning the world upside down with the message about ‘King Jesus’! However, Christians – following the example of Jesus Christ – do **not** respond to the enemies of the cross in the manner of the world. “*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously*” (1 Peter 2:21-23).

## **Gentile Persecution of Christians**

**Gentiles – non-Jews – likewise persecuted their fellows from among the Gentiles who had become Christians as well as Jewish Christians, too** (1 Thessalonians 2:14). Eventually, the Roman Empire began to take notice of Christianity when Christians and Jews disrupted life in Rome, leading to the emperor banning Jews from Rome, at which time Christians were forced to leave, too (Acts 18:2).

Tiberius Claudius Caesar reiterated the policy of Augustus Caesar, the

first Emperor, to permit countries and cultures that were assimilated into the Roman Empire to continue practicing their own religions and cultures. Specifically, Claudius permitted Jews throughout the Roman Empire to practice their religion and customs, as long as they did not interfere with or vilify the religions of others, and of course, did not resist Roman rule. Claudius issued the following law.

Tiberius Claudius Caesar decrees, seeing the Kings Agrippa and Herod, my dearest friends, have entreated me that I would suffer the Jews in every government under the Romans, to observe their laws as in Alexandria; I most willingly grant it, not only for the sake of gratifying those who ask it, but judging that those are worthy, for whom it is asked, because of their faithfulness and friendship to the Romans; especially accounting it most just that no Grecian city should be deprived of these rights, seeing they were kept for them by the divine Augustus; wherefore it is right also that the Jews throughout all our empire should observe the customs of their country without any hinderance, whom I now command that in love to us they would behave more moderately, and not despise the religion of other nations, but keep their own laws; and I will that governors of cities, and colonies, and freedoms, both in Italy and without, have this my edict transcribed, and also kings and princes by their ambassadors, and that it be put in such a place in less than thirty days, from whence it may be plainly read. (*John Gill's*)

At first, Rome viewed Christians as a Jewish sect among many such divisive groups within first century Judaism. “Talmudic literature states that there were 24 sects in Israel” (Flusser). That would have made Christians merely representative of the 25<sup>th</sup> sect, but the core differences between Judaism and Christianity resulted in conflict between the two groups. Once Christianity distinguished itself from Judaism, however, it no longer had legal protection and was subsequently persecuted by the Roman Empire.

In addition, because Christians refused to worship the state gods, they were viewed as atheists and punished or executed. In time, living emperors considered themselves gods and demanded worship; the Christian refusal was viewed as treason and sufficient cause for punishment and death. After Nero burned Rome (A.D. 64.), Christians, who were already despised by their pagan neighbors, were accused of the crime. Subsequently, Christians were punished and killed. Below is a quote from my book, *The Cost of Discipleship*.

*Fox's Book of Martyrs* names many saints and vividly describes the ways

in which they were often tortured to death because of their discipleship. A summary of the vicious ways in which early Christians were killed would necessarily include: being sewn into skins of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs; dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, put on poles and set afire for illumination; beaten to death with clubs; devoured by wild beasts; crucified, crowned with thorns, and thrust through with a spear; burnt at the stake; scourged and pressed to death with weights; beheaded; thrown from lofty points; covered with boiling pitch and set afire; scalded; drown; dragged by horses; put into leather bags together with a number of serpents and scorpions, and in that condition thrown into the sea; stretched upon a wheel until all bones were broken and then beheaded; stoning; torn with hooks; feet pierced with nails and other torture induced before being beheaded; starved; hanged; feet attached to the tail of a bull which was driven down the steps of a temple; broiled; shot to death with arrows; poisoned.

Knowing that Christians were willing to suffer such abuse rather than to recant Christ as their Lord and Savior should serve to emphasize the true definition of discipleship and what its costs could be. How much we would be (and someday may be) willing to suffer for the cause of Christ is ultimately the thermometer of Christian discipleship! How much fervent zeal do you exhibit (Revelation 3:15-16)?

All throughout history, opponents of Christianity, as well as apostate Christian sects (Catholic Church, denominations), persecuted Christians. Usually today, Christians do not experience physical abuse, imprisonment or death simply because they are Christians. Yet, Christians fear for their lives in several places around the world today (e.g., in Muslim and Hindu nations, in countries without the freedom of religion).

### **Contemporarily**

More recently and in western countries (e.g., USA, Canada), the rights of Christians and Bible believers in general are eroding significantly and alarmingly. Business owners who refuse to sell homosexual specific arrangements (e.g., florists and bakeries) due to their biblically held convictions have lost court challenges, resulting in costly judgments against them and even the loss of their livelihoods. Landlords are forbidden by law to refrain from renting their own properties to homosexuals and unmarried couples, or they, too, will face lawsuits and hurtful monetary judgments against them. People have been arrested for talking about the Bible in public places. Homeowners

have been fined for having friends over for a meal and a Bible study, but next-door neighbors could have a beer party without repercussions. Preachers have been censored by city officials for preaching from the Bible, and at least one Canadian preacher was arrested, fined and sentenced to *sensitivity training* (an attempt at brain washing and Bible bashing) for preaching what the Bible says about homosexuality. **The Bible is now considered hate speech!** Military officers have been removed from their duties for holding biblical views about morality. The Bible is not allowed in public schools, though the Muslim religion's Koran and its teaching are welcome. All of this and more represents a hostile and challenging environment.

Then, there's the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. The dangers as well as the government restrictions and shutdowns are a whole new and different (in our lifetime) hostile and challenging environment. Churches and preachers have been fined and preachers have been arrested for continuing religious services despite government orders to shut down. The pandemic, in many cases, has splattered Christianity into neighborhoods and Christian homes across the world; while congregations' doors were closed locally, we worshipped in our home, joined by our children who lived in the area. Essentially, many homes, at least temporarily, became churches – more churches rather than less churches than before. There are also additional, more personal hostile and challenging environments that Christians face daily and around the world (e.g., work, family, financial, medical, etc.).

## **Conclusion**

**Christianity has always found itself in a hostile and challenging environment. Furthermore, Christianity has always flourished in hostile and challenging environments.** For instance, at the height of Christian martyrdom under Roman oppression, the motto surfaced that “the blood of martyrs is the seed of the kingdom”; the more Christians who were murdered by Rome, the more Christians there were who remained as the general population investigated more closely Christian convictions “*unto death*” (Revelation 2:10) and obeyed the Gospel.

It is equally true that Christianity has always tended to descend into complacency, bordering on apathy and indifference, when it no longer experienced resistance or when, additionally, times were prosperous. The decline of Christendom in Europe and the declining affection for the



Christian religion in North America are evidence that the marginalization of Christianity corresponds to increasing material prosperity. Paul contrasted the distinguished of this world with the common man, noting that more ordinary than mighty people will embrace the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:26).

In the first century, the apostles continued to preach the Gospel even when they were forbidden to do so (Acts 4:18-21; 5:17-29); the apostles and other Christians could not be discouraged from preaching and teaching the Gospel (Acts 8:4). The children of God should not fear what the world may do to them, but instead, they must trust in the Lord and look to Him to restore whatever is lost while in His service (Matthew 19:27-29). ***“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”*** (Matthew 10:28). ***“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”*** (Romans 8:28).

Finally, we must obey the laws under which we live (Romans 13:1-7). The only exception to complying with a particular lawful order is when it *specifically* contradicts the higher law of God (Acts 5:29). The Lord’s church – Christianity – will prevail (Matthew 16:18), and we who are Christians are the Lord’s church and comprise true Christianity. †

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# FOUNDATIONS OF WORSHIP

**Jerry Bates**

Man is a worshipping creature. God created man to worship and glorify Him. The word used the most in the New Testament for worship means to make obeisance to or do reverence towards. Jesus said in Matthew 4:10, *“You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve”* (NKJV). Why worship only God? Nothing

or no one is like God. Worship begins with the nature of God – Who God is. One reason some have a difficult time worshipping God is because they do not realize Who God is.

Often, man thinks that God is much like we are. Certainly, He is bigger, wiser and more powerful, but basically God would be subject to similar emotions as man. That was the idea of ancient Greeks as they created legends about their gods. Their gods were much like man. However, the God of the Bible is nothing like man. Why should God be worshipped?

**God should be worshipped because of His character.** The character of God is much different from man’s character. *“For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord”* (Psalm 33:4-5). Notice what these verses say about God. His word is always right, and every action is true. God is upright, that is, He is without deception. God has no false actions or words. God is completely righteous and just, and His actions are governed by His lovingkindness. One can easily see that this is not like humankind. Man routinely lies about even little things, and every action is far from true and right. Our actions are often governed by lust or selfish ambition, not lovingkindness.



**God should be worshipped because God is the Creator.** *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast”* (Psalm 33:6-9). Since God created the universe, we should respond in reverence. The vastness of the universe is unimaginable. Scientists say the earth is part of the Milky Way galaxy, which is said to be 100,000 light years across, and a light year is 5.89 trillion miles. Yet, as large as this seems, there are other galaxies that dwarf the Milky Way by comparison. The Bible declares that God created **all** the universe, including man. No wonder the Psalmist wrote, *“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained. What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?”* (Psalm 8:3-4).

**God should be worshipped because of His holiness.** The Old Testament presents God as Sovereign, powerful, the *“Holy One of Israel.”* *“For our shield belongs to the Lord, and our king to the Holy One of*

*Israel*” (Psalm 89:18). “...They have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel...” (Isaiah 1:4). “*I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King*” (Isaiah 43:15). Isaiah alone uses the words “*Holy One*,” 29 times in reference to God. Once again, we see that God is not like us. Man could hardly be described as the “*Holy One*.”


This is the great paradox of worship: The Holy One is in our midst. In worship we come into the presence of God. “*I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in your midst: and I will not come with terror*” (Hosea 11:9). “*Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst*” (Isaiah 12:6). In our society, we have largely lost the holiness of God. Yet, holiness is the one attribute that is behind every other attribute. If we lose the holiness of God, we lose God.

In worship, we come into the presence of God. Worship is not merely celebrating an idea about God or a facet of His nature but drawing into the presence of God Himself. In the first half of Hebrews 10, we read about the great sacrifice of Christ as compared with the animals of the Old Testament. As a result, the writer of Hebrews concluded that we should “*draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*” (Hebrews 10:22). “*Draw near*” is usually used in the Old Testament in reference to worship. In worship, sinful man comes into the presence of a holy God. While we might say in one sense, God is everywhere, and we are, therefore, always in the presence of God, **we are in the presence of God in a very special way in worship.** “*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...*” (Hebrews 4:16). In worship, we do not just come to a church building, but **we spiritually enter the very throne room of God.** Hebrews 12:22-24 describes it this way: “*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*” When we consider the great privilege of coming into the presence of the mighty King of Kings, why should we be reluctant to worship? We should look forward to gathering with our fellow Christians in the presence of God to

praise our Savior and Judge.

**Finally, we worship because of who we are.** We have nothing to give to God and do not deserve to approach God. *“As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understand, there is none who seeks after God. They are all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one”* (Romans 2:10-12). In worship, we have an encounter between a holy God and an unholy people.

**There is a connection between worship and daily living. One cannot separate the two.** God is not interested in one’s worship if it is accompanied by a life of moral rebellion. Several verses in the Old Testament emphasize this truth. *“Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me”* (Isaiah 1:13). God could no longer endure their sacred meetings. He was tired of their worship because of their unholy lives. Notice the words of God in Amos 5:21-22. *“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.”* That is why Paul beseeches us to *“present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service”* (Romans 12:1). The same idea is described in John 6:54. Jesus declared that *“whoever eats My flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life ...”* Jesus was not talking about the Lord’s Supper. He was talking about the difference between **external lip-service** and **internal embodiment**. He was talking about the difference between simply admiring Him and actually taking up one’s cross and following Him. He was talking about **the difference between acting like a Christian on the outside and truly being a Christian on the inside.**

Notice the words of a commonly sung hymn. “I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene, And wonder how He could love me, A sinner, condemned, unclean.” Are we really amazed? If we are not, we should be, and that understanding would compel us to bow in worship to God. We worship not because we have to worship! We worship because of who God is, who we are and because we have surrendered our lives to His will. That is the only acceptable worship. 

Jerry Bates is a missionary, Gospel preacher and one of the editors of the quarterly magazine *The Voice of Truth International*. He resides in Winona, Mississippi, USA.





# Paradoxes of Christianity: Invisible, Yet Visible

**Shane Fisher**

A paradox is defined as “a statement that seems self-contradictory or absurd, yet in fact expresses a possible truth.” ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).

**The Bible teaches that God’s invisible attributes are clearly visible by the things He has made.** The foundation for this paradox is built upon Romans 1:20, which reads, *“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”* (NKJV).

We live in a time when unbelief in the God of the Bible has become the popular trend. Empiricism (how to know something by using the five senses – taste, touch, hear, smell and see) is seemingly depicted as the **only** way we can know things. The argument is that if it cannot be observed by any of the five senses, then it must not be real or true. Yet, this is simply not the case. There are other ways by which we can know something is true.

One of those ways is called logic (the science of correct reasoning). This is to what Paul the apostle appealed when he stated that we can correctly reason that God’s **invisible** attributes are **clearly seen** – His eternal power and divine nature – because of what He has made.

We live in a time in which many scientific discoveries have been made in the last century (such as deoxyribonucleic acid [i.e., DNA]). The complexity of such a structure and the details of information that it contains

are mind-boggling, and thus, it is hard to understand why people still believe in macroevolution as the way in which DNA and everything else originated.

The examination of whether or not the God of the Bible exists is contingent on those sets of data that are available to us, and from that data we are to determine just which is the correct explanation for the origin of the universe.



**First, the universe exists.** It is here. There are a few people who hold to the false idea that everything is an illusion, but I guarantee if I were to place their hands on a hot stove, they would retreat from that false notion! **Second, the universe had a beginning.** Even most unbelievers will agree with this premise.

Many unbelievers have recognized that the universe cannot be eternal. Many have rightly argued, due to cosmological evidence, such as the observational evidence from astronomical data, thermal evidence from the second law of thermodynamics, the quantitative evidence from the abundance of helium and other factors, that the universe began to exist at some point in the past.

Also, a person recognizes that an infinite regress is philosophically

impossible. If I were to ask – “From where did you come?” – you would answer that you came from your parents. If I were to then ask – “From where did they come?” – you would answer that they came from their parents. Then, we would go on to your great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, etc. Anyone would have to logically conclude that there must have been a starting point, or otherwise, the human population would astronomically exceed the capacity of this world!

**Third, the universe demands a cause that is sufficiently capable of being intellectually satisfying for the explanatory scope and power of the sets of data from which it draws.** The universe consists of space, time, energy and matter. The cause – whatever it was – had to be non-spatial (i.e., outside of space), non-temporal (i.e., outside of time), non-material (i.e., non-physical), external to the universe, uncaused (i.e., eternal) and powerful enough to have brought the universe into existence. It cannot be like the impersonal force from the *Star Wars* movies. It has to be **personal** since this Cause **chose** (i.e., exercised His will) to bring the world into existence (Revelation 4:11). This brings up some questions such as “**What** caused the universe to come into existence?” and “**What** is the best explanation for the universe?”

Another set of data that demands our attention is what has been called the fine-tuning of the universe. Maybe you have been in a building where you have experienced the temperature either too hot or too cold, and the thermostat needed to be adjusted for your satisfaction. On a much bigger scale, the universe is made up of numerous “thermostats” and “controls” that allow the conditions of life to exist. If these “controls” were to be out of balance, **then life would not exist at all.**

Some of the examples that have been cited are forces governing the atom, the matters of the universe and the creation of chemicals that are favorable to life. There are regional conditions favorable to life, such as the shape, the position, the size of the Milky Way galaxy, the position and composition of the sun and the relationship of planets to the sun. The locational conditions are favorable to life, such as the earth’s relationship to the sun, the earth’s atmospheric conditions and the earth’s relationship to the moon. The questions demanded are “**What** caused the universe to appear finely tuned for life?” and “**What** accounts for the best explanation for all of this fine-

tuning that we see around us?” We should infer correctly that the universe was **specifically designed** with exactly the right conditions for humanity to exist and live here. To believe that blind chance or the impersonal forces of evolution are behind it is not the best explanation.


Another set of data would be the complexity of life at the cellular level such as (1) the formation of carbon atoms, (2) the formation of amino acids and nucleotide bases, (3) the formation of proteins, (4) the formation of nucleotides and (5) the formation of nucleic acids such as DNA and RNA. Such questions that need to be asked are “From **where** could life have come?” “**When** did life occur?” “**Why** did life occur?” and “**How** could life occur?” Since we are dealing with information, then does not information demand an **Informant**? Does this not infer from the **visible** data that we have available that it links to an **invisible Someone** who is intelligent and communicative?

Another set of data to draw from is the reality of consciousness. Many studies have been conducted in this area. An honest person, who studies the brain in-depth, will discover that there is more to the brain than just the physical organ inside one’s skull. There is this mental status of awareness that is outside our physical organ, but at the same time, it is connected to the brain. While the brain can be measured, the consciousness cannot be measured. There are other startling differences that could be given between the brain and consciousness. This brings up some questions such as “**What** caused consciousness to emerge from non-conscious matter?” and “**What** is the best explanation for the existence of consciousness?” The best explanation would be that it came from an **Ultimate, Conscious Mind** who desired that we be made in His image with the ability to think and make judgments (Genesis 1:26-27).

Another set of data that would need to be studied is the reality of freewill. People understand this as a self-evident truth that we are capable of making our own choices. It simply did not emerge or cannot be attributed to quantum physics. This brings up some questions such as “**What** caused free will to come into existence?” and “**What** is the best explanation for free will?” The best explanation would be that it came from **Someone Who also has freewill** (Revelation 4:11), and Who is love (1 John 4:8), Who allows man to make up his own mind as to where he wants to spend eternity (Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23).

Another set of data that would need to be studied is the reality of objective moral laws. We recognize there are some things that are morally right and that there are some things that are immoral. Even the conscience is pricked when we commit these evil acts because we realize we have done wrong and feel guilty (Romans 2:14-15; 1 John 3:4). The laws of objective morality cannot be ignored. It is hard to believe that they are an illusion, products of our individual beliefs or merely the result of culture. This brings up some questions such as “**What** caused morality to come into existence?” and “**What** is the best explanation for morality?” The best explanation would be an Ultimate Lawgiver, Who stands as that personal source of morality and obligation to whom we are amenable. Naturalism just cannot account for human dignity and worth.

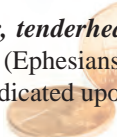
## Conclusion

We can correctly reason that God’s **invisible** attributes are clearly seen – His eternal power and divine nature – because of what He has made, including the fine-tuning of the universe, the complexity of life, consciousness, freewill and objective moral laws. No one on the day of Judgment will be able to make a case that God did not provide enough evidence that He exists. God has given us overwhelming evidence that He exists in the things that were made around us. He has clearly shown through fulfilled prophecy that the Bible is His Word, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that a person can study the Bible to learn what to do in order to be pleasing unto Him and enjoy that blissful paradise awaiting the faithful. **Humanity, indeed, does stand without excuse.** 

## Work Consulted

Much of the material in this article was adapted from J. Warner Wallace’s *God’s Crime Scene: A Cold Case Detective Examines the Evidence for a Divinely Created Universe*. Colorado Springs: David Cook, 2015.

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**Kennedy’s Pennies** “*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you*” (Ephesians 4:32 NKJV). Keep in mind that God’s forgiveness toward us is predicated upon our forgiveness of one another. Give that some serious thought. 





1932—2008

# When Was the Church Established?

**J.C. Choate**

Before beginning our study, a clarification needs to be made between the meaning of “church” and “congregation.” The New Testament scriptures speak of **one church, the body of Christ**, but mention is also made of **the church in Corinth, the church in**

**Thessalonica**, etc. Obviously, from studying the texts, we can understand that these were not different denominations but were what we would call **congregations** of the one church that Christ promised to build.

Today, there are many churches, with many names, many doctrines and many types of organization, and each one had to be established at some point in time. Some like to brag that their church is an old church, that it had its beginning back in the 1800’s. Others will admit that their church is much younger.

But what difference does it make **when** a church was established? **It doesn’t make any difference if one is not concerned about the church they read about in the Bible, and whether their church is that same church.** However, if a person is concerned about being a member of the church that Christ promised to build, then, identifying that church is of vital importance. If you check Church History on the Internet, it will tell you when the first Pope of the Catholic church was named, when the Lutheran Church had its beginning, when John Smyth began the Baptist church, when the Mormon religion officially began, when Pentecostalism was born, etc., but none of these churches are found in the pages of Scripture!

In Matthew 16:18, Christ promised, “...*Upon this rock* [concerning the confession that had just been made that He was the Son of God], *I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” In Mark 9:1, He said, “...*There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God* [which is the church, the body of Christ] *come with power.*”

Notice two points in this promise: the church would have its beginning in the lifetime of some of those who were hearing His words, and it would come with **power**. When we turn to Luke 24, after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, He commanded the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were “...*endued with power from on high*” (Luke 24:49). In Acts 1:8, just before the Lord returned to the Father in Heaven, He told the apostles that not many days from that time they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) and that when they received that power, they would become His witnesses throughout the world.

When we turn to Acts 2, the apostles were in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost day following the Lord’s resurrection. “...*Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*” “*And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven (verse 5). Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled...*” (verses 6-7). Reading the remainder of the chapter, Peter convinced the listeners that Jesus was the Christ for whom they had been waiting for centuries, and the response of the multitude was, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*”

“*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*” (verse 38). “*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*” (verse 41). “*And the Lord added to*

*the church daily such as should be saved”* (verse 47).

So, from the scriptural record itself, we read of the beginning of the church of Christ – the body of people in congregations throughout the world – who, throughout the centuries since that date, have come together in unity to be the church for which our Lord died. From Acts 2 forward, the church is always spoken of as being in existence. What does this tell us? If the promise of the establishment of the church was fulfilled at that time, almost two thousand years ago, **any church that had its beginning since then is not the true church of the Bible.**

Of course, **congregations** of the church can begin anywhere and any time; so, how can we know if the church (congregation) of which we are a member is part of that family of God?

1. **Does it wear the name of Christ?** *“The churches of Christ salute you”* (Romans 16:16).
2. **Does it teach the biblical plan of salvation?**
  - **Belief** *“...These 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).
  - **Repentance** *“I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3).
  - **Confession of faith in Christ** *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 10:32) and
  - **Immersion in water into Christ for remission of sins** *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:16). *“...Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him”* (Acts 8:38).
3. **Does it worship each first day of the week?** *“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight”* (Acts 20:7).
  - **Studying the Word** *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42).

- **Singing praises** (acapella, as in the New Testament worship) “... *Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:19).
- **Praying** “...*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*” (Ephesians 6:18).
- **Giving of one’s income** “*On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come*” (1 Corinthians 16:2) and
- **Partaking of the Lord’s supper** *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.* (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)?

4. **Is it organized scripturally, with elders and deacons to “shepherd” the flock** (1 Timothy 3:2-7; 8-11)?
5. **Is it teaching and practicing daily Christian living** (Galatians 5:16-26)?
6. **Is it involved in outreach, seeking the lost so that the Gospel can be spread throughout the world** (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:14-15)? ☩

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# *The Potter and the Clay*

**Byron Nichols**

Like a lot of other folks, I get a good bit of enjoyment from sports, but it is my uninspired opinion that God is really not into sports any more than He cares about crossword puzzles and checkers. However, there are some indications in the Bible that God does have some interest in, of all things, the making of pottery. I invite you to join me in investigating further God's interest in pottery.

Let's begin by reading Jeremiah 18:1-4. ***"The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 'Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.' Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make."*** The Lord wants His people to understand this thoroughly, as is clear from verses 5-6. ***"Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?'" says the LORD. 'Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!'"*** The Lord's message to Israel was that He is the Potter and they are the clay. He is the Lord and Master, and they are but clay in His hands, to be used in whatever manner or form He chooses.

Who are we? Are we not God's spiritual Israel today? We are, and as such, we are to trust ourselves in the hands of our Potter. Also, regarding God's interest in pottery, let's consider Isaiah 29:15-16. ***"Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, and their works are in***



*the dark; They say, ‘Who sees us?’ and, ‘Who knows us?’ Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, ‘He did not make me’? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, ‘He has no understanding’?”*

Please realize that God has no disregard for clay and its importance. His concern is that His people comprehend that He is the Potter and His people are the clay, subject to Him and the design that He may very well have for them.

God is indeed a loving God, but He is not about to relinquish His role as our Maker and Master to us, His creation. The New Testament version of Isaiah 29:15-16 is found in Romans 9:20-21. ***“But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”***

As in many other matters, Jesus gives us a perfect illustration of a lesson. ***“And He said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will’”*** (Mark 14:36). Jesus



understood that He was on earth to do His Father’s will and not His own, even when He didn’t prefer His Father’s over His own.

The apostle Paul was thoroughly converted to Christ, to the point that he said, ***“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”*** (Galatians 2:20). He was quick in learning that he was only clay in the hands of the Potter. He said it in a different way in Ephesians 2:10. ***“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”***


Spiritual self-denial is not natural, but it can be learned and practiced until it even becomes desired by those who have grown spiritually. May we all be among that number who can conscientiously sing these words by Adelaide A. Pollard:

***“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have  
Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay!”***

***Mold me and make me after Thy  
will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.***

***Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine  
own way! Hold o’er my being absolute sway!***

***Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me.”***

Perhaps a fitting conclusion to our study is found in Isaiah 64:8. ***“But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.”*** 

Byron Nichols is Editor Emeritus of *The Voice of Truth International*. He resides in Springfield, Missouri, USA.





# 5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

## The Joy of Salvation

Paula Bates

1. Neither is there \_\_\_\_\_ in any other: for there is no other \_\_\_\_\_ under heaven given among men, whereby we must be \_\_\_\_\_. Acts 4:12
2. Cast me not away from your \_\_\_\_\_; and take not your holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the \_\_\_\_\_ of your salvation; and uphold me with your free spirit. Psalm 51:11-12
3. But rejoice, in as much as you are \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be \_\_\_\_\_, you may be glad also with \_\_\_\_\_ joy. 1 Peter 4:13
4. Wherefore my beloved, as you have always \_\_\_\_\_, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own \_\_\_\_\_ with fear and trembling. Philippians 2:12
5. For the grace of God that brings salvation has \_\_\_\_\_ to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and \_\_\_\_\_, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Titus 2:11-12



- 
- Answers:**
1. Salvation, name, saved
  2. Presence, joy
  3. Partakers, revealed, exceeding
  4. Obeyed, salvation
  5. Appeared, worldly lusts

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## EVIDENCES

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# *The Voice of the Lord*

D.A. Adenugba

In Psalm 29:3-9, we read persistently about the voice of the Lord. What is the voice of the Lord? The voice of the Lord:

- *“Is over the waters; the God of glory thunders...”* (v. 3)
- *“Is powerful”* (v. 4a)
- *“Is full of majesty”* (v. 4b)
- *“Breaks the cedars, yes, the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon”* (vs. 5-6)
- *“Divides the flames of fire”* (v. 7)
- *“Shakes the wilderness; The Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh”* (v. 8)
- *“Makes the deer give birth...”* (v. 9)

Children of God, without hesitation, give glory and honour due to the wonderful name of God. *“Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord Glory and Strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”* (v. 1-2).

The Highest will hear our voice and shower His great blessings on us. The God, whose dwelling is in Heaven and footstool is on Earth, will be highly magnified in our lives. May God have mercy on us and answer our prayers. ✝

**[Editor’s Note:** While angels in Heaven and the children of God on earth willingly recognize the sovereignty, magnificence and powerfulness of Almighty God, the rest of mankind is reluctant to acknowledge His existence and certainly will not bend their wills to Him. While people ought to pause and recognize God in the created universe (Romans 1:19-20), no one can be oblivious to the voice of God resounding through roaring thunder and lightning strikes of a fierce storm. ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

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# EVIDENCES

## THE INCREDIBLE ARCTIC GROUND SQUIRREL

**David Everson**

Well, the deep freeze of winter is upon us and I found out again how uncomfortable clearing sidewalks is at -12 degrees, but that is what we expect in West Virginia winters. Winter is also hard on the creatures that God created, and He designed them with some amazing methods of surviving the cold winter season. Let's look at one such design in the arctic ground squirrel.

The arctic ground squirrel is one of many animals that God designed to survive in the extreme cold region we call the arctic, where temperatures regularly fall to -40°F to -50°F in winter. Yet, we find many animals God created with the ability to survive these temperatures. Some have especially designed hair to insulate the body, while others find a shelter and over winter they experience that special state we call hibernation. The arctic ground squirrel was designed with extreme physical features.

In the late summer and fall of the year, it begins to build body fat by foraging on tundra plants, seeds and fruits. By the end of the summer, the males will begin to store food in their burrows so that in spring they will have a reserve of edible food until new growth begins in late spring.


During the hibernation of the arctic ground squirrel, it can drop its brain to just above freezing and the rest of the body temperature to subzero. Its heart rate drops as low as one beat per minute. The arctic ground squirrel is basically frozen solid! This is a condition called "supercooling." During the long seven to nine-month hibernation, the squirrel will periodically, once every two to three weeks, while it is still asleep, shiver and shake for 12 or more hours to create warmth to bring its body temperature back to normal of about 98°F. It does this using a part of the body called brown adipose tissue or brown fat. It will keep this body temperature for several hours to regenerate its brain, and then, it goes back to being frozen solid again. This is a very rare ability among mammals, and scientists are still trying to understand this physiological behavior that God designed in the arctic ground squirrel.

## EVIDENCES

Scientists are now studying the hibernation ability of the arctic ground squirrel and how its brain can survive this “brain freeze,” and it is hoped to help humans who suffer from neurological disorders like dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.



When ground squirrels hibernate, their brain neurons shrink, and many connections between neurons shrivel. However, it appears that the periodic warm up compensates for this loss with massive growth spurts, multiplying nerve links beyond what existed before the arctic ground squirrel started hibernation. It is still unclear to scientists how this happens, but many believe the answer may involve a protein named the tau protein. Normally tau proteins help stabilize long ropelike parts in the cell’s scaffolding called microtubules. Researchers have learned that the tau proteins build up in the brain cells of people with neurodegenerative disorders. The tau proteins may also be involved with other disorders such as strokes and heart attacks.

So, in the design of the arctic ground squirrel, the Master Designer may have created the long desired answer to some of mankind’s most tragic neural disorders. I hope by looking briefly at this amazing animal, we can be more determined to believe and stand for the truth of God as the Creator of all things. 

**[Editor’s Note:** Implied, regarding the contest between evolution and creation, is that the characteristics of the arctic ground squirrel could not have evolved over an extended period of time. The animal could not have survived in its environment without having these attributes immediately. ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

**David Everson is a retired biology teacher and conducts creation science seminars. He is also an elder in the church of Christ in Belington, West Virginia, USA.**



# How Do You Measure Up?

Preserve me, O God:  
for in thee do I put my trust.

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord,  
Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to  
thee; but to the saints that are in the earth,  
and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that  
hasten after another god: their drink offerings of  
blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into  
my lips.

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance  
and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines  
are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have  
a goodly heritage.

I will bless the Lord, who hath  
given me counsel: my reins also  
instruct me in the night seasons.

I have set the Lord always before  
me:

because he is at my right hand,  
I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad,  
and my glory rejoiceth:  
my flesh also shall rest in hope.

Psalm 16:1-9

# Our Perpetual Passover!


Terry Wheeler

The Passover Supper was the beginning of the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread for the Jews. It marked the beginning of the year for them, and it was a time of rejoicing for deliverance from Egyptian slavery and from the Death Angel that destroyed the firstborn of all who were not protected by the blood of the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:1-42).



Now what does any of this have to do with us? As Paul might say, “*much in every way*” (Romans 3:2a NKJV)! The Lamb is the Lord Jesus (John 1:29; Revelation 5:6). Jesus is our Passover Lamb, sacrificed for us, whose blood covers our guilt before God and saves us from His wrath. “*...For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

Therefore, we are to keep the Feast! For how long? Well, how long are we to be unleavened in sincerity and truth? Remember, the Old Testament feast lasted a week, beginning with the slaughter of the Passover lamb.

What do we commemorate now on the first day of every week? The death for us of Jesus (Acts 20:7)! We should hold that commemoration in our hearts for the rest of the week, right? Then what? Then, we do it all again! Every Sunday is our Passover celebration, and every week is our feast of unleavened bread seen in our behavior. As the Old Testament Passover is a type of Christ’s sacrifice and thus fulfilled on Calvary long ago, so today, our celebration of freedom from sin and death is every week, until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:26). Our Passover Feast is perpetual – in Christ! 

Terry Wheeler preaches for the Village Church of Christ in Lady Lake, Florida, USA.

**GOD**

# ***He Is Coming***

**Therman Hodge**

In the first chapter of the Gospel according to Mark, we find three references about Jesus Christ where it reads, “**He came**” (Mark 1:9, 14, 31). Of course, we know this means that Jesus came from one point or place to another. The coming of the Messiah or the Christ was of great interest to the Jews and others who had any knowledge of the Old Testament. Regarding Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist referred to Him time and time again (Matthew 3:11; John 1:27). Other New Testament passages also focus on the first coming of Christ (Hebrews 10:5-9). His coming was anticipated by both the prophets and the people. **Yes, we, too, see His coming on the pages of the Bible.**

**Jesus Christ came with a message** (Mark 1:14-15). His focus was on an opportunity. Jesus not only addressed time, but He spoke of the fullness of time. It was the right time (Galatians 4:4).

The emphasis of our Lord’s message was the kingdom. We know which kingdom. We know whose kingdom. We know of its relationship to the Gospel. The nature of the kingdom is compelling, though, some things are demanded of those who would be subjects thereof.

**Jesus Christ came on a mission** (Mark 1:16-20). He came to say some things and to do some things. Our Lord came to call men (Mark 1:16-17). Though men view themselves as busy, Jesus knew and knows what is best for mankind. He called and calls men to other priorities, which are higher and holy priorities. Jesus called and calls men to reach other men with the Gospel (Mark 1:17). Training is helpful and an interest in others is necessary.


**Jesus Christ came working miracles** (Mark 1:21-37). If any doubted His authority to call men, the miracles validated Him. Yes, there were some who doubted and denied His miracles, but Mark defended our Lord’s miracles. Onlookers admitted Jesus’ power over demons and His ability to heal the sick, including the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31). Likewise, people in the streets and throughout the community

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appreciated the miracles of the Christ (Mark 1:32-37).

**Jesus Christ came showing mercy** (Mark 1:40-43). He showed mercy to a leper who had come to Him, begging and with humility. Our Lord's extension of mercy came forth out of His compassion (Mark 1:41). Jesus was moved emotionally and felt for the leper. Therefore, He reached out to him. Mercy led to the leper's cure, which was sudden and complete.

**Jesus Christ came supporting Moses** (Mark 1:44). Jesus was not against the Law of Moses and respected what Moses wrote by way of divine inspiration. Our Lord respected the priesthood relative to Moses' Law. Since Jesus Christ lived during the time that Jews were amenable to the Law of Moses, Jesus required that others in that time also revere Moses' Law.

Yes, Jesus came with a message, on a mission, that was confirmed by miracles and with a great display of mercy, showing us how to respect the law of God. His coming should surely make a difference in our lives as it did in the lives of those of the long ago. 

**Therman Hodge is a Gospel preacher and a short-term missionary to several countries. He resides in Meridian, Mississippi, USA.**

**[Editor's Note: Jesus is coming again** to retrieve His church (1 Corinthians 15:23-24), comprised of individual Christians for which He is preparing a place in Heaven (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). It is appropriate, then, to "Prepare to meet your God" (Amos 4:12; see also 2 Peter 3:10-11). ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]



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**GOD**

# Searching for God

**Gary C. Hampton**

Researchers report they have found what may be liquid on Mars, according to an article on the website for *Popular Science*. I have rarely read an article filled with so many might's and maybes. It is obvious they are desperate to find the possibility of life on another planet.

Their time could be much better spent looking for God and His will for their lives. These well-educated men seem to be following the path of the Gentiles' in their downward spiral into the depths of sin.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them for God has shown it to them. 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.* (Romans 1:18-21)



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Scientists and researchers who work so hard to find evidence of life on another planet overlook the truth right before their eyes, God exists! The Psalmist sang, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork”* (19:1). *“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God”* (Hebrews 3:4). God created the universe with such precision that men can calculate the exact day, hour and minute of the next lunar or solar eclipse. Halley’s Comet has an orbital path that brings it within view of the earth every seventy-five years, with the next appearance expected in 2061.

It is no wonder that the singer of Israel wrote, *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God”* (Psalm 14:1-2). May all open their eyes to the design all around us and seek the will of the Designer. †

Gary C. Hampton preaches for the Siwell Road congregation in Jackson, Mississippi, USA.

## Robison’s Rubies

Each new year, people suppose it is a time for a new beginning. Really, though, a new beginning can take place any time. Many people might feel guilt over their past and frustration over their future, but there is hope in Christ. No, the person who follows Christ won’t necessarily have a smooth way or an easy path, but he or she can have a new beginning. By faith in Christ and confession thereof, by repentance and baptism, one can have sins washed away (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; 22:16). Then, one is in Christ (Galatians 3:27). The apostle Paul said, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV). Christ’s purpose was and is new beginnings and hope for the obedient. *“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”* (Hebrews 5:9).



# GOD

## THE WRATH OF GOD

Wayne Barrier

Paul declared in Romans 1:16-17, *“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’”* (NKJV). The Bible clearly teaches that we as the creation of God (Genesis 1) are accountable to Him (Matthew 25:31-46; Ecclesiastes 12:13), and we are to follow Him according to the Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17). **The power of God to salvation is available to everyone. Everyone can be saved.**


What about those who reject the Gospel and God’s offer of salvation? Scripture is filled with warning for these people. Consider Romans 1:18-32, which reads:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 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, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 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*

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*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.*

God's response to all ungodliness and unrighteousness follows the path from initial rejection, even though the evidence of God is clear, through the degraded condition where those professing to be wise became fools. This degraded state moves to the acceptance of men and women rejecting their natural use when women prefer women and men prefer men. Further degradation is characterized by the long list of sins in Romans 1:29-32.

There's no reason for man to reach this condition. We can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1-11). All have sinned (Romans 3:23) and are required to repent (Acts 2:38; 17:29-31) to be saved. Christ makes our repentance accepted (Romans 5:6-11). 

**[Editor's Note:** Summarized, Jesus Christ taught that sinners could become Christians – be saved – through faith and baptism. ***“He who believes and is baptized will be saved...”*** (Mark 16:16). Elsewhere, Jesus emphasized the necessity of belief that He is the Son of God (the Messiah) (John 8:24), repentance (Luke 13:3) and confessing before others that He is the Christ (Matthew 10:32). Hence, ***“faith”*** in Mark 16:16 is a synecdoche, a figurative expression where a part represents the whole (i.e., ***“faith”*** represents the entire New Testament plan of salvation). On the birthday of the church, recorded in Acts 2, the apostle Peter preached to Jewish believers, ***“...Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”*** (Acts 2:38). Everyone living today who would avoid the wrath of God (needs to ***“obey the gospel”*** 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) as Saul of Tarsus (later, the apostle Paul) did nearly 2,000 years ago; he was told, ***“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins...”*** (Acts 22:16) ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA and does mission work in several countries.

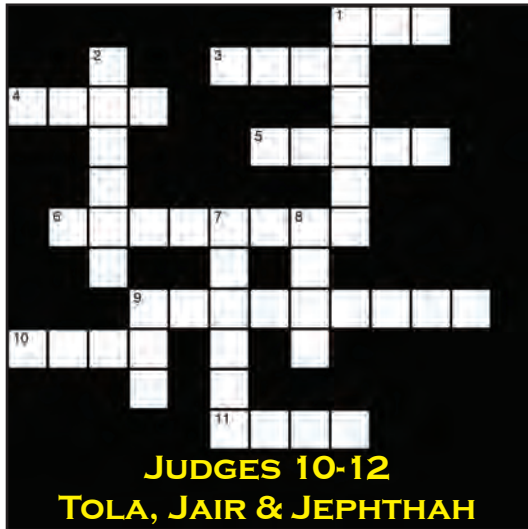


# Bible Find

Martha Rushmore

## ACROSS

- 1 How many years did Jephthah judge Israel? (12:7)
- 3 Who was the father of Tola? (10:1)
- 4 Who was judge over Israel after Tola? (10:3)
- 5 Where was Jair buried? (10:5)
- 6 Who met Jephthah coming out of his house in Mizpah? (11:34)
- 9 For what did Jephthah's daughter ask to go to the mountains and bewail? (11:38)
- 10 Who was the grandfather of Tola? (10:1)
- 11 Who judged Israel 23 years? (10:2)



## DOWN

- 1 Where was Tola buried? (10:2)
- 2 Who was Jephthah's father? (11:1)
- 7 What was Jephthah's mother? (11:1)
- 8 What did Israel do in the sight of the Lord? (10:6)
- 9 What did Jephthah make to God regarding a victory in the battle against Ammon? (11:30-31)

**See inside back cover for the solution.**

# ***GOD'S LAWS***

**Royce Pendergrass**

Moses was given God's law on Mount Sinai, and that law included what we commonly refer to as the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 20:1-17, we read, *"And God spoke all these words, saying:"*

1. *"I am the Lord your God... you shall have no other gods before Me."*
2. *"You shall not make unto you any graven image... and bow down to them nor serve them."*
3. *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."*
4. *"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."*
5. *"Honor your father and your mother."*
6. *"You shall not kill."*
7. *"You shall not commit adultery."*
8. *"You shall not steal."*
9. *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."*
10. *"You shall not covet."*

Thousands of years ago, God gave these commandments to Moses. The wondrous thing is that, even though we are no longer under the Law, all but one of these commandments is still given for God's people today! Let's examine that thought.

1. God's chosen people were commanded to serve God only and not put others before Him. Our Lord Himself taught the people, *"You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve"* (Matthew 4:10 NKJV).
2. God's people were not to worship idols. Paul praised the

## THE WORD OF GOD


Thessalonians who had ***“turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”*** (1 Thessalonians 1:9). The dictionary defines an idol as “an image or object worshiped as a god.” From history, we know that idols have been widespread, especially among superstitious people. God demands that His people worship Him and not a false god!

3. God’s people were not to use His name in vain. This one has always been a problem for people. Folks want to swear by God’s name and take God’s name in vain in cursing, and what about the ever-present OMG of today? We read in Hebrews 12:28, ***“Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”*** We don’t revere God and stand in godly awe of Him when we belittle His name!
4. People under the Old Law were commanded to ***“remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.”*** The Sabbath was the 7th day of the week and the day set aside for God. With the advent of Christ, this law changed as ***“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread”*** (Acts 20:7). Also, New Testament Christians were told to give of their means on the first day. ***“On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper...”*** (1 Corinthians 16:2). Scriptures give every reason to believe that the day of worship changed.
5. Under the Old Law, folks were told to honor one’s father and mother. Jesus Himself taught that we are to ***“Honor your father and mother”*** (Matthew 19:19).
6. The Old Law said, ***“You shall not murder.”*** Under the New Law, the outcome of a murderer is made clear in 1 John 3:15, ***“You know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”***
7. The Old Law said, ***“You shall not commit adultery.”*** Under the New Law, adultery is the first sin mentioned in works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19, and Paul ended by saying that ***“those who***

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*practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

8. The Old Law said, *“You shall not steal.”* Paul told the Ephesians, *“Let him who stole, steal no longer”* (Ephesians 4:28).
9. The Old Law said, *“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”* Paul taught, *“You shall not bear false witness”* (Romans 13:9).
10. The Old Law said, *“You shall not covet.”* Paul taught, *“Nor covetous will inherit the kingdom of God”* (1 Corinthians 6:10).

Sometimes we say that the Old Law was given to those folks a long time ago. True, it was but the teachings of the Old Law still apply in almost everything that we do today. Thank God for His continuing laws of goodness! 

**[Editorial Note:** The New Testament replaced all of the Old Testament, including the original Ten Commandments (2 Corinthians 7:7-13; Romans 7:6; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:8-13). However, essentially, nine of the Ten Commandments have been given again in the New Testament; we follow them, not because they **were** in the Old Testament – which is no longer authoritative – but because they **are** in the New Testament. ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

Royce Pendergrass (1941-2017) was a Gospel preacher who lived in Arkansas, USA.

# Cecil's

## COMMENTS

Paul told Titus, *“But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned”* (Titus 3:9-11 ESV). Among the *“works of the flesh”* are *“enmity, strife... rivalries, dissensions, divisions.”* These are numbered right along *“sexual immorality... idolatry... orgies.”* *“Those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Galatians 5:19- 21). God strongly opposes those who, because they are eager for arguments and love to pick fights, bring division among brothers.



## THE WORD OF GOD

# The Bible Is **THE** Book

Thomas Baxley



There are quite a few who regard the Bible as an important book but not the end-all that it truly is. Islam acknowledges the importance of much of the Bible, but Islamists falsely claim that the Bible has been corrupted and the Koran is superior. Mormons

have the Bible, the *Book of Mormon*, the *Pearl of Great Price*, and *Doctrines and Covenants* in their lineup. Catholicism as well as Protestant denominations believe the church's interpretation of the Bible is more important than the actual Bible text. Other groups have priests or prophets who claim to receive direct revelation from God, while still others claim to receive the revelation themselves. So, what do we do? Who is correct? With all of these ideas circulating, how can we know what the truth really is? This is why we must continually emphasize that the Bible is not just "an" important book, but it is **the** book; it, and it alone, is the standard. This is the only book that will teach us who God is and what His plan is; it is the only road map to Heaven. †

Thomas Baxley preaches for the Highway Nine Church of Christ in Piedmont, Alabama, USA.

**[Editor's Note:** It is eternally dangerous to either ignore the Bible or to alter it in any way. ***"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book"*** (Revelation 22:18-19 NKJV). ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

## THE WORD OF GOD

# WALKING WITH GOD

Rodney Nulph

*“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer”* (Psalm 19:14 NKJV). In my estimation, there is no better place to “see” the heart of God than through the Psalms. The Psalms, which fall into the *poetry* section of our Bibles, are made up of 150 Psalms, divided into 5 different books. The Hebrew word for Psalms means songs of praise, and many of the Psalms are just that. The entire 150 Psalms are thought to be composed over a 1,000-year period. While God is ultimately the Author (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21), He used several different human penmen to record His Words. David is attributed with writing 73 psalms in this collection, while Asaph, the sons of Korah, Solomon, Heman, Ethan and Moses are the other penmen of this great assortment. Each of the five books of the Psalms has a unique literary structure. Every book begins with our relationship to the Lord, and each book ends with a doxology (expression of praise) to the Lord. As we briefly note each of these five books, we shall see a unique place that God occupies in our everyday affairs.

Firstly, in **Book 1** (Psalms 1-41), we see **God beside us**. A great example of this is found in Psalm 1. Here the man who walks beside God is like a *“tree Planted by the rivers of water”* (Psalm 1:3). This man is flourishing, prospering and growing because he walks beside God. The last psalm in book 1 (Psalm 41) is another fitting example of God beside us. The one who daily *“considers the poor”* (Psalm 41:1) has the blessing of God walking beside him, which includes preservation (Psalm 41:2), compassion (Psalm 41:3-10) and salvation (Psalm 41:11-13).

Secondly, in **Book 2** (Psalm 42-72), we see **God before us**. A notable example of this is found in Psalm 46. Even if *“the earth be removed”* (Psalm 46:2), God is still God! It is He that goes before us in trials and turmoil. It is God that is always there, *even* amid horrific circumstances. Following God, we will always find help (Psalm 46:1). Psalm 72 is a Psalm

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from Solomon, but is certainly a **Messianic** Psalm, wherein Solomon, by inspiration's pen, saw God planning and preparing the time when all of mankind can serve God (Psalm 72:11). It is a time when all of the earth will see the wonderful planning of God in redemption and this terrestrial ball will be filled with His glory (Psalm 72:19). We are so blessed today to see this plan unfolded in its entirety!

Thirdly, in **Book 3** (Psalm 73-89), we see **God around us**. Psalm 78 is a psalm of Asaph, wherein he recounted the history of Israel and demonstrated how God had been at work the entire time. He encouraged Israel to retell these wonders to the next generation and even unto the children that had not yet been born (Psalm 78:6). What a lesson for us today. We must share with others, beginning in our homes, the mighty deeds that God has performed! Psalm 89 continues this same idea of proclaiming God's greatness to everyone (Psalm 89:1), which greatness is clearly seen in God blessing mankind with His Son, the seed of David (Psalm 89:35-36), and then, this book closes with adoration and praise for the Anointed One, Jesus Christ!

Fourthly, in **Book 4** (90-106), we see **God above us**. Psalm 90, a psalm of Moses (the only psalm that Moses is credited with penning), is a psalm wherein God is shown to be eternal and everlasting, but man's life upon this earth, in contrast, is shown to be very brief. Psalm 106 wonderfully closes with the doxology of God, Who is, "*everlasting to everlasting*" (Psalm 106:48). Amen!

Fifthly, in **Book 5** (107-150), we see **God among us**. Of course, nowhere do we see God among us more than Psalm 119, where His Word is our guide and stay. One can never be among God unless His Word is among him or her as well. Psalm 119 is a beautiful acrostic of the Hebrew alphabet, which contains 22 letters. Each 8-verse stanza begins with a corresponding Hebrew letter. Psalm 119 is a great treatise on the Law of God. Psalm 128 is another splendid example of God among us. When God is among our homes, our families are blessed ('wife as a fruitful vine'; 'children as olive plants about thy table,' Psalm 128:3). Then, this book closes with a Psalm of praise (Psalm 150) extolling God for His power (v.

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1) for His “*mighty acts*” (v. 2) and concludes with the call for everything that has breath to praise the Lord (v. 6).

Walking with God is a choice that each must make. To walk with God means that we obey His Word. Surely one of the remarkable things we see in the Psalms is reverence for God, both for His blessings and for His Book. May we each deeply drink of the wonderful treasures that are ours to behold within the Psalms, and may we each daily walk with God! †

Rodney Nulph is a Gospel preacher and the Associate Editor of *Gospel Gazette Online* magazine. He resides in Beavertown, Pennsylvania, USA.



Just as it takes a certain number of inches to make one foot, so it takes certain things to make a Christian. The Bible is God’s measuring standard to tell mankind what is and what is not the measure of becoming a Christians and to

exhibit Christian behavior (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The divine measuring stick – the Bible – says it takes faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Acts 2:38), confession (Romans 10:9-10) and baptism (Acts 2:38) to make a Christian. This same measuring standard tells man it takes living soberly, righteously and godly (Titus 2:12) to practice Christian conduct or living.

All carpenters in the world simply claiming that 6 inches equals one foot (instead of 12 inches) would not make their claim true. All the preachers and professed religionists in the world merely claiming that one becomes a Christian **before** faith, repentance, confession **and** baptism won’t make it so either. How do your beliefs and practices measure up in light of the Bible?



**Rebecca Rushmore**

**(answers inside back cover)**

1. Describe John's clothing.
2. Who was in the boat with Zebedee when James and John left to follow Jesus?
3. What name did Jesus give to James and John?
4. What method of instruction did Jesus use to teach the disciples?
5. How many swine did the unclean spirits enter?
6. Name the brothers of Jesus.
7. How did Herod describe John?
8. Near what city did Jesus heal Bartimaeus?
9. Into what did Jesus say the Temple had been turned?
10. What did Peter do after he realized he denied Jesus as He predicted?

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## SALVATION

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# HOPE IN THE MESSIAH: GOD'S ANOINTED IN ISAIAH 61

Jeremy W. Barrier

In September of 2021, I was fortunate enough to be able to take my first mission trip in 18 months. We were able to travel to Perú, crisscrossing the Andes mountains and visiting churches scattered throughout the former Incan Empire. Most of these churches are made up primarily of Quechua people, different from the Spanish descended inhabitants of Perú. One of the locations we visited was the town of Tinta, where a school for churches of Christ has now been operating for 41 years (since 1980) called *Escuela Nacional Biblica para Obreros Cristiaños (ENBOC)*. While there are many things that I would love to write about the school, and the work there, I will simply mention one interesting facet of this town, and then apply it to Scripture. This town was a locus for the Peruvian uprisings and struggle for independence in the late 1700's and early 1800's, when they finally overthrew the Spanish. The initial leader to kindle the beginnings of the uprising was a man by the name of Túpac Amaru II. Amaru was an early leader and martyr of the cause. While his rebellion led to his violent death and the death of his family in the year 1781, his efforts did lead to the defeat of the Spanish by Perú nearly half a century later. The struggle for freedom, equality, justice and fairness is sometimes hard to earn.

The struggle for justice and freedom takes place in many cultures and in many settings. Such was the case for the Jews in Palestine 2,000 years ago. When the young Jew by the name of Jesus arose before His synagogue in Nazareth to read from the Holy Scriptures, He too brought a message of longing for independence. Our Lord's message came from Isaiah, the great prophet of old. Jesus told the synagogue that He would be the One Who had been anointed by God (Luke 4:16-21). He would bring release to the unjustly imprisoned. Jesus would bring hope to the hopeless and poor. He would bring healing to those who were blind. Jesus would be the long-expected King of Israel Who would arise and heal the land.


Isaiah was a renowned and famous prophet of Israel who lived almost 800 years before Jesus. However, by the time of Jesus' life, his writings were



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certainly one of the most important and popular writings read by the Jewish people. Isaiah's writings were a great source of inspiration. In particular, the final section of the book in chapters 56–66 proclaimed a great, redeeming message of deliverance by God. Isaiah called out the words of a God who would redeem and heal the nation of Israel. The prophet brought a message of a returning anointed one, a King like no other king of old, who would heal and deliver the people. One passage that communicates this message so clearly is the one that Jesus read within his community who had gathered on the Sabbath. He was reading Isaiah 61. The message of Isaiah emphasizes that God will bring justice to the people of God through this anointed one. God loves justice (Isaiah 61:8; 11). God rejoices in seeing everyone treated with fairness. Ultimately, Isaiah called for fairness, independence and equality that all humans deserve. Consequently, this was the core message of our Lord, too. Jesus, the Anointed One of God, would bring justice and mercy to the world through His life. An amazing message indeed!

We struggle under the weight of the world and carry so many burdens. Sometimes, we simply cannot make enough money to survive. We struggle with our families – with our marriages and with our children. We struggle with our work or with our health. We struggle in our spirit, and our souls cry out to be filled. We hurt and long for more. We desire love and affection. We want meaning in our lives. So many difficulties and trials weigh us down. Then, we read the message of Isaiah 61. We are filled with hope and justice after reading Isaiah's message. We realize that the Anointed One will bring freedom from oppression, and God will deliver.

As I walked through the central Plaza of Tinta in September 2021 and looked at the home of Túpac Amaru II, and I actually thought of the Messiah, the spiritual Messiah Jesus, who rose up against the evil powers of the cosmos and won! People desire redemption. By way of comparison, the Incan people desired redemption. The people of ancient Israel also cried to God for redemption in the sending of a deliverer. Even in the days of Jesus, people gathered in the synagogues of Galilee, and specifically in Nazareth, as they called out to God for healing. Through the message of Isaiah, God says He will provide. This is a message of hope! 

**Jeremy W. Barrier is a missions evangelist and head of the graduate program at Heritage Christian University in Florence, Alabama, USA.**

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# For Those Questioning the Necessity of Immersion

Paul Clements

It is common to hear the question – “What about the thief on the cross?” – in a discussion about the necessity of baptism or immersion. Baptism is a transliteration of a Greek word that means immersion, which is also evident from New Testament verses, too (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4).

Some people assume the penitent thief was never baptized. We do not know whether he was baptized. He could have been baptized in John’s baptism when it was still in force. He could have been a disciple of Christ and then turned to sin. Regardless, we do not know if he was baptized. When you consider the discussion that Jesus had with the penitent thief,




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you learn several things (Luke 23:38-43). Among other matters, you learn this man knew something about Jesus and had changed his view of Jesus. You also learn that he believed in God and in a moral standard (right from wrong). This man confessed his sins and admitted his punishment was just. He said Jesus was innocent of the charges made against Him, which would have included Jesus' claim to be the Son of God (Mark 14:61-62). This was an expression of faith and an acknowledgment of the truth that Jesus was Who He claimed to be.

The thief was evidently penitent. Everything he said and did seems to indicate that. He, like the apostles, may have neither fully understood the kingdom nor the Lord's intent and purpose. However, he believed Jesus would yet come into His kingdom and could "**remember**" him at that time.

A couple of other facts need to be considered in regard to Jesus and the thief. **One**, Jesus had the authority to forgive sin upon whatever terms He chose (Mark 2:1-12). In this passage, Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic based on the faith of his friends and proved His authority to do so by healing the man. **Secondly** and most pertinent to the matter, Jesus and the thief lived and died under the Mosaic Law. The new and better covenant of Jesus came into force **after** the death of Christ (Hebrews 8:6-7; 9:15-17; Colossians 2:14). The Mosaic Law was for the Jews, given by God to His chosen people at Mt. Sinai. After the death of Christ, when He took the Jewish Law "**out of the way, nailing it to his cross,**" all men – both Jew and Gentile – were then subject to the law of Christ and it alone.

Here's a final thought regarding the necessity of baptism. Since Jesus said, "**He that believeth and is a baptized shall be saved**" (Mark 16:15-16), **then that settles it**, regardless of what the thief did or did not do! As to whether the thief was saved with or without baptism, Jesus said he was to be with Him in Paradise that day. Paradise is used in the New Testament to refer to the place of the righteous dead (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7). 

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**Not  
Counted  
but  
There**

**Van Sprague**



How many had eaten in Matthew 14:21? *“Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children”* (NKJV). Five thousand? If you said, “No, more than five thousand. That wasn’t counting the women and children,” you are correct. That’s the idea of the word translated *“besides.”* The men were counted separately, not counting women and children.

However, the word can also mean “without.” Why wouldn’t the translators use that word here? Let’s try it. “Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, without women and children.” While “without” is one shade of meaning of the word, it would give the wrong idea given the context. Someone might come away asking, “Were there women and children? Did they not get to eat?”

In John’s account of this miraculous feeding, there was a young boy who had loaves and fish (John 6:9). It was a great multitude, and there were women and children in it. Jesus was healing the sick. The word is translated *“besides”* because they were there. They just weren’t included in the counting.

Here’s why this is important. Some take Paul’s emphasis on righteousness being by faith, in places like Romans 4, and try to remove anything we do, “works,” from faithful living. Romans 3:28 concludes *“that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds [works] of the law.”*

Abraham was a great example of this because he was justified without being under the Law. However, it wasn’t because of what he did (his

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works) that he was worthy of justification, but he *“believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness”* (Romans 4:3). He was justified without the works of the Jewish Law and not from counting his own works. Otherwise, *“if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God”* (Romans 4:2).

See, God had already been shown as the Justifier, through Jesus, in Romans 3:26. There are none who are righteous and who can justify themselves; otherwise, they would be able to boast of what they have done.

It is in this context that Paul went on to say:

*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”* (Romans 4:4-8)

We come back to the word we discussed in the beginning. *“David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works.”* “Apart” here could be translated with the idea of “without” (KJV) or “separate.” The context bears out that it is much like the first verse we first examined. David expressed gratitude for the fact that there were works which weren’t counted. He went on to mention the lawless deeds and sins that are forgiven and covered.

Faith being *“accounted”* for righteousness is descriptive of the accounting process. If our works are what was counted, everyone would end up in the red [deficient] after considering all of the good and bad. However, it’s faith in God and His righteousness that is counted, not counting our works. Like the women and children being there, our works are there, and they have to be, but they do not earn our righteousness.

Reflect on the following verses about salvation and see how this understanding of works and faith fits the Bible context. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are*

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*His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).*

*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. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:18-26) †*

[Editor’s Note: The disciples of Christ (Christians) are obligated to bear “much fruit” (John 15:5, 8), and yet, that is not the basis by which one’s sins are remitted, because nothing that man can do can satisfactorily address the problem of sins and remove them. Otherwise, if man could do something or enough of something to remove his own sins, there would have been no reason for Jesus Christ to have left Heaven and to die on Calvary’s cross. **“So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do’”** (Luke 17:10). Though we cannot remove our own sins, on the basis of our obedience – though we fall short of perfection – Jesus Christ is **“the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”** (Hebrews 5:9). Works are the result of obedient faith, but the absence of works calls into question one’s faith and obedience. ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

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## Gospel Gazette Online

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# The House of God Often Meets in a Building to Worship

Raymond Elliott

The house of God also meets in rented halls, private homes, under a shed, in public buildings and even in the open spaces. However, one asks, “Is not the church building where we meet on Sunday the Lord’s house?” Yes, in the same sense that my house in which my wife and I live is the Lord’s house. It belongs to God who provided it for us. The psalmist declared that *“the earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein”* (Psalm 24:1 ESV). Yet, did not David say, *“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD!’”* (Psalm 122:1)? Yes, that is true. There was a time when God’s presence could be found above the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle (sanctuary) that Moses erected (Exodus 25:8, 21, 22). The glory also filled the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34). Later, King Solomon built the Temple (house) of the Lord in the city of Jerusalem (1 Kings 6:14). When finished, *“the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord”* (1 Kings 8:11).

In his sermon in Acts 17, the apostle Paul declared, *“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands”* (v. 24). Yet, God does dwell in His people! You see, the house of God is the church of our Lord! In a letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, *“I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth”* (1 Timothy 3:14-15). In 1 Peter 2:5, we read, *“You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”* Paul wrote to the church of God in Corinth, *“For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building”* (1 Corinthians 3:9). **The house of God is a spiritual building and not one**

## THE CHURCH

erected by the hands of men! It is in this sense that the house of God does often meet in a building! The house (church) of our Lord is never a place but a people redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ!

The house of God is also referred to as being “*a holy temple in the Lord,*” as we read in Ephesians 2:19-22.

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

We also read in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, “*Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.*” The apostle wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:19 “*that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*”

So, my brothers and sisters in Christ, the Scriptures teach that we are the “house of God, which is the church of the living God,” that is “*a spiritual house*” and not the place where we assemble to worship God. ✝

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### KENNEY'S PENNIES

*“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God”* (Ephesians 3:17-19 NKJV). Man is looking for fulfillment, for **something more**. Look here! Christ provides so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. Catch the degree of fullness – “*filled with all the fullness.*” That pertains not only to this life but to the afterlife also!

# HYMNS

## Trust in the Lord

Psalm 37:3-7  
Arr. Paul Clements, 2020

Paul Clements, 2020

Trust in the Lord and do good, Trust in the

The first system of music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "Trust in the Lord and do good, Trust in the".

Lord and feed on His faith - ful-ness; De - light your-self

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Lord and feed on His faith - ful-ness; De - light your-self".


al - so in the Lord, and He shall give you your

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "al - so in the Lord, and He shall give you your".

hearts' de - sires. Com - mit your way to the

The fourth system concludes the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "hearts' de - sires. Com - mit your way to the".

## HYMNS



Lord, and He will bring forth your right-eous-ness



as the light; Rest in the Lord and wait for Him,



Wait on the Lord and keep keep His way. His way.

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# ARE WE DEVOTED TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD?

Brian Kenyon

Luke summarized the first church of Christ, established in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42). The term, *“continued steadfastly”* means to be devoted (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 6:4; Romans 12:12). There are four specific areas, all spiritual in nature, to which these early Christians were devoted. In this article, we will examine the third of these. They were devoted to *“the breaking of bread.”* The term *“breaking of bread”* can refer simply to a common meal, as it does in Acts 2:46. However, in the context of Acts 2:42, the term refers to a special *“breaking of bread,”* which is the Lord’s Supper (cf., Matthew 26:26-29). In Acts 2:42, the original language has two definite articles that do not come across in most English translations. The term literally reads, *“the breaking of the bread,”* which clearly distinguishes this from “breaking bread [from house to house]” (Acts 2:46). The day and frequency with which the Lord’s Supper was to be taken is not given here, but we find elsewhere that it was taken on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20). The Lord’s Supper is communion with Christ (Matthew 26:29; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17), as worshippers remember His death (1 Corinthians 11:23-29). *“The breaking of bread”* likely serves as a synecdoche (a part used for the whole) to indicate all worship. Spiritual obligations were a matter of devotion for the early church (Acts 20:6). How important is worship and *“the breaking of bread”* to us? †

Brian R. Kenyon is the Director of the Florida School of Preaching in Lakeland, Florida, USA.

**Did You Know?** Excavations determined that a foundation stone of the Temple weighs about 415 tons. These quarried stones were set in a 2-foot deep channel chiseled into solid bedrock.



## WORSHIP

# *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*

Dean Kelly

We have this beautiful song in our song book. We usually use it, appropriately, as we leave an assembly to close it out. It is taken from the following passage in Numbers 6:22-27, which reads:

*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."' "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."* (NKJV)

This passage is a blessing that God commanded the priests to use for the Israelites. God stated to Moses the purpose of this blessing: *"They shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."* Let's examine this blessing one phrase at a time:

**The Lord bless you and keep you.** The priests were to call upon God to bless the people. When we close a service with this song, are we really listening to the words we are singing? It should be our prayer and hope that as we leave that place of worship those who have been assembled will be blessed by God. We need to recognize our dependence upon God, realizing that *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning"* (James 1:17). We are asking God to bless those who are assembled. We are also asking God to keep them in the safety of His arms. We recognize what Paul says, *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31). We are praying that we will walk in such a way as to be in the light (1 John 1:7) and to walk in the safety of the God Who loves us.



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**The Lord make His face shine upon you.** For the child of God, it is a blessing for God's face to shine on us. Notice the request in the prayer that God be "*gracious to you.*" Paul consistently called upon God to give grace to those to whom he wrote. This is a grace beyond the saving grace (Titus 2:11). It is a special extension of God's favor upon those that are His people. We are echoing that prayer for God to extend His special favor or grace upon those who have been assembled. We want our God to look upon us with joy, with a "*shining face*" of glory and blessing as we walk our daily walk.

**The Lord lift His countenance upon you.** That phrase carries the connotation of God looking upon us with favor. Paul stated to the Galatians, "*For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ*" (Galatians 1:10). Again, in Paul's writings, he not only wished grace but peace on the ones to whom he wrote. That peace is not the peace that the world gives but peace that God gives (John 14:27). It is that peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7). This peace of the blessing from the priests to the people, and the peace that comes from God to Christians, is a peace that is not dependent upon our circumstances; it is **internal, not external, because of the eternal.**

The purpose of this blessing, once again, is to put God's name on His children so He can bless them (Numbers 6:27). When we sing this song in closing a service, may the words of this song stamp into our hearts the name of God. May we always wear His name and the name of His Son and allow God to bless us because of it. †

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The power of a transformed life is seen when one presents his or her body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2). Like the metamorphosis of the lifecycle of a butterfly, our spiritual bodies are changed (i.e., renewed) by the Word of God.

**Let God's Word transform your life now!**

# Parents, Are You Home Bible Schooling Your Children?

Mark T. Tonkery

Due to the pandemic, most parents with school-aged children have been introduced to the world of homeschooling, like it or not. Even before the pandemic, many Christian families chose to homeschool their children, and they feel their children learn better in this type of an environment. Regardless of how parents choose or are compelled to educate their children, it is vital that all parents **home Bible school** their children. This is especially important since the pandemic has interfered with our regularly scheduled children's Bible classes.

The Bible teaches us that it is our job and responsibility as parents to train our children in the ways of the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 teaches us:

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.* (NKJV)

Then, in the New Testament, Ephesians 6:4 commands, **“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”** Further, we learn in 2 Timothy 1:5 and 2 Timothy 3:15 how Timothy was taught the Scriptures from his youth by his mother and by his grandmother.

Josh McDowell once wrote, “God emphasizes the importance of parents teaching the Bible to their children. The church and Christian school [Bible School as well] cannot be used to escape from this responsibility.” Please do not misunderstand; I am very happy that we have Bible classes for our children, and we have great Bible class teachers

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who do a wonderful job teaching the Bible. Yet, they cannot take the place of parents in teaching the Bible and God's truths.

Children watch and learn from their parents every day. They know what we believe and how we live out the teachings of the Bible – or not. They know if we

lie or cheat, pray or read our Bibles. So, **are we home Bible schooling our children?** Here are some suggestions on ways we can teach our children the Lord's Word at home.

- Have daily Bible devotionals where Bible reading, teaching and praying take place.
- As you go through your day, and children have questions, try always to point them to the Bible. Have older children look up the passages in their Bibles to find answers to their questions.
- Work with your children to know where the books of the Bible are found, memorize the names of the Old and New Testament books in order as they appear in our translations, give them memory verses and encourage them to read the Bible.
- Talk about your children's Bible classes. Have them review the lessons and encourage them to do any homework the teachers assign, and if they need to return a homework paper, then make sure your child follows through.
- Live the Bible in your everyday life so your children know what it means to be a Christian – to be kind, loving, joyful and dealing with problems of life in a biblical way rather than in a way the world would deal with them.

**Parents, we cannot leave our child's Bible education to chance.  
Are you home Bible schooling your children?** †

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## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

# Should Opposites Attract?

Rebecca Rushmore

A recent question was raised about how personality types affect the marriage relationship. Which personalities get along the best and which clash the most?

Of all the relationships we have here on earth, marriage is probably the most important. A good relationship between a husband and a wife makes for a happy home. A marriage shadowed by bitterness, fighting and other unpleasantness leaves its scars on not only the couple but also their children and others around them. **Good marriages are not just accidents. They are the result of hard work and understanding.**

In general, marriages between two people with the same personality type have the potential to clash. Also, anyone married to a sanguine or choleric is in for a challenge. This is mainly due to the tendencies of these two types to require excessive attention and control, respectively. Frequently, opposites do attract. Sanguine individuals tend to marry melancholy ones and choleric favor phlegmatics. Such situations are not always the case but do appear to be common. In no way can one combination be considered better than another any more than one personality type can be considered better than another. Each situation will have its strengths and weaknesses.

If two people are to enjoy a happy marriage, each must understand his mate's personality. Each personality type has unique needs and reacts to situations in a different way. Consider, first, the sanguine. Here is an outgoing person who loves to be the center of attention. He typically is an unorganized person. What problems could this create in a marriage if he weds a melancholy – a quiet person who wants everything in order? A phlegmatic mate could also present some problems. This mate is even quieter than the melancholy and does not like to be involved in anything. A choleric mate would need to be in control and therefore take the attention from the sanguine to himself. Can you see the problems that might arise? How could some of these potential clashes be avoided?

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What might the mate of a sanguine do to promote peace in the home? First, realize that there is nothing wrong with being cheerful and optimistic. Solomon recorded in Proverbs 17:22, “***A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones***” (NKJV). It is good for all around if a person is happy instead of sad and depressed. Next, acknowledge that sanguines need lots of attention. Everyone likes to feel that he is important, but he feels important when he is center stage. Third, accept the fact your sanguine mate will never be a neat, organized individual. Though he may try for short periods to be neat and tidy, it is not in his nature. Eventually, he will revert to his sloppy habits. This does not mean he cannot become neater; if he really wants to, he can. However, do not expect him to become a perfectionist.

A choleric mate always needs to be in control. If this is the man, that is good. He will lead the household by making decisions and guiding it the best he can. However, if the wife is choleric, problems could arise. One problem comes from not accepting God’s commands. Paul wrote, “***Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head***

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*of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:22-23).*

Just as Christ is the master of the marriage between himself and the church, His bride, the wife in an earthly marriage must let her husband have the authority. The husband, whether he is a choleric who likes control or not, must assume this role if he is to be pleasing to God. With the Bible as a guide, this matter of authority in the home makes for better understanding between mates.

Another conflict that can arise with a choleric mate surrounds his love for controversy. Many times a choleric individual will argue just to argue. Knowing this, a wise spouse can learn to carefully pick the arguments in which he will participate. For peace, the choleric should learn to control his argumentative nature. Knowing that a choleric mate is by nature very stubborn can also help avoid hurt feelings and conflict in the home.

Melancholy individuals are hard to please. Sometimes the mate of such a person may feel rejected and that he is unable to do anything right. This leads to depression and resentment that can destroy a marriage. The spouse of a melancholy should understand that his mate, by nature, sets high standards for himself and those around him. Failing to meet those standards is not a sign of weakness or unworthiness. The perfectionist tendencies of the melancholy tend to irritate those around him. He deeply wants and needs things to be in perfect order for his peace of mind. A spouse who knows this can help the marriage by doing his best not to be a slob and keeping things as orderly as possible.

Since this individual sets such high standards, he is very critical of those who do not meet them. Depression is frequent, usually because he himself cannot meet the standards and because no matter how hard he tries, he cannot get everything in perfect order. If your mate is like this, work with him to set more reasonable standards and do not take his frequent criticism to heart.

The last personality type is the phlegmatic. This individual is unlikely to volunteer for anything. He will not want to socialize except with a few close friends. A mate who loves to go to social gatherings may feel




## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

closed off from others. Remember that the phlegmatic leans toward indecisiveness. When appropriate, make some decisions for him and you may learn that given time, he would have made the same decision. A man of this personality is the least likely to accept his God-given role of leading the home. If his mate takes the role, he will gladly let her. However, this is not God's plan. The godly wife, no matter what her natural inclinations, should insist her phlegmatic husband accept his responsibility in the home.

In a marriage consisting of any combination of personality types, good communication and reliance on the Bible are keys. When situations arise, sit down with your mate and let him know what troubles you; he cannot read your mind. Find out what your mate needs and try your best to meet those needs. If he is a sanguine, he needs attention and approval. The choleric spouse needs achievement and appreciation. A melancholy individual needs order and sensitivity. Respect and self-worth are necessary for the phlegmatic. Also, realize your own faults and how they affect your mate. Sometimes compromises may need to be arranged so that the needs of each can be met. Don't expect your spouse to do all the changing needed to make the marriage work.

God left us with some guidelines for a happy marriage. Read Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-7. Mutual love and respect characterize a happy marriage. A marriage between a husband and a wife is similar to the relationship between Christ and the church. Neither should be full of unhappiness and strife. Also keep in mind that divorce is not an option in God's eyes. Do all that you can to ensure problems in your marriage will not keep you out of Heaven.

Knowledge of the four personality types is not a cure-all for marriage. It is a tool to understanding your spouse and the reasons he acts the way he does. We discussed in this article mainly the faults and how to deal with them. Remember, you did not marry a person for his faults but for his strengths. Enjoy the strengths, work with the faults and above all, keep God at the center of the marriage. 

**Rebecca Rushmore is a Staff Writer for *The Voice of Truth International* and a school-teacher. She resides in Collierville, Tennessee, USA.**



# *Bible Word Scramble*

**Rebecca Rushmore**

Write the first letter of each word indicated in the passages below.  
Then, unscramble the letters to find the theme of the verses.

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Matthew 9:22 4th word \_\_\_\_

Romans 1:16 2nd word \_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 1:21 21st word \_\_\_\_

Hebrews 11:1 8th word \_\_\_\_

1 Peter 1:7 18th word \_\_\_\_

**Bible text: New King James (NKJV)  
(See the back cover for answer.)**

# *How to be Happy?*

**Pedapaga Akash Babu**

What is the toughest question you've ever been asked? What is the inquiry that everyone in the world nowadays is making? Many millionaires and billionaires around the world are in a quest to find the answer for the same question, which the whole world is asking. Many great people, including philosophers, have sacrificed their lives to find the answer to this question. So, without further suspense, let me bring that inquiry to you – "How can we be happy?" Many people have family, love, money and everything they wish. Yet, sadly, the only things they can't find are happiness and contentment. Many people, especially youth, have not found happiness. As a result, some of them resort to suicide, drug addiction, game addiction, etc. There are many reasons for depression. Rejection and stress are two main reasons for depression.



## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

These days, many people move away to the mountains or to the seashore in their quest to find peace in their lives.

Let me elaborate with a real story of a man who lived in London between 1771-1837. He was depressed, and hence, he went to a doctor for advice. The doctor suggested that he go to a show by a very popular clown named Joseph Grimaldi. The doctor said that Mr. Grimaldi is capable of even making the stones laugh. Then the man said, "I am that Grimaldi!" Even the people who make others happy find themselves depressed, too. Some time ago, I read an article about the suicide of a motivational speaker who had motivated more than 3,000 people to achieve their dreams. Even motivators need motivation.

Look at a man from the Bible, the second richest king who ever lived on the planet with a net worth of \$2 trillion dollars (USD). He had an income of 25 tons of gold every year (2 Chronicles 9:13-29), He was the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 4:29), a great writer (1 Kings 4:32) and a man with a thousand wives (1 Kings 11:3). Even after having great luxuries, many riches and a giant family, Solomon wrote, "***Vanity of vanities... all is vanity***" (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

**[While not able to confirm the precise wealth of Solomon, he was the wealthiest man of his time and perhaps who ever lived. ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]**

The answer to the question of how to be happy is "Jesus." The only way one can find happiness – not only for a lifetime on the earth but also for eternity – is Jesus Christ. One cannot be happy without having Christ in his life. Men have been trying to find happiness in the physical realm. Yet, the happiness we may find on Earth doesn't last forever, but the happiness we need to seek lasts for eternity.

### ***The Bible Tells Us to Be Happy.***

We must rejoice as our names are written in Heaven (Luke 10:20). One's name is written in Heaven only after being baptized. Acts 8:39 says the eunuch went on his way rejoicing after he was baptized. Acts 16:34 talks about the jailor and his family who rejoiced with all his house after they were baptized. So, are you baptized? Rejoice! Your name is written in the book of eternal life! Galatians 5:22 says that happiness or joy is one among the nine qualities of

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

the fruit of Spirit. In Acts 11:23, Barnabas exhorted the church to cleave to the Lord. We find happiness when we hug the Lord. I always felt safe when I was wrapped around by the arms of my parents. Hugging also releases oxytocin, which is a stress relieving hormone in the human body. Our Lord is spirit. Hence our physical bodies can't touch Him, but we hug the Lord when we give first priority to Him in our lives. We hug the Lord when we put Him first in everything. Also, we must note that hugging the Lord is neither advice nor a request. It is an order! Put God first in everything and you will find happiness in your life for sure (Matthew 6:33)!

### ***Great Men of the Bible Rejoiced in the Lord, Irrespective of the Situations.***

You might have a question. "I have been facing many rejections, teasing and bullies. How can I be happy in all circumstances?" Let me show you two men who rejoiced while bearing shame for the Lord's name (Acts 5:41). Even after being severely beaten and being thrown into prison, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God (Acts 16:23-25). We generally sing when we are happy. Paul and Silas were happy for being in prison for no reason except because of the Gospel. Also note that the time at which Paul and Silas were rejoicing was midnight! Do little irritations from your family disturb your happiness? Do rejections in your life unseat your joy? Neither irritations nor rejection in our lives are bigger than the troubles and rejections that the apostle Paul faced.

Many people think that having money can buy happiness. Money can buy many things but not all things. The Bible teaches us to believe in the Lord, rather than in unstable and temporary wealth (1 Timothy 6:17). First Peter 4:12-13 tells us to rejoice even when we take part in Christ's sufferings.

### ***Why Should I Rejoice in the Lord?***

Philippians 4:4 reads, "*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*" (NKJV). Verse 5 says, "*...Lord is at hand.*" Wow, what a convenient God we have! We need not go to Jerusalem, we need not climb a hill or go to a valley to find our Lord. He is at hand! So, Rejoice!

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Acts 14:17 says that He is the only One Who fills our hearts with joy. He defends and protects us (Psalm 5:11). So, rejoice in the Lord.

Happiness or joy in the Lord lasts forever. It is eternal happiness. All the pleasures of this world last for a period (Hebrews 11:24), and they will come to an end (1 Corinthians 7:31). There is a day coming in which the whole world along with tears and depression in it will be destroyed. Then, there shall be no more death and no more tears (Revelation 21:4). Those who are victorious in the battle with worldly pleasures shall reign forever with the Lord (Revelation 22:5).

Let me conclude with some important questions. Are you baptized? Do you have Christ as your Lord and Savior? Do you put God first in everything you do? Do you seek heavenly things? If the answer for the above questions is “Yes,” then, you shall reign with the Lord. Congratulations! You are a victorious Christian! If the answer is, “No,” to any one of the questions, I once again urge you to think of Christ. Our lives are unpredictable. One’s life is like a vapor that appears and vanishes in no time. So, please come to Christ, accept Him as your Savior by obeying His command to believe and be baptized (Mark 16:16). Put God first in everything you do, and you will find the happiness that lasts forever. †

**Pedapaga Akash Babu lives in Tiruvuru, India.**

**[Editor’s Note:** Ten years ago, as a sixth-grader, brother Babu was a speaker, as was I, on a program in India addressing 100 Gospel preachers. Despite barely a teenager then, he presented one of the best, most enthusiastic, relevant and useful sermons that I’ve ever heard anywhere at any time. He spoke in perfect English while another brother translated his sermon into Telugu. Now, he is a graduate from schooling with an engineering degree. It seems that our young brother in Christ is following in the faithful steps of his father and mother, his father being a schoolteacher and Gospel preacher – also worthy of commendation for his energy and efficiency for our Lord Jesus Christ. ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

# Cecil's

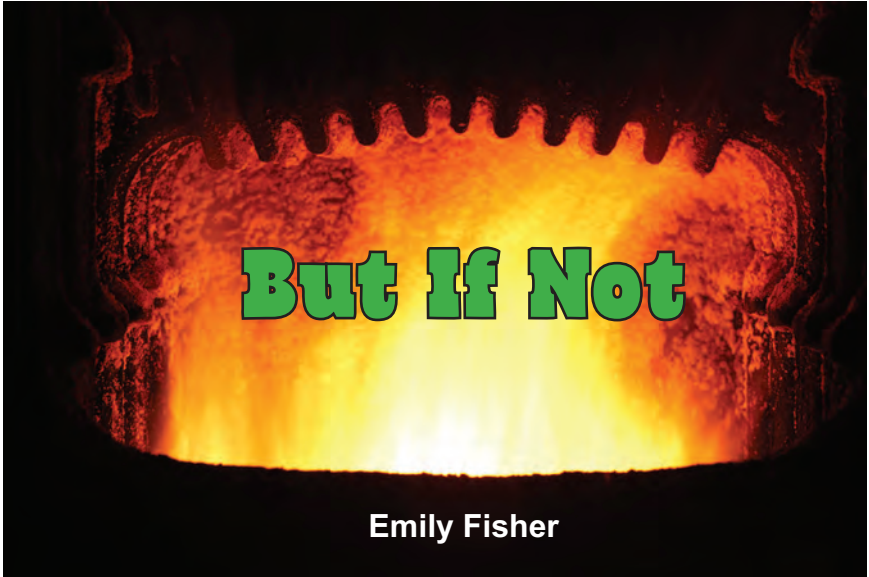
COMMENTS

When someone you know is doing something you believe is wrong, it is always

better to talk to him about it than to talk to others about him.



## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING



Three young, Hebrew men were brought in before King Nebuchadnezzar for refusing to pay homage to the golden idol that the king had set up on display for all to bow down in worship of it. Consequently, the monarch of Babylon angrily addressed them with the threat of being burnt to death if they dared to resist again. Daniel 3:16-18 gives us their response to that prideful king:

*...O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up. (NKJV)*

Notice the faith of these Jews in the phrase of verse 18, ***“but if not.”*** In the face of imminent death, they not only informed the mighty king of the most powerful empire at the time that the God of Israel could deliver them from the fire, but also, that since their God is All-Powerful and All-

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Knowing, He may allow their lives on this earth to end in that furnace. **Either way, they would not bow down to false gods, and the One, True God would be glorified!**

We must ask ourselves if we have faith as displayed by these Israelites. The world is still full of idolatry to which many succumb (Romans 1:18-25; Colossians 3:5). As Christians, we must realize that our allegiance to the True God is being pulled in every way further from Him by the influences of this world. Therefore, we must continually fight against evil, striving every day to keep the faith and encourage our brethren in their walk (Ephesians 6:10-12; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 14:12).

The Christian life is not an easy one, and certain circumstances in our individual lives may make life even harder to bear. We may pray for and expect certain things in this life: a faithful spouse, healthy children, a good job, etc., but in all reality, we may not be given such blessings. Is our faith such that when loss, hardship and disappointment happen in this life, we trust fully in God and lean on His understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6)?

Knowing that without faith, we cannot please our Lord (Hebrews 11:6), may we resolve to fortify our commitment to Him. May our prayers of petition to our Father, include, **“But if not, I will praise and glorify You.”** †

Emily Fisher is a missionary, a staff writer for *The Voice of Truth International* and works with World Evangelism. She resides in Winona, Mississippi, USA.

### Robison's Rubies

In Ephesians 2, Paul wrote of God's rich mercy and **“great love with which he loved us”** (v. 4 NKJV). That love spurred His **“kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”** (v. 7). He said, then, that God **“raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”** (v. 6). That is, forgiveness reigned so that people who were spiritually dead became spiritually alive. In a parallel passage in Colossians 2, the apostle Paul commented on how that happened: **“buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead”**. When a believer is baptized into Christ, the old lifestyle of sin is put away and a new person arises, forgiven and alive. Praise God for this gracious opportunity.

# CHRIST, THE TRUE ONE

Mark McWhorter

There is so much said about our Lord, Jesus Christ in the Bible. The entire history of the Old Testament pointed toward Jesus. The four Gospel accounts tell us about His life. Truth is important with God. The word “true” is used referring to Jesus and His character. Let us look at a few instances.

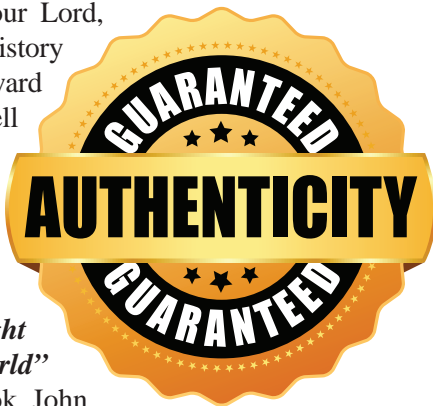
In John 1:9, we read, *“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world”*

(NKJV). In the beginning of the book, John discussed the Word – Jesus – before He came to earth. Jesus came to earth to be our spiritual light. **If we follow Him, we will never be in darkness.**

In John 6:32, we read, *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you **the true bread from heaven.**’”* When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, God gave them manna to eat. Jesus said He is the true bread that gives spiritual life. If we continue to feed on Jesus, we will never starve spiritually. We will have life.

In John 15:1, we read, *“I am **the true vine**, and My Father is the **vinedresser.**”* We must be branches of the spiritual vine – Jesus. If we stay connected to Him, we will receive the nutrients and water we need for a proper spiritual life.

In 1 John 5:20, we read, *“And we know that the Son of God has come*




## HEY YOU KIDS

*and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*” People around the world have all kinds of gods, but Jesus is the true God. He is the only One Who can give spiritual life.

In Revelation 3:14, we read, “*And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.’*” Jesus is our true witness before the Father. He will always speak the truth in our defense. Therefore, it is necessary to make sure we are in Christ.

In Revelation 19:11, we read, “*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*” Jesus Christ is the only true Judge. He will judge according to His Word, which is Truth.

I am glad we have a true God. I am thankful He was willing to come to earth and to die for me. Read and study your Bible. Learn all you can about Jesus and make sure you obey Him. If any of this is hard to understand, ask an adult to help you. 

Mark McWhorter has written daily devotionals for youth for decades. He lives in Pell City, Alabama, USA.

### *Rubison's Rubies*

Paul wrote in Ephesians 2, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” We do not deserve the salvation Christ offers. Notice, though, He did not say we are saved by “grace only” or by “faith only.” In fact, James 2 teaches over and over again that “*faith without works is dead.*” The next verse in Ephesians 2 actually clarifies the thought. Verse 10 says, “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*” God’s grace is given to us for the very purpose of having us be people of good works.



# Are You Weak?

*(Let me share a secret of some things learned years ago when my children were small.)*

**Betty Burton Choate**

I have found that there are two sides of me. One side has every desire to be strong, to demand work and sacrifice of myself. The other side wants to take life easy, to live a weak commitment to God that soothes my conscience with *some* work done but doesn't cause discomfort or require any real sacrifice. For instance:

- I want to work, but there is the temptation to escape into another world through a good book.
- I plan to cut down on buying pretty, useful but unnecessary things for the house, but I find some place mats on sale at a real bargain, and they would go perfectly with my brown dishes.
- I know Shannon has enough "junk" already, but as I walk by the toy counter, a vision of hopeful blue eyes and "Did you bring me anything?" weakens my resolve.
- It is easy to spoil the children with new clothes they want but don't need, so I determine to restrict us all; but on the next trip downtown the shoes Sheila has been wanting are on half-price sale.

Discipline and self-sacrifice are not easy things with which to live, but they are so very good for all of us. I dare say that only a small percentage of Americans would realize just how good such self-imposed restraint is, because it is obvious that most of us indulge ourselves far more than is best. Maybe the reason is not lack of *intention* so much as lack of *strength*.

I have found a way of effortlessly increasing my strength, and I would like to share it with you. Deuteronomy 23:21-23 says:

***When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and***

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

*it would be sin to you. But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth. (NKJV)*

It is true that this is an Old Testament law, and it is not a part of the New Testament, but God's attitude toward the keeping of one's word would not change. We can be very sure that even today it is a serious and binding thing to make a promise to God. According to Acts 18:18-21, Paul evidently made such promises, with the knowledge that "**by all means**" he must keep them.



So, on occasions when I seriously desire to do a thing, and I doubt my own strength to stay with the commitment, I undergird my weak strength in this way:

- I weigh the question from all sides, being absolutely sure that I want to make the commitment.
- I determine the length of time for which I want to make the commitment.
- Then I pray very earnestly to God, promising Him that I will do this thing.




## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

The result is wonderful! My own strength suffices to keep me going most of the time, but when the temptation to be weak comes along and I need help, my automatic thought is an unquestionable, “**NO!** You have promised God. You *cannot* do that.” Amazingly, that rock wall of promise protects me easily from every weakness and temptation! It really works!

With the current world crises and the increased need to spread the Gospel, we, as a family, wanted to increase our giving for God’s work. Our solution for finding the money to give was to have a family meeting and to discuss among ourselves what each of us could promise to give up, either entirely or in part. Even though we are habitually economical, sewing most of our clothes, buying what must be bought whenever the items are on sale, very rarely eating out, foregoing weekly trips to beauty shops, etc., we found that we could cut down our indulgences in *desirables*. Those useful or pretty personal and household things that one could do without included the extra pair of shoes or blouse that seemed just perfect, a new book or record, soft drinks and other food indulgences, except on very special occasions. There are so many ways to cut down and have more money for God’s work!

I am sure that we will find that it feels so good to *trim the fat* that we will want to trim a little further next year!

Maybe, even with this, I want the easy way, the one that *allows us to decide* the extent of the sacrificing we will do. How I pray that world conditions will not throw us into war and chaos, robbing us of the peace and possessions that undergird our sense of physical security. How I pray that we – and all other Christians – will choose to sacrifice of our own accord so that truth and freedom can be spread rather than communism and oppression.

I believe sincerely that the time for decisions has come. If we as God’s people do not voluntarily decide to do more for Him and the world, and less for ourselves, Satan will soon be pushing in to take away from us all that we have hoarded as our own. Please think prayerfully about these challenges and consider what you can do. 

**Betty Burton Choate is the widow of J.C. Choate, founder of *The Voice of Truth International*. She resides in Winona, Mississippi, USA.**

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## PROVERBS 17:22

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A student burst into his professor's office and said, "Professor, I don't believe I deserve this "F" grade that you gave me!"

The professor replied, "I agree, but unfortunately, it is the lowest grade the university will allow me to award."



"An abstract noun," the teacher said, "is something you can think of, but you can't touch it. Can you give me an example of one?"

"Sure," a teenage boy replied. "My father's new car."



Two friends were driving through Louisiana when they came to a sign that told them they were almost to Natchitoches. They argued all the way there about how

to pronounce the name of the town.

Finally they stopped for lunch. After getting their food, one of the guys said to the cashier, "Can you settle an argument for us? Very slowly, tell us where we are."

The cashier leaned over the counter and said, "Buuurrrrrr-gerrrrr Kiiiiinnnnnggg."



I was out walking with my then 4-year-old daughter. She picked up something off the ground and started to put it in her mouth. I asked her not to do that.

"Why?"

"Because it's been lying outside and is dirty and probably has germs."

At this point, she looked at me with total admiration and asked, "Wow! How do you know all this stuff?"

"Uh," I was thinking quickly, everyone knows this stuff, "Um, it's on the Mommy test. You have to know it, or they don't let you be a Mommy."

"Oh."

We walked along in silence for 2 or 3 minutes, but she was evidently pondering this new information.

## PROVERBS 17:22

“I get it!” she beamed. “Then if you flunk, you have to be the Daddy.”



**John:** What’s the difference between a lemon, an elephant and a bag of cement?

**Philip:** I give up, what’s the difference?

**John:** You can squeeze a lemon, but you can’t squeeze an elephant.

**Philip:** What about the bag of cement?

**John:** I just threw that in to make it hard.



The orthopedic surgeon I work for was moving to a new office, and his staff was helping transport many of the items. I set the display skeleton on the front seat of my car, with his bony arm across the back of my seat.

I hadn’t considered the drive across town. At one traffic light, the stares of the people in the car beside me became obvious, and I looked across and explained, “I’m delivering him to my doctor’s office.”

The other driver leaned out of

his window and said, “I hate to tell you, lady,” he said, “but I think it’s too late!”



A newlywed farmer and his wife were visited by her mother, who immediately demanded an inspection of the place. While they were walking through the barn, the farmer’s mule suddenly reared up and kicked the mother-in-law, unfortunately killing her instantly.

At the funeral service a few days later, the farmer stood near the casket and greeted folks as they walked by. The preacher noticed that whenever a woman would whisper something to the farmer, he would nod his head “yes” and say something. Whenever a man walked by and whispered to the farmer, he would shake his head “no” and mumble a reply.

Curious, the preacher later asked the farmer what that was all about. The farmer replied, “The women would say, ‘What a terrible tragedy,’ and I would nod my head and say, ‘Yes, it was.’ The men would ask, ‘You wanna sell that mule?’ and I would shake my head and say, ‘Can’t. It’s all booked up for a year.’”

# THE INFLUENCE OF EVOLUTION

Ben Jones

Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution has become one of the most universally accepted ideas of our time. Debates on the subject have highlighted the alleged conflict between science and faith, although capable men and women have shown the two disciplines to be compatible. Unfortunately, evolution's influence permeates everything today from textbooks to television to children's toys. As a result, this theory can have a dangerous effect on the way people think about important spiritual matters.

## EVOLUTION AND THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

The Bible reveals God's purpose for man, both in creation through Adam and re-creation through Christ. God's power is displayed by man's weakness (Exodus 9:16), while man's potential is realized in Christ (Ephesians 2:10). By contrast, evolution essentially teaches that the purpose of life is simply to exist. The weak die; the strong adapt and survive. In effect, this way of thinking is the ultimate form of materialism. However, a man's life consists neither in the abundance of his possessions nor in the superiority of his genes. Long life, good health and a large family may all be desirable, but they do not commend men to God. In fact, the absence of these things may well teach men to depend on God for their strength (2 Corinthians 12:10). *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28 NKJV).

## EVOLUTION AND THE VALUE OF LIFE

Long before Thomas Jefferson wrote that all men are created equal, the apostle Paul proclaimed that God *"...has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth..."* (Acts 17:26). However, the principle of natural selection demands that all men are not equal, and the removal of inferior traits is necessary for the good of

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

the species. This sort of warped mindset has influenced entire cultures (including our own) to accept the atrocities of slavery, eugenics, ethnic cleansing, euthanasia and abortion. Evolutionary thought places value on human life based on a given set of characteristics considered desirable at the time. The Bible places value on every human life because it is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). It is very good in God's sight (Genesis 1:31), and it is the motivation for Christ's death (Romans 14:15).

### EVOLUTION AND THE EXISTENCE OF MORALITY

The apostle Paul quoted a poet who wrote “...*Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*” (Titus 1:12). Today, some men still behave like beasts. The Bible defines this behavior as willful ignorance and disobedience, which will be punished at the Judgment (Romans 1:18-35; Acts 17:30-31). Evolutionists, however, try to explain man's behavior as the result of primitive survival instincts, which have no intrinsic moral value. *A Natural History of Rape*, published by MIT Press, is one such so-called “scientific” – really evolutionist – attempt to explain a heinous act as the byproduct of natural selection. God will ultimately require accountability even if men do not (2 Corinthians 5:10).

### EVOLUTION AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

During the infamous Scopes Monkey Trial, William Jennings Bryan was forced to admit his doubt in the biblical account of creation. The inability to reconcile the millions of years necessary for evolution to occur with a literal account of creation has since caused many other Bible readers to doubt the credibility of the Scriptures. Several theories have been devised to allow the seven days of Genesis to be interpreted figuratively, but the notion of “theistic evolution” has only served to further weaken the conviction that the Bible is the fully inspired, authoritative Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16).

Evolution is simply an idea, but ideas have real consequences. They influence decisions and eventually shape the values of a society. Surely, the danger can be seen in a valueless society shaped by the folly of evolution. †

**Ben Jones preaches for the University Church of Christ in Morgantown, West Virginia, USA, and he is an instructor at the West Virginia School of Preaching.**

# **DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY**

# **Man Does Not**

# **Have the Authority**

**Donald R. Fox**

Mankind has individual authority to choose many things. The following thoughts are guided by western culture and general USA standards of right and wrong. Further, Christians hold that the Bible is the complete authority over the dictates of mankind.

A few examples will help us understand. A young person may consider becoming a doctor or any other honorable profession. We understand such things, and we also make judgments concerning such choices. For negative unprincipled pursuits, one could choose to be a killer for hire, a bank robber, a child molester or a rapist. Such are not acceptable and are sinful. There are restrictions and guidance to what I can do and cannot do. **It is never right to do wrong!**

During September 2015, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church visited the USA. He was well received by great numbers of people and heads of government. He made many speeches. The television news networks covered his travels, speeches, etc. in an excellent manner. The masses of people were delighted to view and to hear the Pope. Throughout the Pope's visit, much emphasis and discussions were aimed on Roman Catholic doctrines and teachings. If I understand rightly, I would like to address only one recent Catholic Church teaching. I am talking about homosexuality and related moral issues. The Catholic Church seems to be mixed-up or to be struggling to gain former homosexual or gay Catholics back to previous relationships with the Catholic Church. There is a great difficulty to accept or find some way to solve the gay problem for Catholics.

## **A Struggle to Solve the Gay Problem within the Catholic Church**

What does the Catholic Church teach about same sex attractions and gay marriage? Are homosexuals welcome in the Catholic Church? Some men and women who strug-



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gle with same-sex attractions wonder if there's any hope for them to be welcomed in or back to the Church. The answer to that question is an unambiguous "yes." ("Homosexuality") Catholic teaching on homosexuality, which prohibits sex between two people of the same gender, is black and white. On the ground, though, how this teaching is applied is much murkier. Individual bishops and pastors decide if children of same-sex couples have a right to baptism or to attend Catholic schools, leading to disparate policies. Some Catholic institutions offer health insurance to spouses of gay employees, while others fire openly gay teachers or organists. Catholic hospitals and, in some cases, Catholic bishops have supported laws criminalizing homosexuality, while others have condemned them. (O'Loughlin)

### **Man Cannot Go Beyond What Is Condemned in the Word of God**

Man cannot approve as right what God has appointed as sinful. There is only one solution, **a return to the Scriptures!**

*Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 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. (Romans 1:22-27 NKJV)*

*"Shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind..." (Leviticus 18:22)* is a reference to the shameful vice today called homosexuality. It was an *"abomination"* in the eyes of God when Leviticus

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was written, and so it still remains today. Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown for this evil, and it may be received as certain that the judgment of God will surely fall upon those who practice it, and eventually upon any society that apologizes for it, allows it, and consents to it. Indeed, in the sudden appearance of a brand new disease, called AIDS, (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) which arose out of the homosexual community and most frequently occurs among practicing homosexuals, and for which no cure is known, leading almost inevitably to death, there may be the cutting edge of just such a heavenly judgment as that which moved Sodom and Gomorrah into oblivion. Very learned physicians have repeatedly warned the whole nation of the potential threat of this home-born killer. Churches which accept the conduct mentioned here as an “acceptable life-style” have absolutely forsaken their trust as custodians of the Gospel of Christ! God condemned this departure into wickedness, and He still condemns it, no matter what churchmen or churches pretending to be “Christian” may say to the contrary. (Coffman)

### Conclusion

Friends, since we are all free moral agents, and we all have the power to choose right and wrong, whom will you obey? Do we obey and submit to the teachings of Almighty God or to man and his concocted rules and doctrine? †

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# THE LEGACY OF SIMON THE CYRENIAN

Kevin L. Moore

Mark's record of the Lord's crucifixion reports, "*And they compelled one passing by, Simon a Cyrenian, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, that he might carry the cross of [Jesus]*" (Mark 15:21).<sup>1</sup> John's Gospel account mentions Jesus bearing His own cross (John 19:17), presumably at the beginning of the brutal trek to Golgotha. No doubt weakened by extreme blood loss and fatigue, all three Synoptic accounts [Matthew, Mark and Luke] report Simon's conscription to provide assistance along the way (Matthew 27:32; Luke 23:26).

Simon's name is Jewish, the Grecized version of the Hebrew name Simeon (cf., Genesis 29:33). He is called a Cyrenian, being from the North African city of Cyrene in Libya. In order to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem, if sea travel could be afforded, the journey from Cyrene would have taken over a week. Otherwise, land travel would have taken about a month. Whether Simon had made the lengthy pilgrimage or had actually moved to Jerusalem, his commitment to the Jewish faith is evident.

Mark is the only Gospel writer to mention Simon's sons Alexander (a Greek name) and Rufus (a Latin name), indicative of a culturally diverse family. Cyrene, at one time a Greek city and then a Roman city, was itself culturally diverse. There is no practical reason for Mark to have inserted these names in the crucifixion narrative unless these men were known to his original readership. It is historically understood that the Gospel of Mark was written for a Roman audience. Years before its publication, the apostle Paul had penned his letter to the saints at Rome, which includes a greeting to "*Rufus, the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine*" (Romans 16:13).

Paul had not yet been to Rome when this letter was drafted (Romans 1:10-15; 15:22-24), so how did he know Rufus and Rufus' mother? The

## BIBLE CHARACTERS

apostle apparently had enjoyed their hospitality and knew them well enough to regard Rufus' mother as his own. Yet, when and where would this relationship have formed?

### **ATTEMPTING TO FILL IN THE GAPS**

Seeing that Simon of Cyrene and probably his family were in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified, might they still have been around a few weeks later at Pentecost? Luke, who knew of Simon (Luke 23:26), reported the following: **“now abiding in Jerusalem were Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven,”** including those from **“the parts of Libya down through Cyrene...”** (Acts 2:5, 10). Multiplied thousands of these Jewish pilgrims and residents had obeyed the Gospel by the time persecution forced them to disperse, with their new-found faith, proclaiming God's Word (Acts 8:1-4).

***So then those having been scattered by the persecution arising over Stephen, went through to Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except the Jews only. But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who having entered Antioch, were also speaking to the Hellenists,<sup>2</sup> proclaiming the good news of the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; then a great number, having believed, turned to the Lord.*** (Acts 11:19-21)

Cyrenian Jewish Christians were involved in planting the church in Syrian Antioch, in whose work the apostle Paul became thoroughly engaged (Acts 11:25-30; 12:25; 13:1-3; 14:26-28; 15:1-3, 40; 18:22-23). Among the leaders of this congregation were **“Simeon, called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian...”** (Acts 13:1). The name Simeon is the Hebraic form of Simon (Acts 15:14), and Niger is the Latin term for “black,” perhaps suggesting African descent. If Simeon (Simon) and Lucius, among others, were from the African city of Cyrene, the former may have needed a more distinctive distinguishing moniker.

While the biblical information is not detailed enough to draw definitive conclusions, Paul's intimate connection with the Antioch church would have afforded him ample opportunity to develop relationships with Cyrenian families. If some had moved to Rome by the time he wrote his letter to the Romans, surely he would want to send them greetings. Then,

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when Mark produced his Gospel narrative in the same environment, why else mention the sons of Simon unless they were known among his readers?

### OBSERVATIONS AND INFERENCES

If the above scenario is reasonably accurate, what can we learn from Simon the Cyrenian and his family?

- Simon, albeit an unwilling participant, took part in the Lord's ruthless execution. The difference is, you and I have been willing participants (Romans 5:6-8; Hebrews 6:6; James 1:14-15).
- Simon was apparently impacted by Christ's suffering and death, earning him recognition in all three Synoptic Gospel accounts, with additional information about his family. To the receptive heart, the cross of Jesus *"is the power of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:18).
- Simon appears to have taken seriously his role as spiritual leader of his household, his faith impacting his wife and sons. May we follow this example of influence among our loved ones in the *"training and counsel of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4).
- Simon and his family were not dormant appendages of the Lord's body but very active in the work of the church. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm, immovable, always abounding in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor is not ineffective in the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 15:58).

### CONCLUSION

Simon of Cyrene has typically been seen as a fringe character in the Gospel account, one simply at the wrong place at the wrong time. However, closer examination allows us to learn more about him and from him, offering much encouragement as fellow cross-bearers.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are the author's own translation.

<sup>2</sup> There is uncertainty here whether the reference is applicable to Hellenistic Jews (ESV, ISV, NKJV, NRSV) or to Gentile Greeks (ASV, CSB, NASB, NET, NIV, RSV), or maybe more generically to Grecians (KJV). †

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# Noting Your Bible



## **The Godhead**

A study of the Almighty, Supreme Creator of Heaven and Earth is enriching and one that every Christian should pursue, not only for one's own knowledge but also in order to talk with others about the One, True God. Scripture does not contain one, all-embracing term describing God. A term used in the New Testament is translated, Godhead or Divine Nature, and this Greek word means Deity, Divinity. Let's open our Bibles and see what God revealed about Himself. Note this topic in your Bible with Genesis 1 next to it.

1. Turn to Genesis 1:1, circle the word, "God," and note, "**Elohim – Hebrew, plural word used over 2,000 times in Old Testament. When referring to the God above all, a singular verb is used – as here in verse 1 (See Genesis 1:26).**" Also, in this context, circle, "Spirit of God" in verse 2, noting that the Hebrew word for "spirit" is *ruach* meaning "spirit, breath, wind" – used throughout Old Testament for the Divine Spirit who empowers people miraculously (Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:3; Numbers 24:2; 1 Samuel 10:10; 19:20; Ezekiel 11:24).
2. Look at Genesis 1:26-27 and underline that "**God made man in His image, creating male and female.**" You may want to note that Jesus quoted this verse in Matthew 19:4. The plural pronouns in verse 26 have long been debated. Some claim that the trinity is implied while others say God's heavenly court is in reference here such as in Isaiah 6:1-8. If the latter, then it would be possible that God invited his court (seraphim, angels, etc.) in the creation of man, but He is the one Who created (Verse 27 clarifies that). Note also, "**image or likeness here is in the context of rulership – mankind is distinct from animals** (See Genesis 2:4)."
3. In Genesis 2:4, circle "**Lord God**" and note "**= the self-Existent, Eternal One (See Romans 1:20).**" The covenantal name *Yahweh* is used here (Remember: Moses by inspiration wrote this account to Israel who had made a



covenant with the I AM (Exodus 19).


4. Turn to Romans 1:20-23, noting, **“through creation we can know there is a God full of majesty and glory (Psalm 19) – (See Revelation 4).”**
5. In Revelation 4:11 and following, consider some points in the context of this throne room scene and take time to read the whole context here. Circle verse 11 and underline the word, **“worthy.”** Draw a line from verse 8 showing that the heavenly creatures called God Almighty holy and worthy. Reference chapter 5:2 – underlining the question and circling **“worthy”** in this verse. Note in the following verses (3-8), the Lion of Judah, the Lamb slain, is worshipped by the heavenly court. In 5:9 and 12, circle the word **“worthy”** and underline **“worthy is the Lamb (See Revelation 19:13).”**



**HOLY TRINITY**

6. Go to Revelation 19:13 (Read the whole chapter) and underline the name given to the Lamb – **“Word of God (See John 1).”**
7. Turn to John 1:1-5 and write next to these verses, **“The Word = God = in the beginning at creation = Creator (See John 1:14).”**
8. Go to verse 14, underline it and note in the context of verses 14-18, **“Jesus Christ is the Word = in the beginning = Creator = God (See Matthew 1).”** Reference 1:29 here also where John calls Jesus the Lamb of God. We can conclude from this that the pre-incarnate (before coming in human flesh) Christ was called the Word.
9. In Matthew 1:23, write, **“Having come in human flesh, Jesus is God with**

**us, fulfilling prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 (See Colossians 2:9)."**

10. Underline Colossians 2:9. The inspired apostle Paul appealed to the Deity of Christ. Write, "**(See Colossians 1:16-17).**"
11. Turn back to chapter 1 of Colossians, noting that Paul already discussed this in detail – verses 13-20. Write next to these verses, "**(See Ephesians 4:4-6).**" Note here also the use of the word "firstborn." Verse 18 says He "**is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead**" as in Revelation 1:5 also. It is not saying that Jesus had a beginning but that He is the first to rise from the dead to die no more, thus conquering death!
12. In Ephesians 4:4-6, underline the seven ones. "**(See Matthew 3).**"
13. Turn to Matthew 3:16-17 and note who was present at the baptism. "**(1) Jesus, the Son, (2) the Spirit of God was seen, (3) the Voice from Heaven was heard (He is called the Father by Jesus in Matthew 5:16). (See 1 John 5:20).**"
14. Look at 1 John 5:20. (This is a good book to read in one setting.) Note here, "**Jesus made it possible for us to know the True God, know that we are in Him = in His Son (see Titus 2:13).**"
15. In Titus 2:13 and also verse 10, note that Paul equated "**our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (See Isaiah 6).**"
16. Another throne room scene, one in which Isaiah saw God's glory. (You may want to go back to Revelation 4 and reference the similarities.) Our focus is upon the fact that Christ quoted and fulfilled this prophecy. (It is recorded in all four Gospel accounts.) Read the whole chapter of Isaiah 6 and note next to verses 9-10, "**(See John 12:37-41).**"
17. Turn to John 12, underline verse 41 and write, "**The inspired apostle John equated Jesus with Yahweh (See 2 Corinthians 13:14).**"
18. Underline or highlight this beautiful verse: "**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.**" 

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# What about the Ten Commandments Today?

Russel G. Bell

The question comes to me, “If we are not under the Old Testament, which includes the Ten Commandments, does that mean we are no longer under the Ten Commandments?” You might be shocked, but “Yes, it certainly does.”

Does that mean we can kill, steal, commit adultery, etc.? Certainly not, for laws about these are included in the New Testament, with the exception of one of the Ten Commandments – “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*” (Exodus 20:8 NKJV). That is why Christians no longer worship on Saturday – the Sabbath – but on Sunday – the Lord’s Day, the first day of the week and the resurrection day of our Lord, in honor of Him who died for us.

We have no command in the New Testament to obey the Sabbath Day and keep it holy, and yet, the other nine of the original Ten Commandments are there. This is no mistake, but instead, it is the will of God for man today.

Remember the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 7:4, which inform us that we are “*dead to the law through the body of Christ.*” In other words, when Christ died on the cross, the Old Testament Law (including the Ten Commandments) was taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14). “*We have been delivered from the law*” (Romans 7:6). Should you follow a law from which Christ has discharged you? Certainly not, and that’s why we follow the New Testament of Jesus Christ. †

[Editor’s Note: It was always God’s intention to replace the Old Law with the New Covenant or Testament (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13; Ephesians 3:9-11). The Old Testament prepared mankind for the coming of Jesus Christ. “*Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor*” (Galatians 3:24-25). Hence, Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the “*New Covenant*” (NKJV) or “*Testament*” (KJV) (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:13; 9:15; 12:24). ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

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## BIBLE QUESTIONS

# Who Was the Father of Melchizedek?

Louis Rushmore

Someone asked, “Who was the father of Melchizedek?” This Bible character’s name appears 11 times in Scripture (Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:1, 10-11, 15, 17, 21). None of the passages that refer to Melchizedek identify his parentage. The absence of references to his mother and father or to his birth and death is part of why and how Melchizedek is an example of some of the characteristics of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Note that Hebrews 7:3 says of Melchizedek that he was *“without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually”* (NKJV). Being a mortal, certainly Melchizedek had a mother and a father. Obviously, he was born and eventually he died. However, none of those particular details have been preserved.

Lacking the details of Melchizedek’s parentage and when he was born or when he died makes him **appear** to be without beginning and without end. Thereby, Melchizedek in this way mimics and serves as an example of God the Son, Jesus Christ, Who is eternal – without beginning and without end. *“And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life”* (Hebrews 7:15-16).

In addition, Melchizedek served as *“priest of the Most High God”* (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1) under Patriarchy and preceding Judaism with its Levitical priesthood. As such, the priesthood of Melchizedek was perpetual, without end or continual (*“forever,”* Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21). More so, the priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priesthood, also a fitting comparison to Jesus Christ, whose priesthood is superior to the priesthood under Judaism (Hebrews 7:1-28).✝

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# **A Soul and the World**

**Ernest Underwood**

*“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:26 NKJV).

## **Introduction:**

1. These questions, propounded by Jesus of Nazareth, are highly suggestive.
2. They set the wheels of thought to spinning, put us to thinking of life’s issues, the big things with which we have to do: the soul, the world, gain, loss, profit.
3. Let us come to grip with these issues.

## **Body:**

### **I. What is the soul?**

- A. It is the higher life, that which distinguishes man from the beast.
- B. It is the part of man that will survive the ordeal of death.
- C. Shall we say that “man has a soul” or that “man is a soul”?
- D. Its value: It is of greater value than any member of the body (Matthew 5:29-30), even the entire body (Matthew 10:28) or “the whole world.”
- E. Its possibilities:
  1. It can sin or be righteous.
  2. It can be miserable or happy.
  3. It can descend into the horrors of Hell, or it can ascend to Heaven.

### **II. What is the world?**

- A. According to John (1 John 2:16), the world includes: **sensual pleasures** – “*the lust of the flesh,*” **wealth** – “*the lust of the eyes*” and the **honors of the world** – “*vainglory of life.*”
- B. “*The whole world*” of which the Master speaks includes all the pleasures, the wealth and all the honors the world can bestow.

### **III. If you should gain “the whole world,” what would be your gain?**

## CHARTS & OUTLINES

- A. Something that cannot satisfy (John 4:13).
- B. A dangerous master. When the young ruler gained riches, he gained a master who had more power over him than the Lord of life (Mark 10).
- C. Something perishable (1 Peter 1:24; 1 John 2:17a).


### IV. If you should gain *“the whole world,”* what would be your loss, for everything you gain, you must sustain a loss?

- A. Sensual pleasure is gained at the price of purity; wealth accrues at the price of honesty, liberality and sympathy (Luke 16:19-21); honor is attained at the price of conviction (Luke 6:26).
- B. When purity, honesty, liberality, sympathy and conviction are gone, the soul is gone – gone for a mess of meat. The soul – higher life – must be surrendered when we make a conquest of the world.

### V. If you should gain *“the whole world,”* what would be your profit?

- A. What would a fish be profited if it should gain all seas and forfeit its gills?
- B. What would a bird be profited if it should gain all atmosphere and forfeit its wings?
- C. What would a man be profited if he should gain the world and forfeit his eyes, his ears, his health or his soul – that which is worth more than the entire body?
- D. He who forfeits his soul for the world must, in the end, lose both the price and the purchase (Luke 12:16-20).

### Conclusion:

1. The soul, if finally lost, cannot be recovered. *“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
2. If you should stand on the eternal shore, having bartered your soul, it will be impossible to buy it back.
3. You shall be like Esau of old, who after selling his birthright, tried in vain to regain it (Hebrews 12:16-17). 

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## CHARTS & OUTLINES



# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

*....the pillar and ground of the truth*

Headquarter: Heaven - Hebrew 12: 23

Established in A.D. 33

*The church of Christ is also known as:*

- 1. The church of God (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15).**
- 2. The church of the Lord (Acts 20:28).**
- 3. The church (Acts 8:1).**
- 4. The church of the Firstborn (Heb. 12:23).**
- 5. My church (Matt. 16:16).**
- 6. The bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2).**
- 7. The household of God (Heb. 3:6).**
- 8. The family of God (Eph. 3:15).**
- 9. The church of the living God (1 Tim. 3:15).**
- 10. The fold / flock of God (Acts 20:28).**

*All the above are used to describe the church Christ built.*

**The Church of Christ is not a denomination!**

**The Church of Christ is a people of restoration spirit, wanting everyone to return to the Bible, thereby restoring the original New Testament Church in our time.**

COC, MAGODO

# Verse Search



## 2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-18

Jerry Bates

1. Who did Paul say was his letter of recommendation? (3:1-2)
2. How was it written? (3:3)
3. From where did Paul's sufficiency come? (3:5)
4. "The \_\_\_\_\_ kills, but the \_\_\_\_\_ gives life." (3:6)
5. How was the ministry of death written? (3:7)
6. Why could the children of Israel not look upon the face of Moses when he came down from the mountain? (3:7)
7. What was happening to the glory of that ministry? (3:7)
8. How did the glory of the ministry of righteousness compare to the glory of the ministry of death? (3:9)
9. Since Paul had such hope, how could he speak? (3:12)
10. Since the people of Israel could not look upon the face of Moses, what did he do? (3:13)
11. What was upon the minds of the Jews as they read the writings of Moses? (3:15)
12. How could that be taken away? (3:16)
13. Where the Lord is, there is \_\_\_\_\_. (3:17)

(See the back cover for answers.)

## VERSE SEARCH

**1** Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? **2** You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; **3** clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

**4** And we have such trust through Christ toward God. **5** Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, **6** who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**7** But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, **8** how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? **9** For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. **10** For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. **11** For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

**12** Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech – **13** unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. **14** But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. **15** But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. **16** Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. **18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

**NOTE:** In this passage, Paul compared the Law of Christ with the Law of Moses. He called the Law of Moses the ministry of death because there was no true forgiveness available under the Law. The animal sacrifices could not take away sin. Only the blood of Christ could do that. Since no one could keep the Law perfectly, and since no forgiveness was available under the Law, the Law could only bring death. However, in Christ there is life. A much fuller discussion of this can be found in Hebrews 9-10.

Nevertheless, there was glory found in the Old Law. If what brought death was glorious, then there is much more glory found in what brings life. The Jews had great difficulty accepting this; thus, Paul said they had a veil upon their minds and hearts when they read the Law of Moses. When one turns to Christ, that veil is taken away.

# ETERNAL LIFE IN JOHN

Cecil May, Jr.

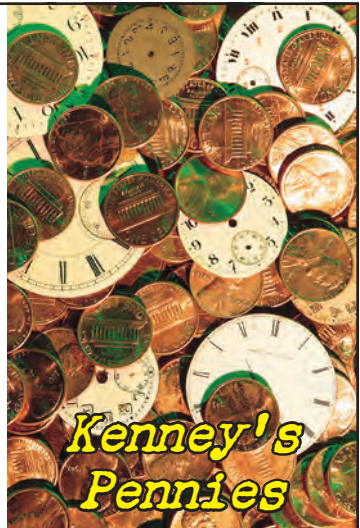
Since *“all Scripture is breathed out by God”* (2 Timothy 3:16 ESV), God is Scripture’s ultimate Author. One may correctly say, “God said,” introducing a quote from Scripture. However, God allowed each human author to have his own distinct style and vocabulary. In some cases, different authors may use a word or phrase with their own distinct meaning.

*“Eternal life”* in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and Paul’s epistles refers to life as in Heaven (Mark 10:30). John, however, in his Gospel account and epistles, says, *“We have eternal life”* using *“eternal life”* as equivalent to forgiveness of sins.

In Scripture, death is often “separation” from God. When our sins are forgiven, we have “life” again. The nature of that life is not physical but eternal – reconciliation to God. †

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*“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night”* (Psalm 90:2, 4 NKJV). God lives in eternity. He has eternity to reward those faithful to Him for whatever we go through in this dimension in which we live – time (Matthew 19:27-29). He also has eternity to punish those who do wickedly and are disobedient to His Word (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).



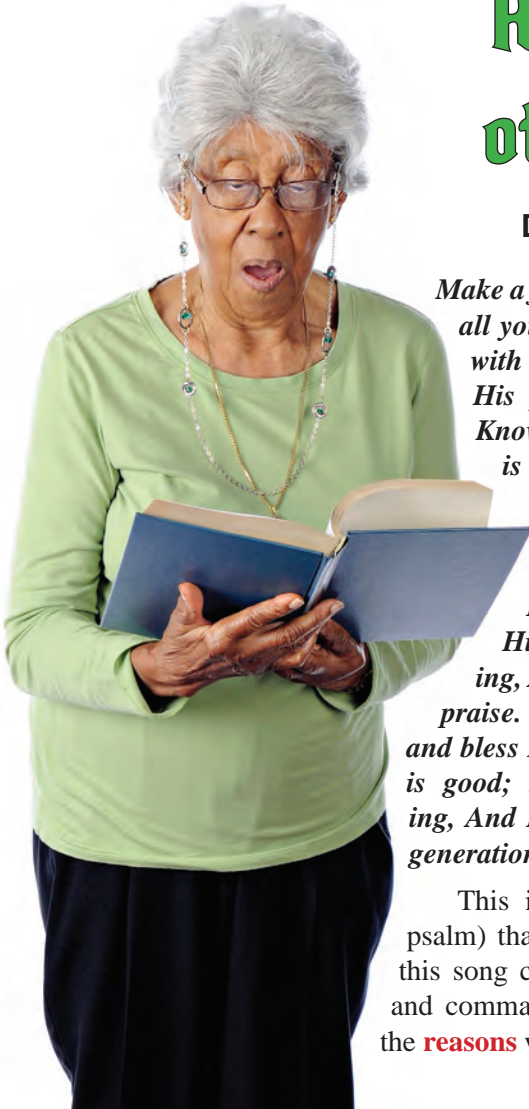
## TEXTUAL STUDIES

# A Psalm of Praise

David Conley

*Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.* (Psalm 100 NKJV)

This is a very popular song (or psalm) that King David wrote. Notice this song contains commands to **serve** and commands to **praise**. It also gives the **reasons** we are to serve and praise.



## TEXTUAL STUDIES

### Commands to Serve

- *“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord”*
- *“Serve the Lord with gladness”*
- *“Come before His presence with singing”*

### Reasons

- *“The Lord, He is God”*
- *“He who has made us”*
- *“We are His people”*

### Commands to Praise

- *“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise”*
- *“Be thankful unto Him”*
- *“Bless His name”*

### Reasons

- *“The Lord is good”*
- *“His mercy is everlasting”*
- *“His truth endures to all generations”*

**We have good reasons to Serve and Praise!**



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**Cecil's**

**COMMENTS**

Status Quo has been defined as Latin for “the mess we’re in.” Quarantined in this pandemic, many talk about being anxious to get “back to normal” regardless of their complaints about whatever “normal” used to be. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV).



# Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

## WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF HEBREWS?

Many theologians say that the apostle Paul wrote the book of Hebrews.

**The author of Hebrews says that what he wrote was confirmed to him by those who had heard from the Lord. He wrote by inspiration, but he was not reiterating what he had heard directly from the Lord Himself.**

**“...how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him... (Hebrews 2:3).**

From Paul's own statements in books known to be written by him, we can be sure that he was not the author of Hebrews. What did Paul say?

**But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12).**

**Without exception, Paul began and/or ended his letters with his own identification.**

**Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God... (1 Corinthians 1:1).**

**Paul... The salutation with my own hand... (1 Corinthians 16:21).**

**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God... (Ephesians 1:1).**

**Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Jesus Christ... (Philippians 1:1).**

**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God... (Colossians 1:1).**

**Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother... (Philemon 1).**

**I, Paul, am writing with my own hand (Philemon 16).**

**Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians... (1 Thessalonians 1:1).**

See also 2 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:1.

**It is obvious from these quotes from letters written by Paul that he did not write the letter to the Hebrews, but perhaps Apollos or Aquila did, since they were also learned in the law?**

# QUESTIONS I HAVE ABOUT THE BOOK OF MORMON (PART 3)

Shane Fisher

The *Book of Mormon* (hereafter *BOM*) is claimed to be another book inspired by God in addition to the Bible. We need to be like the Bereans and investigate whether these claims are true or false (Acts 17:10-12). I have read through the *BOM* several times, and here are some questions I have for Latter-Day Saints. My hope is that brethren will use this list of questions as an evangelistic tool to help Latter-Day Saints to come to the truth (John 8:31-32). The first and second articles (in the previous issues of *VOTI*) contained thirty questions. This is the third part.

**(Question 31)** Jacob 2:27-28; 3:5 state: “Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none; For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts... Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursing which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our father – that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them.” Why was the revelation Jacob gave concerning having one wife and no concubines abrogated by *Doctrine & Covenants* 132 (recorded in 1843) which made polygamy lawful? Why was the law of polygamy repealed in 1890?

**(32)** Does the long allegory of Jacob 5 copy a mixture of the parable of Luke 13:5-9, the olive tree/wild olive tree from Romans 11:11-36, and Jesus as the true vine from John 15:1-8?

**(33)** In Jacob 3:12-13 (supposedly between 544 and 421 B.C.), states, “And now I, Jacob, spake many more things unto the people of Nephi, warning them against fornication and lasciviousness, and every kind of sin, telling them

## FROM THE HEART OF

the awful consequences of them. **And a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, which now began to be numerous, cannot be written upon these plates** (emp. mine); but many of their proceedings are written upon the larger plates, and their wars, and their contentions, and the reigns of their kings.” Jacob was one of the sons of Lehi that was born in the wilderness. In 2 Nephi 5:34, we learn that 30-70 years had passed. Taking the total number of people they list who came to the new world, would we really conclude this to be a “numerous” people? A hundredth part of their chronicles could not be recorded because there was so much history in seventy years plus the years that Jacob was living. Really?

(34) Jacob 7:27 reads, “And I, Jacob, saw that I must soon go down to my grave; wherefore, I said unto my son Enos: Take these plates. And I told him the things which my brother Nephi had commanded me, and he promised obedience unto the commands. And I make an end of my writing upon these plates, which writing has been small; and to the reader I bid farewell, hoping that many of my brethren may read my words. **Brethren, adieu.**” How did the French word “adieu” come from this reformed Egyptian text?

(35) Mosiah 2:3 states, “And they also took of the firstlings of their flocks, that they might offer sacrifice and burnt offerings, according to the Law of Moses.”

Tolle remarks, “In the law of Moses, the firstlings of the flocks were never to be offered as burning offerings and sacrifices. All firstlings belonged automatically to the Lord and were never counted as a man’s personal property. But all burnt offerings had to be selected from one’s own personal property, or be purchased with his own money for that purpose, while all the firstlings of the flock, being peculiarly the Lord’s property, came into the hands of the high priest, not be used as burning offerings or sin offerings, but the flesh to be eaten by himself and family. Read Exodus 13:2, 12; 22:29-30; Number 3:13; 2 Samuel 24:24; Numbers 18:15-18” (Tolle 18). Why does it say they offered sacrifices according to the Law of Moses when, in fact, they did not observe the Law of Moses in this matter?

(36) Mosiah 20:1-5 states, “Now there was a place in Shemlon where the daughters of the Lamanites did gather themselves together to sing, and to

## FROM THE HEART OF

dance, and to make themselves merry. And it came to pass that there was one day a small number of them gathered together to sing and to dance. And now the priests of king Noah, being ashamed to return to the city of Nephi, yea, and also fearing that the people would slay them, therefore they durst not return to their wives and their children. And having tarried in the wilderness, and having discovered the daughters of the Lamanites, they laid and watched them; And when there were but few of them gathered together to dance, they came forth out of their secret places and took them and carried them into the wilderness; yea, twenty and four of the daughters of the Lamanites they carried into the wilderness.” Is Mosiah 20:1-5 plagiarized from Judges 21:16-24?

(37) Mosiah 18:16-17 (147-145 B.C.) states, “And after this manner he did baptize every one that went forth to the place of Mormon; and they were in number about two hundred and four souls; yea, and they were baptized in the waters of Mormon, and were filled with the grace of God. And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.” How had the church already started in Mosiah 18:16-17 (147-145 B.C.) if Jesus had not built it yet according to Matthew 16:16?

(38) Is Mosiah 27 (100-92 B.C.) a plagiarized account of Paul’s conversion from Acts 9?

(39) Alma 5:3 reads, “I, Alma, having been consecrated by my father, Alma, to be a high priest over the church of God, he having power and authority from God to do these things, behold, I say unto you that he began to establish a church in the land which was in the borders of Nephi; yea, the land which was called the land of Mormon; yea, and he did baptize his brethren in the waters of Mormon.” Why is there a high priest in the church (that is not yet supposed to be in existence, Matthew 16:16) when Jesus serves as the High Priest (Hebrews 7)?

(40) Alma 7:10 says, “And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.” Why does Alma 7:10 state that Jesus would be born in **Jerusalem**,

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*not Bethlehem* (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-6)?

(41) Alma 5:28 (83 B.C.) states, “Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, if ye are not ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold ye must prepare quickly; for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life.” Alma 5:50 says, “Yea, thus saith the Spirit: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand; yea, the Son of God cometh in his glory, in his might, majesty, power, and dominion...” We find in Helaman 5:32 (30 B.C.), “And behold the voice came again, saying: Repent ye, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; and seek no more to destroy my servants. And it came to pass that the earth shook again, and the walls trembled.” Both John the Immerser (Matthew 3:1) and Jesus (Matthew 4:17) stated that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand because it came forth in three and a half years. That does make sense. However, does it make any sense that the *BOM* writers proclaim the kingdom of heaven is at hand when it is 113 years away (Alma) and 60 years away (Helaman)?

(42) Alma 46:14,15 (73-72 B.C.) states, “For thus were all the true believers of Christ, who belonged to the church of God, called by those who did not belong to the church. And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ who should come.” Is this not a contradiction with Acts 11:26? It states: “*So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*”

(43) Why does Helaman 12:26 (supposedly written in 6 B.C.) quote John 5:28-29, which had not been written yet? It states, “Yea, who shall be consigned to a state of endless misery, fulfilling the words which say: They that have done good shall have everlasting life; and they that have done evil shall have everlasting damnation. And thus it is. Amen.” Interesting enough, the footnotes attempt to salvage this error by stating that it is from Daniel 12:2 (2-3). You be the judge on deciding which passage is being quoted: (a) Daniel 12:2, “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*” (b) John 5:28-29: “*Do not marvel at this; for the*

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*hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done, to the resurrection of condemnation.”*

(44) Helaman 14:20 states concerning the crucifixion of Jesus, “But behold, as I said unto you concerning another sign, a sign of his death, behold, in that day that he shall suffer death the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; and also the moon and the stars; and there shall be no light upon the face of this land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, **for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead** (emp. mine).” How can you reconcile Helaman 14:20 – darkness for three days occurring with the crucifixion of Jesus with the Gospel accounts of darkness for three hours? Also see 3 Nephi 8:3.

(45) In 3 Nephi 9:18, Jesus states to the Nephite multitude (Remember: according to the *BOM* these are supposedly early peoples of the Americas that spoke Hebrew or Egyptian), “I am the light and the life of the world. I am **Alpha and Omega** (emp. mine), the beginning and the end.” What would be the point of Jesus communicating the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet to this audience?

There are more questions to be asked about the Book of Mormon in future *Voice of Truth International* issues.

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## **What Can You Do to Help Spread the Word?**

- \* For just a moment, put yourself in a village in Africa, or even in a large city in India, or in the jungles of South America. You are an immortal soul, living in a perishing body. How will you knowledgeably prepare for the judgment and eternity that awaits us all?
- \* Does the church of Christ exist in your community, so that you can hear the Gospel preached? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- \* Is there a source for buying Bibles in your community? Though the Bible has been translated into most languages, villages seldom have bookstores. For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- \* If you have found the Truth and are a Christian, is there a bookstore from which you can order additional study materials? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.

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## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

### Verse Search (page 100)

1. The Corinthians
2. Written in their hearts
3. God
4. Letter, Spirit
5. Engraved on stones
6. Glory of his countenance
7. Passing away
8. It was much more glorious
9. Great boldness
10. Put a veil upon his face
11. Veil
12. Turning to Christ
13. Liberty

### Bible Word Scramble (page 70)

Faith

### Bible Find (page 41)



### Scavenger Hunt (page 49)

1. camel's hair, a leather belt (1:6)
2. hired servants (1:19-20)
3. Boanerges or Sons of Thunder (3:17)
4. parables (4:33-34)
5. about 2,000 (5:13)
6. James, Joses, Judas, Simon (6:3)
7. "a just and holy man" (6:20)
8. Jericho (10:46-52)
9. "a den of thieves" (11:17)
10. wept (14:72)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

# **The heavens declare the glory of God**

**And the firmament shows His handiwork.**

**Day unto day utters speech,**

**And night unto night reveals knowledge.**

**There is no speech nor language**

**Where their voice is not heard.**

**Their line has gone out through all the earth,**

**And their words to the end of the world.**

**In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,**

**Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,**

**And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.**

**Its rising is from one end of heaven,**

**And its circuit to the other end;**

**And there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

**The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;**

**The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;**

**The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;**

**The commandment of the Lord is pure,**

**enlightening the eyes;**

**The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;**

**The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.**

**More to be desired are they than gold,**

**Yea, than much fine gold;**

**Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.**

**Moreover by them Your servant is warned,**

**And in keeping them there is great reward.**

**Psalm 19:1-11**