

V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Why Does God Allow Human Suffering?
Page 11

Who Is My Judge?
Page 18

Lessons from the Catacombs
Page 22

The Flood: Not Local, but Global
Page 30

The Holy Priesthood
Page 43

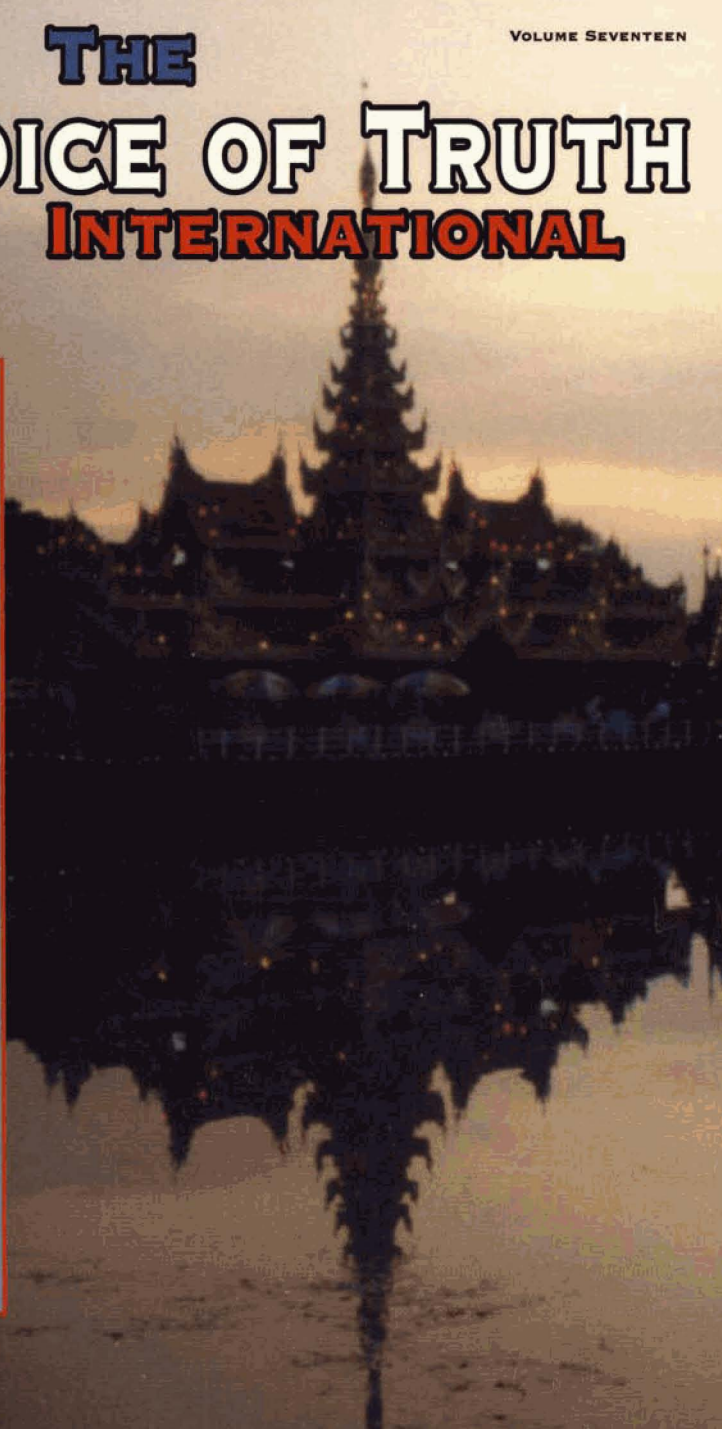
The One Who Never Let Go
Page 54

Bystanders in Contrast
Page 59

Be Still
Page 63

Have You Been Born Again?
Page 80

Myanmar
Page 107



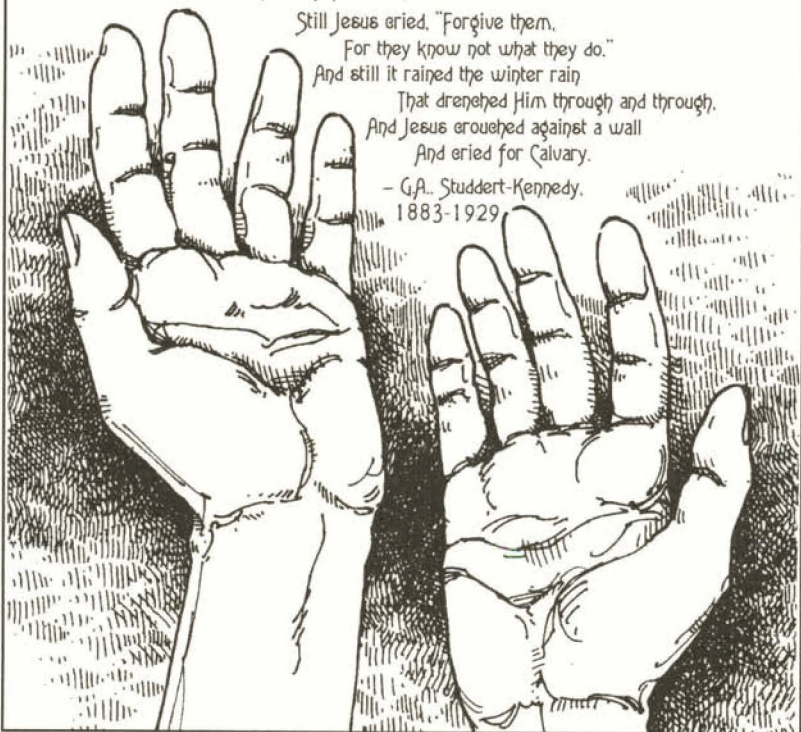
Indifference

When Jesus came to Golgotha
They hanged Him on a tree.
They drove great nails through hands and feet
And made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns.
Red were the wounds and deep,
For those were erude and eruel days
And human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to our town
They simply passed Him by;
They never hurt a hair of Him,
They only let Him die;
For men had grown more tender,
And they would not give Him pain,
They simply passed on down the street
And left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them,
For they know not what they do."
And still it rained the winter rain
That drenched Him through and through,
And Jesus crouched against a wall
And cried for Calvary.

- G.A. Studdert-Kennedy,
1883-1929



THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

STAFF:

Editor-in-Chief: J.C. Choate

Managing Editor: Byron Nichols

Layout Editors: Betty Burton Choate
Barbara A. Oliver

Typesetting: Gay Nichols
Eulene Ramsey

Art Consultant: Steven B. Choate

Computer Consultant: Bradley S. Choate

Promotion: Dale Grissom,
Oran Rhodes, Mark Posey,
Buck Davenport, James Warren,
Ken Willis, Don Hinds,
Roy D. Baker, Chuck Forsythe,
Alan R. Henderson, Paul Salvage

Associate Editors for Foreign Editions:

Sunny David, India
Roger Dickson, South Africa
Reuben Emperado, Philippines
Reggie Gnanasundaram, Sri Lanka
Henry Kong, Singapore
Loy Mitchell, All-Africa
Bill Nicks, Trinidad and Tobago
Stephen Randall, Australia
Keith Sisman, United Kingdom
John Thiesen, Malawi
Rod Kyle, New Zealand

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL is published by churches of Christ as a non-profit effort. **J.C. Choate (editor)** P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967, U.S.A.; Phone: 601-283-1192; Fax: 601-283-1191.

In lieu of a subscription rate, a gift of **\$4.00** is suggested for single issues, **\$12.00** for four issues. Make checks payable to **World Evangelism Foundation**, and mail to **Byron Nichols, (Managing Editor) 2148 N. National, Springfield, MO 65803**; Telephone: 417-833-5595.

Please send changes of address and articles for publication to **Byron Nichols** in Springfield, including both old and new addresses so that our records can be corrected.

STAFF WRITERS:

George Akpabli	Ray Hawk
W.T. Allison	Gordon Hogan
O.P. Baird	Al Horne
Rex Banks	Wayne Jackson
Leon Barnes	Ancil Jenkins
Wayne Barrier	Jerry Jenkins
Roy Beasley	Jimmy Jividen
Maxie B. Boren	Dayton Keesee
T. Pierce Brown	Tom Kelton
Ron Bryant	Dalton Key
Salvador B. Cariaga	Michael L. King
Jack W. Carter	Mack Lyon
David Chadwell	Cecil May, Jr.
Frank Chesser	Bill McFarland
Betty Burton Choate	Colin McKee
Jeril Cline	Jane McWhorter
Charles E. Cobb	Hollis Miller
Glenn Colley	Kevin Moore
Willard Collins	Peter Mostert
Owen Cosgrove	Tim Nichols
Sunny David	Bill Nicks
Jerry L. Davidson	Fenter Northern
Hans Dederscheck	Don L. Norwood
David Deffenbaugh	Owen D. Olbricht
Clarence DeLoach, Jr.	Basil Overton
G. Devadanam	Frances Parr
Roger Dickson	Max Patterson
Bill Dillon	Clayton Pepper
Bobby G. Dockery	David Pharr
Earl Edwards	Harvey Porter
Demar Elam	G.F. Raines
Reuben Emperado	John Thiesen
Allan E. Flaxman	Betty Tucker
Royce Frederick	Ken Tyler
E. Claude Gardner	Don W. Walker
R. Gnanasundaram	Bobby Wheat
Gary C. Hampton	Jon Gary Williams
Jack Harriman	Tex Williams
John Harris	William Woodson
W. Douglass Harris	

This printing: 25,000 copies, 13 Editions.

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

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



NO EXAMPLE

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

An example, a pattern to follow, is such an important thing. We can be *told* about something, even *commanded* to do it, but if we have an example of *how* to do it, that means so much more. An example makes a thing come to life, makes the learning easier. To see a thing being done gives us the confidence that we can do it too.

The Scriptures have several things to say about an example. For instance, when Christ showed humility in washing the disciples' feet, He said, "*For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you*" (John 13:15). Paul spoke to the Corinthian Christians and explained that even those things that were written in the law were written for our examples, that we should not walk in those ways (1 Corinthians 10:6). He refers to idolatry, fornication, and murmuring, and how that those who did those things were overthrown in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:5). Paul continued by saying, "*Now all of those things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*" (1 Corinthians 10:11,12; Jude 7).

Continuing, Paul exhorted the Philippian brethren, "*Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example*" (Philippians 3:17). To the Thessalonians he wrote, "*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh*

disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6-9).

Paul said to the young preacher, Timothy, *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity"* (1 Timothy 4:12). Peter said, *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21).

Christ Himself said, *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me"* (Luke 9:23). He also said, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16).

We are all familiar with a son literally trying to walk in his father's steps, and a little girl playing "house" with her doll, following the pattern she sees in her mother. The fact is, children will grow up to do as their parents did before them, good or bad, because they are following their example.

While we need good examples as guidelines for the younger generation to follow, the sad thing is that in so many cases nowadays there is no example for them, except bad ones. Therefore our world is suffering the consequences in many areas of life.

Marriage and Divorce

For instance, we are aware of the fact that in the US about half of the marriages end in divorce. The family is being torn to shreds, violently. Children are born in wedlock — often to parents who have already gone through a divorce and remarriage, and who may have children from earlier unions — and out of wedlock, with no example of what a good marriage is like, or of what stable fathers and mothers are like. Then they grow up, marry, and more often than not divorce

becomes the ready solution to their own marital problems.

Even where marriages are intact, with fathers and mothers spending long hours on their jobs to maintain the standard of living they want, children are often literally left to raise themselves. They grow up without the presence of a parent in the home during the "after school" hours. They are "latch-key" kids, letting themselves into a cold and empty house in which there is very little "home life", few meals cooked and eaten as a family at home, and either little or no discipline, or anger and abuse. Is it any wonder that many do poorly in school, get hooked on drugs, join gangs, get involved in immoral situations, and end up as outlaws in many cases?

Of course this description is not true of every case, but all of us know that the statistics show that it is a massive problem, and one that is mushrooming in our society.

No Example for Preachers

Also, in the church, at a time when we so often hear the statement that no one is interested in the gospel, few preachers and individual Christians get out and

really visit contacts, trying to set up studies to teach the lost. The typical preacher keeps office hours during the week and preaches on Sunday. These are counted as his primary responsibilities. Personal work is not an important part of his training, and there are few examples of hard workers among older preachers. So how is a young preacher to learn the best and most effective ways for him to reach others? He completes his education and goes out into his work with the church, largely untrained in how to help the local church to grow through personally teaching and converting the lost.

No Example for Missionaries

Even concerning the mission fields around the world, sometimes brethren are under the impression that missionaries should go in and quickly baptize a number of people, establish a good-sized congregation, and within a short time have local preachers, elders, and deacons, leaving behind a self-supporting church from its infancy.

Not so. It will take a long time — even years, and maybe a lifetime — to accomplish this. Why? Is the missionary unable

to accomplish his work? Does he not have the ability to build a self-supporting church? Has he failed?

Not at all. Rather, we have forgotten that we live in different parts of the world, with varied cultures, numerous languages, working often with people who were converted from paganism or from denominational backgrounds. These brethren, young in the faith, have had to make unbelievable changes. In many cases they have had to turn against their families and their friends. Their direction in life is being shaped by the missionary and what he teaches. Of course he has preached the Bible and has shown them from the Scriptures what they should do, but still they need time for the head knowledge to become heart knowledge, and they need the missionary as their living pattern. They need to be able to lean on him, to have his reassurance and encouragement.

Now, if he rushes through planting the church and tries to force early maturing, without allowing time for real inner growth, the work will not endure the tests of time. If, in addition, he leaves the young converts on their

own, it will be difficult for them to survive.

Also, keep in mind that in most cases those young Christians have never seen the example of a full-grown church, with qualified local preachers, scriptural elders and deacons, a well-established program of personal evangelism, and a plan to help the local church to grow to maturity in numbers and faith. All of this takes years of time, and cannot be hurried to fit anybody's expectations of what "ought" to be possible. To look at the church of the first century, where many of the congregations grew out of the preparation of a Jewish background and where there was the miraculous guidance of the Holy Spirit to aid in the maturing, and to think that the same can be done in pagan fields today is to deny reality.

In conclusion, let it be emphasized again that the example is very important, and where there is no example how can good things develop? We all depend on examples. We are influenced by them and molded by them far more than we may realize. What kind of example are you setting for those who are following you? †



GOD IS IN CONTROL

Byron Nichols

Good people talk about conditions and circumstances in the world and say, "God is in control," implying that everything that is occurring is according to God's will and plan.

Surely all who believe in God believe that He is indeed in control of the world. However, we cannot accept the idea that God's being in control means that He causes, wants, or is pleased with everything that happens. If so, everyone is merely a robot, having no choice or power of self-will.

If His being in control means that God causes everything to happen that happens, then God causes all sins to be committed, He caused Judas to betray Christ, Moses to strike the rock and thus be unable to enter the promised land of Canaan, Adam and Eve to sin and be expelled from Eden, Nadab and Abihu to offer strange fire, etc., etc., etc.

Romans 8:28 tells us that God can and does make good results come out of bad circumstances, but it doesn't say that He causes the bad circumstances. God was in control in the life of Joseph so that the evil things done to him ultimately led to his being in a position of tremendous power and influence (Genesis 37-47), but God's control did not cause the evil.

Surely we don't believe that God actually desires that thousands die and many more suffer greatly in other ways as a direct result of war today, yet we can most assuredly believe that He sometimes uses His people to render special service in His name as a result of wars. For example, the greatest mission activity on the part of the church in modern times came about as a result of Christians serving in the military in World War II and seeing first-hand the tremendous spiritual needs of people ravaged by war.

Is it possible that we would feel guilty for thinking that God is not

directly controlling everything that takes place in His universe? Would that make Him to be less than all powerful? Friends, the owner of any large company will most certainly delegate much authority and responsibility to others beneath him, but that owner still maintains the power to alter any decision implemented by any of his subordinates. God has chosen to work in somewhat the same way. He has delegated control of nations to kings, presidents, parliaments, etc., but they are all His subordinates, although few of them seem to realize that fact.

If God is directly in control of everything, why pray to Him in behalf of that which is good and of those in high places in government, etc.? Would not such prayers be useless, since God would already have things going the way He wanted them? Praying to God and asking Him to change anything would be futile. Yet, He makes it quite clear in the Scriptures that He wants His people to pray — Luke 18:1 (we ought always to pray); Colossians 4:2 (continue in prayer); Philipians 4:6 (let requests be made known to God); 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (pray without ceasing); James 5:16 (the earnest prayer of a righteous man avails much). Furthermore, God has promised to answer our prayers — Matthew 6:5,6 (pray in secret, but He will reward openly); Matthew 7:7-11 (if we will ask, God will give us good things); John 15:7,16 (our requests to God through Christ will be granted).

It would seem that if God were in complete control, His will would constantly and consistently be done. However, in 2 Peter 3:9 we find Peter saying that God “*is longsuffering toward us, not willing (desiring) that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*” It thus is made clear that God’s will (desire) is that all should repent and be saved. Has that ever come about in the past? No. Is it happening now? No. Is there reason to believe it will occur in the future? None at all. Matthew 7:13 and 14, Matthew 18:8,9,34, and 35, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, and many other passages reveal that God’s will is going to be spurned by many, even the majority, throughout the existence of the earth.

Friends, we are not guilty of denying the power of God when we accept the fact that He does not exercise constant control of everything in the world. God IS in control, but He is not causing men to do evil and abuse others and violate His written will, the Bible. He IS in control — He has the power to end the existence of this world any time He may determine to do so. In the meantime, He is allowing men to exercise their free moral agency and be wicked if they so choose, but the time will most certainly come when He will put an end to it all. Until then, let us not be guilty, either intentionally or unintentionally, of trying to make God responsible for all that happens in the world. †

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOD

How Do You Say. . . ?	10
Why Does God Allow. . . ?	11
He Came and Preached Peace	13
Talking Back to God	15
Of Judgment and Wisdom	17

EVIDENCES

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made	19
The Earth — Mature from. . .	20
Lessons from the Catacombs. . .	22

THE WORD OF GOD

Characteristics of the . . .	27
God's Whole Counsel	29
The Flood: Not Local . . .	30

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Is Conscience a Safe Guide? . . .	33
Who Are Those Christians. . . ?	35
Who Is Righteous? . . .	37
Preaching "The Way" . . .	39

THE CHURCH

The Holy Priesthood	43
The Kingdom in Prophecy	45
God Calls Us to Be. . .	47
In the Holy of Holies	49

CHURCH GROWTH

The Seeds of Evangelism	50
-------------------------	----

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Do You Bring Out the Best. . . ?	56
Peter's Imperfections	57
Bystanders in Contrast	59
Kindness to the Dead	61
Be Still	63

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

What About Your Children? . . .	65
The Will to Discipline	66
Respect for Parents	67
God's Family Values	69

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Verses Every Personal Worker. . .	71
The Gospel Is for All	72
Our Mission: Is It Impossible? . . .	75
The Power of Partnership	77

SALVATION

How Are Persons. . . ?	79
Have You Been Born Again? . . .	80
Baptism Is for the Dead!	82
When Was Paul Saved? . . .	84

PROVERBS 17:22

Humor	86
-------	----

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Ehud, Israel's Second Judge	89
Who Was Jerubbaal? . . .	91
Simon Peter	93
Poor Moses? . . .	95

TEXTUAL STUDIES

Burden Bearing	97
God's Spiritual Blessings. . .	98
Wonderful Assurances	100

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

Reconciliation Is in Christ! . . .	102
A Description of the Church	103
The Divine Calling	105

POEMS AND WRITINGS

Nature Forms Us	14
A Word of Exhortation	16
Who Is My Judge? . . .	18
Truth	28
If It's Doubtful, It's Dirty	34
Quiz	36
A Christian Is. . .	38
The One Who Never Let Go	54
Leave a Touch of Glory	62
Father	68
A Man Awake	74
Shamgar Had an Ox Goad. . .	76

Evangelize!	81
President Garfield's Appointment	90
But I Can't Do Anything!.....	92
What Sayest Thou of Him?	101

FEATURES

Bible Word Power	25
Verse Search	70
Quick Commentary	42
The Book of Titus.....	78
Who Am I?	88
How Do You Measure Up?	32
Puzzle Answers	Back Page

FROM THE HEART OF ...

Myanmar, the Golden Land	107
Exciting Things.	110

**THE VOICE OF TRUTH
INTERNATIONAL**

**WE HAVE A VISION FOR
THE WORLD.**

**WE WANT TO SEE THE
VOICE OF TRUTH INTER-
NATIONAL EXPANDED WITH
EACH ISSUE, SO THAT AN
EVER - GROWING NUMBER
OF FOREIGN EDITIONS CAN
BE PRINTED. THIS IS SORELY
NEEDED.**

**MOST BRETHERN DO
NOT REALIZE THAT THE
MAGAZINES AND OTHER
LITERATURE WE TAKE SO
MUCH FOR GRANTED IN THE
US ARE SIMPLY NOT AVAIL-
ABLE TO BRETHERN AND
SEEKERS IN THE REST OF
THE WORLD. PLEASE HELP
US TO BRING THESE TRUTHS
TO THEM!**

JCC

"AMIE..."

**BABY EYES, BIG WITH QUESTIONS,
SO SERIOUS AND, AT ONCE,
SO SAD,**

**LOOKING AT THE TURNS OF LIFE
FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF**

THREE:

"AMIE . . ."

**— HOW SOLEMN AND HOW KNOWING,
THOSE BIG EYES —**

"AMIE, WHEN WILL YOU LEAVE?"

"JUST TOMORROW, DARLING —

TOMORROW IS THE DAY WE GO."

"BUT, AMIE . . ."

**HE SITS THERE IN HIS
CHAIR**

**— A LITTLE MAN —
HANDS ON HIS LAP,
DANGLING FEET NOW STILL;**

**I CAN SEE HIS EFFORT,
TRYING NOT TO CRY**

**— NOT TO BE A BABY —
BUT THE TEARS BEGIN
AND THERE'S A TREMBLING**

**IN HIS LIPS
FOR THE SORROW
OTHERS**

**— UNINVITED —
BRING HIS WAY:**

"AMIE . . ."

**. . . I'LL BE SO SAD
WHEN YOU GO . . ."**

— BETTY BURTON CHOATE

How Do You Say “Thank You” to God?

Tom Holland

Most of us were taught the importance of saying “thank you” when people did good things for us or said nice things to us. Remember the song for children about “two little magic words” that would “open any door with ease”? One of the words was “thanks” and the other little word was “please.”

Some insensitive people or some ungrateful people may not think to say **thanks**. However, one attribute of a noble character is the awareness of responding to goodness with an expression of appreciation.

But how does one say “thank you” to God? I can’t call Him on the telephone and say, “thank you.” I can’t write Him a letter or send Him a thank-you card. So how do I get the message of my gratitude to a gracious God? There are basically two ways to thank God: **thanksgiving** and **thanksgiving**. These are complementary.

The Bible is very plain in instructing God’s people to give thanks in prayer. In Philippians an inspired apostle said, “*Be careful*

for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

God created meats “*to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth*” because “*every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving*” (1 Timothy 4:3,4).

The Lord Jesus gave a good example of saying “thank you” to God. Before Jesus ate food He first gave thanks (John 6:11). Jesus said, “*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth*” (Matthew 11:25).

So how do we say “thank you” to God? We say “thank you” in prayer and hymns of gratitude to Him.

And we live a life pleasing to God, so that our very behavior shows our **thanksgiving** in response to all that He does for us, day by day. †

Tom Holland is a writer and preacher living in Brentwood, Tennessee, USA.



Why Does God **ALLOW** Human Suffering?

Kevin L. Moore

There are some things God cannot do. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2), He cannot be unjust (Deuteronomy 32:4), and He cannot do what is logically impossible. In order to bring about the greatest state of goodness in the world, God had to create

some specific goods whose existence necessarily entails the possibility of certain evils. Human beings were designed with the ability to think and the freedom to choose. Although we often take these things for granted, anyone

GOD

who has ever been a slave or a prisoner will tell you that freedom is one of the most precious commodities a person can have. Being a God of love (1 John 4:8), He does not force us to act against our wills, but grants us freedom. Freedom involves choice, and choice includes not only the possibility of making right decisions, but also wrong ones. It is **impossible** for God to have made man a free moral agent, and yet take away his capability of making wrong choices.

Now God has given us an instruction book to guide us in the right direction (2 Timothy 3:16,17), but when people disregard God's directives and make bad decisions, pain and suffering are often the result. It is man, not God, who has created slavery, whips, guns, bombs, death camps, liquor, pornography, and so on. The blessing of freedom, when it is misused, accounts for the majority of human misery.

Most people consider something to be good if it brings pleasure, and bad if it causes pain, but this is shallow and shortsighted. The imperfections of this world serve a purpose in allowing individuals to grow and develop into mature, responsible beings in a way that would otherwise not be possible. *"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that*

tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3,4). God's desire for his creatures seems to be, not the suffering itself, but the positive and beneficial effects.

Pain, loss, and hardship also help to create an acknowledgement of human weakness and a need for God in one's life. Pride and arrogance are self-destructive traits (Proverbs 16:18), but suffering has a way of helping us put things in perspective. It is said that when a man is flat on his back, the only direction he can look is up. *"My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever"* (Psalm 73:26).

Life in this physical world is a brief, and necessary, preparation for eternity. The trials we face help us to avoid complacency and to look forward to that place where *"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away"* (Revelation 21:4). More than a perfect world, God desires a loving relationship with His creation. Out of suffering, pain, hardship, and loss God can and will accomplish His good purpose (Romans 8:28-39). †

Kevin L. Moore is working for the Lord as an evangelist in Wanganui, New Zealand.



Dayton Keese

Our world is breeding gangs, racial slurs, domestic fights, and conflicting lifestyles, all growing in the bitter pool of abused freedoms. An increasing number would rather react than relate, create conflict rather than cooperate, slander or shoot one another rather than serve one another.

With all of these problems, it is important that we strongly emphasize one of Christ's primary reasons for coming into the world: "*He came and preached peace to you*" (Ephesians 2:17). The context shows that Jesus not only preached

it, He produced it! He produced it in all the areas where our generation is losing it!

In Ephesians 2:11 Paul urged his readers to remember a day when every brand of reaction and rebellion prevailed instead of peace. His punch line was that when Christ came into their hearts, all of that changed. Blessed be that day and praises be given to God when peace prevails where hurt and strife have been. We need to remember again what Christ can do.

Paul pointed to where racial (Jew and Gentile) and cultural (cir-

GOD

cumcised and uncumcised) alienation prevailed, adding "*But now in Christ Jesus, ye that once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ*" (Ephesians 2:13). Racial and cultural differences disappear when the blood of Christ is applied!

Social differences also faded away as He "*broke down the middle wall of partition.*" Why should the wall stay there since He "*made both one*" (Ephesians 2:14)? The media that gave such jubilant coverage to the wall in Germany coming down should telecast and broadcast Christ to everyone, for He can make us one internationally!

Christ removed doctrinal differences, "*having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*" so that He could "*create in Himself of the two one new man, so making peace*" (Ephesians 2:15).

He even removed ecclesiastical differences by reconciling those differences "*in one body through the cross,*" which is in one church (Colossians 1:18). Would to God that every preacher, pastor, and priest would be honest enough to surrender to Him in this matter, ending all church divisions to become "*one body*" — one church — as He built it (Ephesians 2:16; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:19-22).

Most glorious of all, He ended the human-Divine differences, "*for*

through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18; 1 Timothy 3:15).

Racial, cultural, social, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical peace — what a delightful and devoutly-to-be-desired concept! Christ can do it, did do it, and desires yet to do it! Let's call Him "*LORD, LORD*" and do what He says (Luke 6:46; John 10:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10). †

Dayton Keesee preaches for the Eastside Church of Christ in Midwest City, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

Nature forms us
Sin deforms us
Prisons try to
reform us
Education tries
to inform us
But it is the
power of
Jesus Christ
that can
transform us.

— Unknown

Talking Back To God

Harvey Porter

There was controversy in the early church concerning the salvation of the Gentiles, the Old Law being set aside by God, and the Israelites basing their salvation on the fact that they were the seed of Abraham by birth and not by faith. Paul wrote on this great problem in the letter to the Romans. He said, "*But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, Why did you make me like this? Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?*" (Romans 9:20,21).

The human family has had a long history of "talking back to God." It is not uncommon today to hear some who are not well informed concerning God's Word say, "The God I serve is a God of love and could not have made anything like hell!" They are in effect telling God that He could not condemn sinners. They have not studied the many passages that speak of the justice of God. It is true that God is a loving and forgiving Father. It is also true that He hates sin and that His holy nature cannot abide sin; therefore, sinners cannot live in His holy presence.

Many have felt that baptism is not necessary for salvation, even though the New Testament clearly teaches that it is. Peter told those who believed in Jesus on the Day of Pentecost to, "*Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven*" (Acts 2:38). Other translations often say, "*for the remission of sins.*" Baptism "*puts us into Christ,*" "*unites us with Christ,*" "*baptism does also now save us,*" "*baptized into the body (the church),*" and "*washes away our sins.*" Sinful man should not tell God and Jesus, the Savior, how to save us.

It is not uncommon for man to tell God how and what he will give as worship to God. Some say that they do not have to worship at all, because God knows how they feel. Others declare, "Well, going to church never saved anybody!" The Bible says a lot about worship. Jesus specified that "*true worshippers must worship the Father in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). What a dangerous thing to make up our own way and then have the audacity to tell God that He should like it after we have rejected what He directed us to do over nineteen hundred years ago! The pot cannot tell the

potter anything.

Paul closed the doctrinal section of Romans with these great words: *"Oh, the depth of the riches, the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."* Paul quoted from Isaiah 49 and Job 41. The heart of the quote is, *"Or who has been his counselor?"* God had never had nor needed a counselor.

God is filled with wisdom and knowledge. Puny man's wisdom does not even measure up to the foolishness of God (see 1 Corinthians 1:25). His judgments are unsearchable. He always makes the right decision, gives the right command. Truth is established by Him. Man can never call God into question.

Mankind's duty and response to God is to humbly obey His every wish and to walk in fellowship with Him by faith. *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."*

Please, never talk back to your Heavenly Father! †

Harvey Porter works with the Montgomery Boulevard congregation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A.

A Word of Exhortation:

"Let Us" from the book of Hebrews

1. Let us **FEAR.**
Hebrews 4:1
2. Let us **LABOR.**
Hebrews 4:11
3. Let us **HOLD FAST.**
Hebrews 4:14: 10:23
4. Let us **PRAY.**
Hebrews 4:16
5. Let us **GO ON.**
Hebrews 6:1
6. Let us **DRAW NEAR.**
Hebrews 10:22
7. Let us **CONSIDER.**
Hebrews 10:24
8. Let us **LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT.**
Hebrews 12:1
9. Let us **RUN WITH PATIENCE.**
Hebrews 12:1
10. Let us **HAVE GRACE.**
Hebrews 12:28
11. Let us **GO FORTH.**
Hebrews 12:12
12. Let us **PRAISE GOD.**
Hebrews 13:15

— Jim Martin



Of

Judgment

and

Wisdom

Joe C. Magee

“So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, ‘Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him.’ But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’” (1 Samuel 16:6,7).

Here we see a milestone in the history of God’s people. Against God’s knowledge of what was best for them, they had insisted that they have a king, that they might be like the nations around them. Saul, whose stature and appearance fit the peoples’ idea of kingliness, had proved to be a poor choice. Now, in the choosing of David, the judgment of the people was not considered. Divine intervention was to make its impression upon Israel.

It is good that our powers of discernment are not limited to first impressions. When our knowledge of a person is enriched by time and association, we often find that those first impressions were faulty. We should recognize that life is a series of judgments; and the ongoing exercise of such tends, by the very nature of experience, to develop within us wisdom which grows with age. Yet we will never reach the depth of discernment which God knows.

God's judgment does not graduate from the lesser to the greater, from the unseen to the seen. He sees all of man from the very start. He knows his character, his ambitions, his weaknesses, and his strengths. He does, however, allow the instrumentality of man's devices to bring about His purposes. The drastic contrast between King Saul, who *looked* like a king outwardly, and David, who had the *heart* of a true and godly king, is a case in point.

This very principle of God's superior judgment is paramount in Christ's coming to earth. Who among men would have ushered in the King of kings and the Lord of lords in such fashion? Who would have chosen the Majestic Monarch from among the lowly craftsmen of Nazareth? Surely we can see the parallel between the shepherd boy David and the Good Shepherd; and, seeing, submit to the wisdom of God.

Perhaps we can learn from this that God does not exalt men for their social station, but for their spiritual dependency. May we be reminded that the Lord's words, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*" were not the moral platitudes of mere man. They were wisdom from above. †

Joe C. Magee is the preacher for the church of Christ which meets in Berryville, Arkansas, USA.

Who Is My Judge?

Sometimes people judge and condemn each other. Sometimes other people say, "Oh, we aren't to judge any person!" Who is right? Who is our judge?

The apostle asked: "*If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?*" (1 Peter 4:18).

The promise is made, "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad*" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Jesus warned: "*He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).

It is important that we read the Bible and obey the words taught by Jesus. He says that they have been given to us as a guide to prepare us for living now and for passing that final examination.

No human actually has any right to judge another. But when the Scriptures are the basis for teaching, encouragement, or warning, that is God's judgment, not human judgment.

NEXT: Does God Care?

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

John R. Vaughan

Raymond Hull stated, "I have noticed, with few exceptions, men bungle their affairs." He cited a three-quarter mile long highway bridge, which collapsed and fell into the sea because someone had botched the design of a supporting pier. He noted some town planners who developed a city on the flood plane of a great river, where it is certain to be periodically inundated.

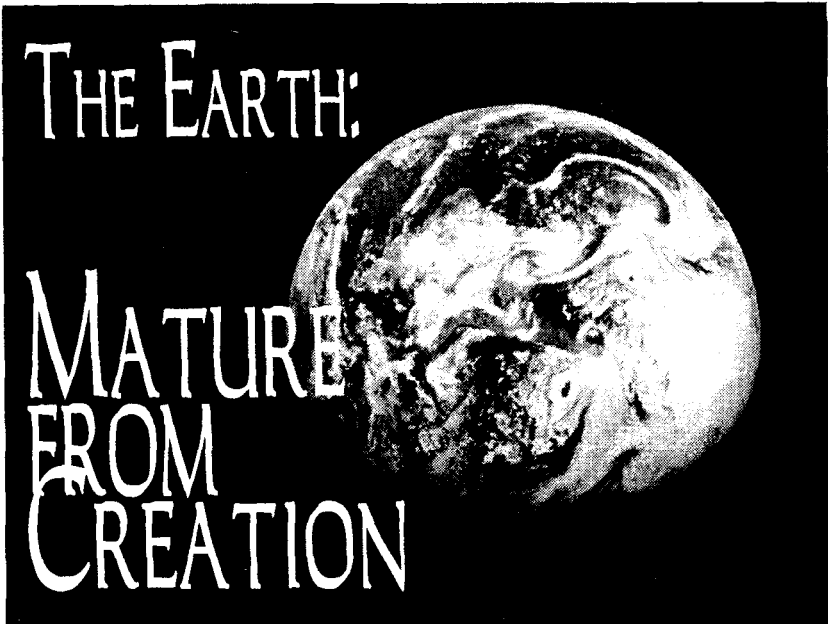
We all remember the tragic rocket explosion that took the lives of Christy McAuliffe and several others because of a faulty O-Ring.

The best and wisest among us mess up. However, when God created man He did so flawlessly. No other machine can absorb the abuse pounded on the human body and continue to function without fail. But, if you are an adult, weighing 175 pounds, in 24 hours:

- Your heart beats 103,689 times.
- Your blood travels 168,000,000 miles.
- You breathe 23,040 times.
- You inhale 438 cubic feet of air.
- You eat 3.25 pounds of food.
- You drink 2.9 pounds of liquids.
- You lose in weight 7.8 pounds of waste.
- You perspire 1.43 pints.
- You give off 2.6 degrees Fahrenheit.
- You speak 4,800 words.
- You move 750 major muscles.
- Your nails grow .00046 of an inch.
- Your hair grows .017414 of an inch.
- You exercise 7,000 brain cells.

No wonder the Psalmist exclaimed, "*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well*" (Psalm 139:14). †

John R. Vaughan preaches for the Graymere Church of Christ in Columbia, Tennessee, USA.



Betty Burton Choate

The Scriptures state beautifully and clearly, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”* (Genesis 1:1). God gave further details concerning the creation in the remaining verses of the chapter, saying that the work was divided into six days. At the end of each day, the work was pronounced as “good” — complete, perfect, ready to function as its own individual part of the whole.

On Day Three God said, *“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.*

“Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so.

“And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

“So the evening and the morning were the third day.”

EVIDENCES

When the dry land was made to appear, it would have shown no fossils, no residue of life, because there had been none.

But when God called the dry land *earth* and commanded it to bring forth life, at that point in the creation process the earth itself was made *mature*, just as the animals and man were created mature and capable from the beginning of reproduction; just so, was the earth aged and mature in whatever aspects were required in order for it to perform as God commanded.

Consider this: Plants cannot grow without soil. Soil is made up of minerals and weathered rock which have been powdered to dust. But to this sterile base must be added *two* other ingredients in order for plants to grow:

- ◆ organic matter, composed of decayed plants and animals.
- ◆ living organisms which break down decaying matter, and which also take nitrogen from rocks and air to make it into substances the plants must have in order to live.

Encyclopedia Britannica reports that there are as many as *one billion such organisms in one square foot of soil!*

Consider this: If evolutionists are right, how did the first plant grow in sterile soil? How did enough “first plants” grow, in the first place, to die and then become

the organic matter necessary for *any* plants to grow?

And those multitudes of varieties of living organisms, those tiny creatures, even down to the one-celled bacteria — those organisms in the cycle of life — when did they develop? Was it during aeons of time before the coming of the plants and animals they would help to decompose? Or did the plants and animals develop aeons before the soil organisms? Or did both populations somehow, mysteriously, develop at just the same instant (but “Evolution” requires “millions of years”, remember!) in time, in just the same spot of sterile soil, and then spread from there?

Evolution doesn’t answer this puzzle at all. It makes much more sense to believe, instead, that God created the soil *mature*, with all the components necessary for “*the earth [to] bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself . . .*” (Genesis 1:11). †

Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, editor of *The Voice of Truth International*. The Choates have done mission work in India and Asia since 1962

If you have God’s promise for a thing, isn’t that enough? — Selected

Lessons from the Catacombs of Rome



Wayne Jackson

The term “catacomb” derives from a compound Greek term with the components *kata* (down) and *kymbe* (hollow). The word is used of that vast network of tombs beneath the city of Rome (and at other places as well) where ancient Christians buried their dead — and even met for worship during times of severe persecution. It has been estimated that this maze of corridors and burial vaults, if strung together, would stretch out some 600 miles. Estimates of the number of tombs vary from 1,750,000 to 4,000,000; they represent the burial of Romans from the 2nd to the 5th centuries A.D. There are a number of valuable lessons from the catacombs.

EVIDENCES

Historicity of Christ — The catacombs are filled with art works (ancient graffiti) which testify to the martyrs' deep faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Epitaph inscriptions like this one are frequent: "Victorina, in peace and in Christ." Common among the inscriptions was the sign of the fish. The Greek word for fish (*ichthus*), became an acrostic symbol for: *Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior*. Surely the ancient martyrs had a better sense of whether Jesus Christ was an actual historical character than some modern atheist.

The Scriptures — The fact that much of the ark work in the catacombs was taken from various accounts in the Bible — both Old Testament and New Testament — reveals now widely the Scriptures must have been circulated in those early centuries of the church's history. There are representations of Adam and Eve, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, Moses' miracle of bringing water from the rock, Daniel in the lions' den, Jonah, the visit of the Wise Men, Jesus as the Lamb of God and the Good Shepherd, etc.

There is another point to be made. Many of the names mentioned in the epistles of Paul are found carved upon the walls of the catacombs. This does not mean, of course, that they represent the actual people in Paul's correspondence; it

does suggest that the biblical record is an accurate reflection of the nomenclature of that day, and thus possesses an aura of authenticity.

The Miracles of Jesus — The New Testament represents Jesus as a miracle worker. Some thirty-five individual miracles are ascribed to Him, in addition to numerous generic references (see John 20:30,31). Many modern scholars, yielding to the influence of skeptics like David Hume (1711-1776), deny that Jesus performed miracles.

Clearly, though, the primitive Christians were convinced of the Lord's miracle-working powers. Among the art works of the catacombs, there are depictions of Jesus' baptism, with the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove. There are reproductions of the healing of the paralytic man (Mark 2), and the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11). There are reflections of the water-to-wine miracle at the wedding in Cana (John 2), as well as the feeding of the great multitude with the loaves and fish (John 6).

The Growth of the Church — A consideration of the material in the book of Acts shows how explosive the growth of the early church was, and the saints in Rome were no small part of this. The faith of the Roman Christians was widely known (Romans 1:8; 16:19). Blaiklock says: "The most conservative

EVIDENCES

interpretation of the Catacomb burial figures would, therefore, suggest that . . . one-fifth of Rome's people in the middle Empire were Christians, and it is possible that the proportion was at times much greater." There is another factor to be considered as well. The tombs of the catacombs represent about ten generations of believers. This would suggest that the early devotees of Christianity passed the Gospel along to their offspring. It's called "vertical evangelism."

Christianity and Intellectualism — Atheism alleges that the Christian faith is only for the ignorant and those who are void of reason. Gibbon charged that the early church consisted almost exclusively of "the dregs of the populace." The catacomb evidence has shown, though, that Christianity invaded the ranks of the middle and upper classes, and made an impact even among the intellectuals. Many of the tombs appear to have belonged to families of the aristocracy (see Acts 17:4).

Persecution — The Lord had promised that His followers would be persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12). In A.D. 64, Nero launched a vicious reign of terror against the church, as did subsequent Caesars. The Christians went underground

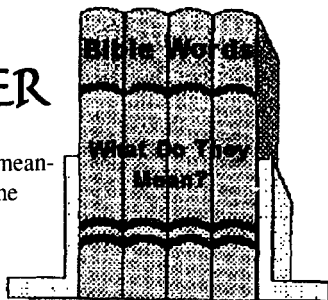
(amongst the tombs — where the superstitious Romans would not follow) to worship. Amazingly, though, the catacomb graffiti reveal no images of sorrow or complaining; rather, a vibrant spirit of joy and triumph is everywhere evidenced. What faith those saints possessed!

Apostasy — The record of the catacombs is not entirely positive. Just as Paul predicted that there would be an apostasy from the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:1ff; 1 Timothy 4:1ff), so the record of the tombs reveals a drifting from the primitive faith. For example, there is graffiti testimony that encourages prayers to and for those who are dead (which later becomes fully developed in Catholicism). Though the Christians constructed baptisteries in the catacombs, there is one picture where "baptism" is being administered by the pouring of water. But there is also a heathen god in the scene — which reveals a woefully compromised faith. Pristine Christianity was eventually corrupted. Eternal vigilance is the price of truth! †

Wayne Jackson is the editor of Christian Courier and is a preacher in Stockton, California, U.S.A.

People cannot change truth, but truth can change people. — Selected

It Helps to Enrich Your BIBLE WORD POWER



Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the context found in Romans 1 (KJV). After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

1. **servant** *n.* – (Gk. *doō' los*) A: a worker B: a waiter C: a freedman D: a slave, a bond-servant.
2. **resurrection** *n.* – (Gk. *an as'tas is*) A: restoration B: a standing up again C: resurgence D: the act of turning.
3. **grace** *n.* – (Gk. *khar' ece*) A: love B: divine favor C: mercy D: kindness.
4. **faith** *n.* – (Gk. *pis' tis*) A: knowledge B: what one thinks is right C: the system of religious truth D: hope.
5. **godhead** *n.* – (Gk. *thi ot' ace*) A: the divine head B: God, the Father C: the three divine Persons, Deity D: all "gods", real and mythological.
6. **vain** *adj.* – (Gk. *mat ah yoi' o*) A: morally wicked, idolatrous B: proud C: useless D: parading one's beauty.
7. **fools** *n.* – (Gk. *mo rah' ee no*) A: the uneducated B: those who act as simpletons; foolish C: a humorous person D: one who laughs.
8. **uncorruptible** *adj.* – (Gk. *af' thar tos*) A: unceasing B: beautiful C: one who cannot be bribed D: undecaying in essence, immortal.
9. **uncleanness** *n.* – (Gk. *ak ath ar see' ah*) A: in need of a bath B: stained C: moral or physical impurity D: foul-mouthed.
10. **changed** *v.* – (Gk. *met al las' so*) A: to make different B: to leave off C: to go beyond D: to replace.
11. **vile** *adj.* – (Gk. *at ee mee' ah*) A: bitter B: sensual C: strong D: disgraceful.
12. **(natural) use** *n.* – (Gk. *khray' sis*) A: benefit B: employment C: talent D: without difficulty.
13. **reprobate** *adj.* – (Gk. *ad ok' ee mos*) A: unapproved B: weak C: inquisitive D: jealous.
14. **(not) convenient** *adj.* – (Gk. *kath ay' ko*) A: (not) easy B: (not) planned C: ill-timed D: (not) becoming; not fit.
15. **without natural affection** *adj.* – (Gk. *as' tor gos*) A: hard-hearted toward those one should love B: pretentious C: insecure in one's relationships D: awkward and affected.
16. **judgment** *n.* – (Gk. *dik ah' yo mah*) A: statute B: censure C: anger, wrath D: fulfillment of a promise.
17. **commit** *v.* – (Gk. *pras' so*) A: to practice habitually B: to promise C: to allow D: to fall into temptation.

1. **servant** *n.* – (Gk. *doō' los*) D: a slave, a bond-servant. The Christian is owned, body and soul, by God, being bought with the blood of Jesus, his Savior.
2. **resurrection** *n.* – (Gk. *an as'tas is*) B: figuratively or literally, standing up again; raised up; being made to live again. As Christ was physically raised, so His followers are promised that their bodies will be raised, changed, and made immortal.
3. **grace** *n.* – (Gk. *khar' ece*) B: divine favor; the divine influence on the heart and its refection in one's life.
4. **faith** *n.* – (Gk. *pis' tis*) C: the system of religious truth; the Gospel. This reference is to "faith", singular — there being only *one faith or gospel* — and to our *obedience* to that faith. "Obedience to faith" renders the idea of being saved by grace or faith *only* an unbiblical doctrine.
5. **godhead** *n.* – (Gk. *thi ot' ace*) C: God in the three divine Persons, Deity.
6. **vain** *adj.* – (Gk. *mat ah yoi' o*) A: morally wicked, idolatrous.
7. **fools** *n.* – (Gk. *mo rah' ee no*) B: those who act as simpletons; foolish. Human wisdom pitted against God's wisdom always makes man appear foolish.
8. **incorruptible** *adj.* – (Gk. *af' thar tos*) D: undecaying in essence, immortal. Nothing in this physical earth is worthy of being used to portray God, because He is of incorruptible substance.
9. **uncleanness** *n.* – (Gk. *ak ath ar see' ah*) C: moral or physical impurity; particularly is this true of those who defile their bodies through homosexual behavior, as is described in the remainder of the chapter.
10. **changed** *v.* – (Gk. *met al las' so*) A: to make different; that is, they gave up the natural use of the body and changed it to something unnatural.
11. **vile** *adj.* – (Gk. *at ee mee' ah*) D: disgraceful, shameful, repugnant, corrupted.
12. **(natural) use** *n.* – (Gk. *khray' sis*) B: employment; sexual intercourse as a use or occupation of the body, by nature, as man was created.
13. **reprobate** *adj.* – (Gk. *ad ok' ee mos*) A: unapproved; by implication, literally or morally worthless; corrupted, having left the pattern God ordained in creation.
14. **(not) convenient** *adj.* – (Gk. *kath ay' ko*) D: (not) becoming; not fit.
15. **without natural affection** *adj.* – (Gk. *as' tor gos*) A: hard-hearted toward those one should love; having a perverted form of affection, an evil lust, instead of the natural love God intended.
16. **judgment** *n.* – (Gk. *dik ah' yo mah*) A: A: statute or decision; an ordinance pronounced by God.
17. **commit** *v.* – (Gk. *pras' so*) A: to practice habitually, as a way of life.

Vocabulary Scale

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

Characteristics Of The Inspired Word

William Woodson

The most comprehensive verses concerning the nature and characteristics of the Word of God are: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Timothy 3:16,17). As one considers his/her reading, understanding, appreciation, and submission to God’s Word, a noting of these characteristics may be helpful. These are listed briefly.

1. Scripture is the **written** will of God. The very term Scripture derives from the idea of writing: hence, the written Word. Thus it is fixed, allows transmission from one time to another, and enables continued study for understanding and insight.

2. Scripture is **inspired of God**. What was written was the product of God’s superintendence by the Holy Spirit, and it was/is His Word, not the word of man. We learn from and appreciate the greatness of Moses, David, Paul, Peter, etc., but, in fact, the words are the words of God by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

3. Scripture is profitable for **doctrine**. The teaching one does in the spread of God’s will, to convert the lost and edify the church, seeks to guide the reader and hearer in better understanding the meaning of God’s will. This is the center of the teaching and preaching God’s people are to do.

4. Scripture is profitable for **reproof**. When mistakes are made concerning God’s will, in doctrine and/or conduct, there is a need for firmness in admonition that correction is to be made. Concern and love are to be present; but genuine regard for God’s truth and righteousness, when spurned by anyone, is to be made clear as well.

5. Scripture is profitable for **correction**. The guidance of Scripture shows how one is to return to and serve God. The prodigal is guided not

THE WORD OF GOD

only concerning how to return home, but also how to conduct his/her life upon that return.

6. Scripture is profitable for **instruction in righteousness**. A growing and maturing of life and love should characterize the child of God. This growth process is nurtured and guided by the truth of Scripture.

7. Scripture produces, when truly followed, the man of God **thoroughly furnished to every good work**. Scripture, while intended for intellectual grasp and appreciation in teaching and maturing, is not confined to intellectualism alone. There is the application of the Word in personal development, loyalty, service, and reverence for God and others. The equipping means for such a life of service is the Scripture truly understood and followed.

These verses provide a remarkable insight into the characteristics of the Word of God. It is well to consider such qualities of the Bible as we love, study, and follow it. †

William Woodson is retired from having taught Bible at David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

Truth

The Word of God is **truth** — John 17:17.

The **truth** can set us free — John 8:32.

The **truth** can be understood — Ephesians 3:3,4.

The **truth** of God is flawless — Psalm 19:7.

Truth is powerful — Hebrews 4:12,13.

Truth is able to cleanse us — Psalm 119:9.

Truth can build one up — Acts 20:32.

Truth can convert — Matthew 13:15.

Truth will endure forever — Matthew 24:35.

Do not add to the **truth** — Revelation 22:18,19.

Do not take away from the **truth** — Revelation 22:18,19.

Do not pervert the **truth** — Galatians 1:8,9.

We must preach the **truth** — 2 Timothy 4:2.

We must stand fast in the **truth** — 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

We must handle the **truth** right — 2 Corinthians 4:2.

We will be judged by the **truth** — John 12:48.

God's Whole Counsel

Hollis Miller

Seldom does a single word, phrase, or sentence exhaust all the Bible has to say about a subject. For example, Paul instructed the Philippians to think about certain positive things, but the balance of biblical teaching makes it plain that Christians are also to think about other things (Philippians 4:8).

Timothy was instructed by Paul to teach brethren that the love of money is a root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). By this, however, the apostle did not mean that a Christian should not pursue acquisition of necessary material things. Elsewhere in the New Testament Christians are taught to work that they might have excess to share with those in need (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11). Paul himself was a tentmaker in order that he might earn money to support himself. Loving money and being sufficiently frugal so as to have means of livelihood in whatever society a Christian may live are not equal to each other.

Some teachings of the Bible are meant to express general principles by which the Lord's people are to govern their lives. The principles are not to be forced to the point of

absurdity. I have never met a Christian who believed his or her bank account should be opened to every fraudulent, slothful individual who might ask to borrow from it (Matthew 5:42). Total abandonment of good judgment in handling requests for loans could easily disable one with regard to discharging other Christian responsibilities, such as having the funds to care for one's own (1 Timothy 5:8).

The teaching of Jesus that His disciples are to turn the other cheek is a principle of human relationship, and not a command that Christians must permit evil men to do to them whatever they choose to do without objection (Matthew 5:39). Paul resisted Elymas as well as the servants of the high priest who struck him on the mouth (Acts 13:8-11; 23:1-5). It is obvious that the apostle did not understand the teaching of the Lord to mean that he should say or do nothing.

When the teachings of the Bible are permitted to explain themselves in the larger context, the whole counsel of God will then be every Christian's guide. †

Hollis Miller is an evangelist in Elkton, Kentucky, U.S.A.

The Flood: Not Local, But Global

Bill Nicks



THE WORD OF GOD

Those who argue for a local flood in the days of Noah, as recorded in Genesis, are usually believers in evolution. To sustain their theory, they must reject the obvious supernatural act of creation, as well as the supernatural events connected with the flood.

Peter says, "*Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished*" (2 Peter 3:6). The word "overflowed" is from the word *kataklysmos*, from which our English word "cataclysm" is derived.

The flood was a great hydraulic and tectonic upheaval, in which the waters underneath the earth were "*broken up*" (Genesis 7:11) and the "*windows of heaven were opened.*" In this supernatural act, the Lord split the crust of the earth with waters beneath the earth, which caused, along with rainfall for 40 days, waters to raise the ark and cover the mountains.

By observing the words of the inspired writer Moses, we may gather these simple facts which show of necessity that there was a global flood.

1. If it were a local flood, Noah could have moved to a higher ground, and animals could have fled away from the waters.

2. The text says the mountains were covered "*fifteen cubits upward,*" which means the waters

prevailed above the highest mountain more than 22 feet. This could not have been a mere local flood. All flesh died in the flood except those in the ark.

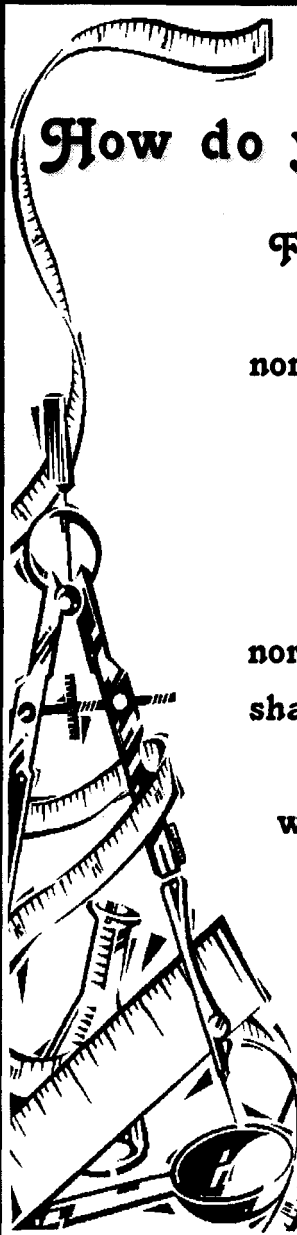
3. The token of God's covenant that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood was the rainbow, which we may still view today as a symbol of God's faithfulness. But this would be meaningless if it were a local flood, because this kind of flood is still common in our world of the 20th Century. See Genesis 9:8-17. But God's promise is sure — there will never be another global flood. Rather, the world will one day be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10-12).

There is a God in heaven (Daniel 2:28), who created the "*heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). The flood was a supernatural intervention into the natural laws of the earth, just as was the virgin birth of Christ and His resurrection from the dead.

It is best to take the Bible at face value, accept it as the Word of the living God, and believe it with all your heart. That kind of faith will lead one to salvation in Christ and eternal life in the world to come.

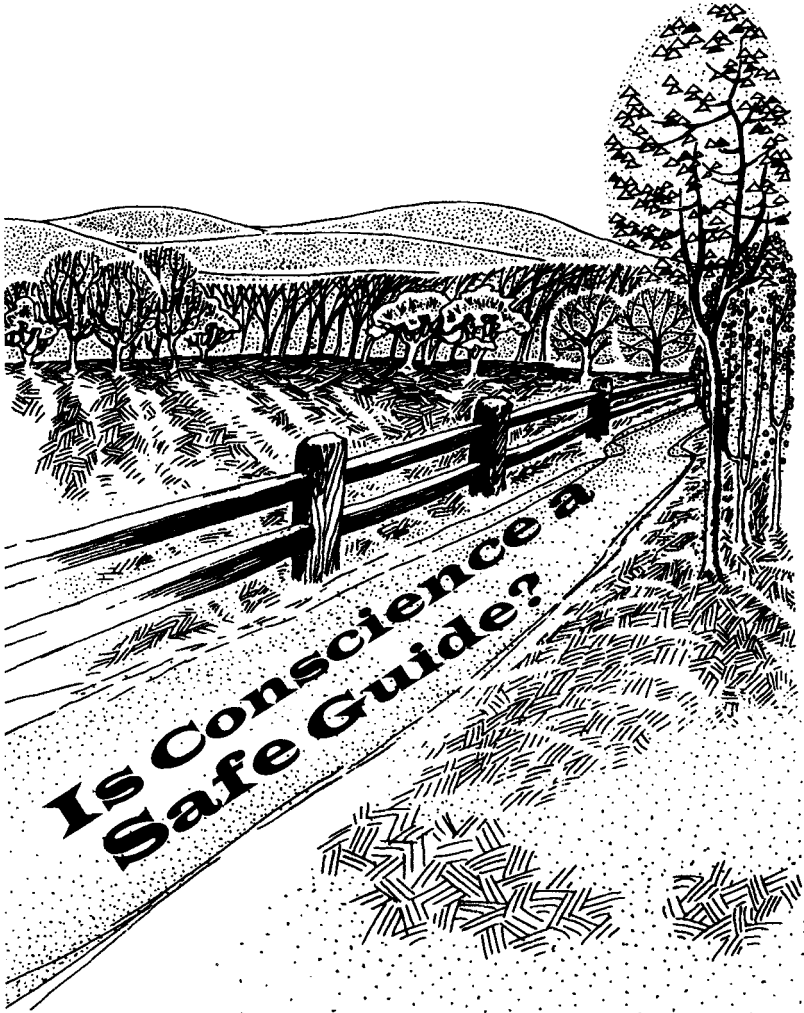
†

Bill Nicks is a former missionary to Africa and is now serving on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies.



How do you measure up?

For I am persuaded that
neither death nor life,
nor angels nor principalities
nor powers,
nor things present
nor things to come,
nor height nor depth,
nor any other created thing,
shall be able to separate us
from the love of God
which is in Christ Jesus
our Lord
(Romans 8:38,39).



Basil Overton

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs

16:25). There are many who think that it does not matter what one believes or does in religion, just so

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

he follows his conscience. But this philosophy exalts one's conscience above the Word of God; this philosophy makes one's conscience his guide instead of the Bible. Instead of conscience being a *safe guide*, it must be *safely guided* by the Word of God. Conscience approves or disapproves, as it has been instructed. If conscience has been instructed wrongly, it may approve of things that are wrong, or even disapprove of things that are right. A misguided conscience can mislead; this is often the case.

Surely, almost all of us have had the experience of honestly taking the wrong road in traveling, going several miles, feeling all the time that we were on the right road. Just to *feel* that we are right in religion does not *make* us right. We have to check the "road map" to heaven — the Bible — to find out what is really right. If we do not do this, and instead just follow con-

science, we thus exalt conscience above God's Word.

Conscience must be properly instructed by God's Word before it can guide correctly. If one travels in his car on the wrong road, he turns around when he discovers his error, and proceeds to find the right road. He would surely not get angry at the person who told him he was on the wrong road, but would likely be grateful to him.

Friend, do not depend on the guidance of your feelings; look in God's road map, the Bible, and see if you are on the right road. "*For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*" (Matthew 7:13,14). †

Basil Overton is the editor of *The World Evangelist* and lives in Florence, Alabama, U.S.A.

If It's Doubtful, It's Dirty

A man one morning was spending considerable time wondering whether he should wear a shirt for the second day or not. Economy was not to be entirely overlooked in his affairs, yet he did not wish to wear an untidy neck piece. His wife settled the question for him finally by remarking, "If it's doubtful, it's dirty."

As a rule, avoid the thing that is doubtful and you will be on the safe side.

— Anonymous



This question is surprisingly easy to answer. The term Christian is first used three times in the Bible by Luke and Peter, and therefore dates back nearly two thousand years (Acts 11:26, 26:28 and 1 Peter 4: 16).

We soon realize from the Bible that the term Christian is used of somebody who is *in Christ*, and therefore *of Christ*. That person is somebody that through faith has obeyed Christ in baptism and continues in faith and action to live life as a Christian. This term, therefore, belongs to the Bible, being used by writers inspired of God. It is not a term created by man.

The term 'Christian' cannot be Scripturally used by somebody who merely wishes to be called a Christian but who has not obeyed God. In the world today, as in the

Who Are Those Christians, and Why Do They Study the Bible?

Keith Sisman

past, many people call themselves Christians who have no right to do so. Usually by choice they have not studied the Scriptures. In not obeying the Gospel, they have rejected the call of God and salvation (Acts 2:38).

Today there are thousands of different so-called Christian denominations who propagate many totally different views on biblical questions. But there is only one doctrine, one true way, one true church to whom any

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Christ-centered Christian will be added by God *after* baptism (Acts 2:47).

The Bible speaks of Christians being a spiritual people (1 Peter 2:4-12), those who are in Christ and therefore in His church, having rejected the ways of the world. Denominations or divisions are spoken against in the Scriptures and are not of God but are of the world (1 Corinthians 1:10,11).

Christians are sometimes accused of worshipping the Bible. This particular charge is often aimed at those people who wish to share their joy of being in Christ with those who have not yet found the truth and who will spend eternity without God if they die in that condition (Mark 16:15,16). Christians worship the true God, (Matthew 28:19) not the Bible.

It has been nearly two thousand years since the deaths of those who were able to live with Jesus and to touch Him. The nearest we can get to Christ is to listen to His inspired Apostles through their writings, in the Bible. When Christians earnestly search the Scriptures it is to find Christ and his teachings. By knowing His teachings we can know Christ, we can obey Him, putting our faith in Him. We can be 'in Christ' where there is salvation. We do not worship the Bible but we worship Almighty God Himself and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son (Romans 10: 14-17, Titus 2:13, Matthew 4:10). †

Keith Sisman is a Christian in England, who operates a Christian Video Lending Library, and serves as the British coordinator for *The Voice of Truth International*.



QUIZ

In which books of the Bible are the following texts?

1. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...
2. Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land...
3. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...
4. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve...
5. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...
6. Cast thy burden upon the Lord...
7. In My Father's house are many mansions...
8. I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God to salvation...
9. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes...
10. Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth...



**Who
Is**

Righteous?

Cecil May, Jr.

Who is righteous? “*There is no one righteous, no, not one*” (Romans 3:10). All have sinned, and **sinner** is the opposite of **righteous one**. To claim to be righteous is to ignore what we know of ourselves, as well as to deny the Word of God.

This answer is found in a context in which the discussion centers around how a person may be “declared righteous” by God. Theoretically, any who are righteous, that is, who have never sinned, are justified. But sinners are condemned, not justified. To be

justified on the basis of one’s own deeds, therefore, one would have to have never sinned. Since “*all have sinned*” (Romans 3:23), no one is justified that way. In that sense, “*There is no one righteous.*”

If we think we keep God’s law well enough to justify ourselves by it, we blind ourselves to our faults, or boil the law down just to outward rites we can scrupulously keep. According to Jesus, some Pharisees did both (Matthew 23). Paul also spoke of those who “*set out to establish their own righteousness*” and did not humbly seek by faith the righteousness that comes only to those who know they need it as sinners (Romans 10:3).

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

If we trust in ourselves that we are righteous, we miss the only means of justification for sinners (Luke 18:9-14), trusting God for justification by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 1-3).

Who is righteous? *"Little children, let no one deceive you. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. . . Whoever does not do righteousness is not of God"* (1 John 3:7,10). Whoever claims to be born of the righteous One is righteous or else belies the claim. If we are unrighteous in our daily conduct, we do not know the righteous God.

This answer is found in a context in which certain antichrists are declared to be false in their claim that our relationship to God is a matter of spirit only, and it does not matter how we live in the flesh. John reminds us that to know and be born of God is to keep His commandments (1 John 3:24), walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), and be righteous as He is righteous (1 John 2:29).

To convince ourselves that the choice between righteous and unrighteous living makes no difference at all in our relationship to God, we must ignore most of the Bible, particularly the teachings of Jesus. *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who*

does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). *"This do, and you shall live"* (Luke 10:28).

If we walk in sin and iniquity we are lost, whatever we may profess of faith or doctrine.

Who is righteous? These two answers approach the question from different standpoints. Both truths are essential to know and to live by. If we say we know God but there is no significant difference in our lives, we may deceive ourselves, but we do not deceive God (Galatians 6:7). If we think the difference in our lives is so great and so much of our own doing that we are thereby righteous, we exalt ourselves and will be humbled by God (Matthew 23:12). †

Cecil May, Jr. is the recently retired president of Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Mississippi, USA.

A Christian is a mind through which Christ thinks, a heart through which Christ loves, a voice through which Christ speaks, a hand through which Christ helps.

— Selected

Preaching the Way

E. Claude Gardner

At least six times in Acts, Luke refers to Christianity as "*the way*." When Paul described his religion he declared, "*But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers . . .*" (Acts 24:14). Luke also uses this expressive word "way" in Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 24:22.

A reading of these passages shows that four actions were expressed toward the way as follows: (1) membership in the way; (2) persecution of the way; (3) worship according to the way; (4) taught or preached the way. It is the purpose of this lesson to stress the necessity and importance of preaching the way.

What Is *the Way*?

The way is the Christian system; it is *the way* of true worship; and it is *the way* of living. Adam Clarke comments on Acts 9:2 as

follows, ". . . this religion . . . *the way* of the Lord, implies the *whole* of worship due to him, and prescribed by himself: the *way* or path in which he wills men to walk, that they may get safely through life, and finally attain everlasting felicity. The Jewish writers designate the whole doctrine and practice of Christianity . . ."

Christianity is the way of life, the way of salvation, the way of service, and the way of hope. It is through the way we enjoy life here and eternal life in the world to come (see 1 Peter 3:10-12; John 10:10; Luke 19:10; 1 John 2:25).

Communism, socialism, and other ideologies are accepted by millions as ways of living, but the way of Christ is the way all men ought to go. Christianity should be viewed as that which governs and influences us in every facet of our existence. Christian principles

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

should govern us in the home, in recreation, at work, in the church, and in society. Christianity must not be a form or ritual divorced from our everyday living.

What Is Preaching the Way?

When one preaches the way, he preaches Christ and the Gospel. Several expressions found in the Bible mean the same and indicate what we are bound to preach. When we preach the way:

1. **We preach Christ.** Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans and to the eunuch (Acts 8:5,12,35). Christ our salvation should be our theme, for He is the way (Acts 2:22; John 14:6). We must not preach ourselves, our opinions, doubts, personal desires, or hobbies (see 1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:5).

2. **We preach the church.** In Samaria Philip, who preached Jesus, is said to have preached the church or "*the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ*" (Acts 8:12). We cannot preach the way without declaring the nature and value of the New Testament church. Christ and the church are inseparables (see Ephesians 5:32; Acts 28:23,31).

3. **We preach the Gospel.** Jesus has commissioned us to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15, see also 1

Corinthians 9:16). Paul was an educated man, yet he preached the Gospel (Galatians 1:11,12). It is our privilege to bless the world with "*the good news*" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

4. **We preach the truth.** "Truth," like "way," is a comprehensive word that conveys the whole of Christianity. We are to speak "*the truth in love*" (Ephesians 4:15). The truth makes us free (John 8:32; 1 Peter 1:22).

5. **We preach the Word.** We are commanded by Paul to preach the Word, and by Peter to speak as the oracles of God (2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 4:11). A command is not a request or a suggestion. Inspiration puts a limit on what we shall preach.

6. **We preach the preaching of God.** When Jehovah commissioned the prophet Jonah to cry against wicked Nineveh, He charged him to "*preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee*" (Jonah 3:2). Whatever has come from God we must be careful to proclaim without addition or subtraction, and without fear or favor (Acts 20:26,27; Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9).

Why Should We Preach the Way?

We go forth under the banner of Jesus, the "captain" of our salva-

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

tion (Hebrews 2:10), preaching to the world. We do this because we have already been saved through preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21). The Gospel believed and obeyed results in salvation (Mark 16:15,16). Paul wrote that the Gospel is *"the power of God unto salvation"* (Romans 1:16). It is powerful enough to reform lives, destroy sin, insure peace, save a city, and change the world.

The world is lost, and we should feel the weight of evangelizing the world (Romans 3:23; John 4:35).

"The Gospel to the whole world in our generation" is not an idle dream. Motivated by love, faith, and hope, we can accomplish what the Savior asked us to do. When Moses hesitated to lead Israel, God promised, *"Certainly I will be with thee"* (Exodus 3:12). Likewise, we feel our insufficiency and limitation of resources, but if we do our utmost to preach the Gospel to every creature, the Lord will be with us *"always, even unto the end of the world"* (Matthew 28:20).

Admonish Those Who Accept the Way

In our efforts to induce sinful man to accept the way we should admonish him to continue his *"walk circumspectly"* (Ephesians 5:15).

One should enter the way and remain in the way that *"leadeth unto life"* (Matthew 7:14). In our conduct we should be reminded that to be a Christian is to walk in the *"way of holiness"* (Isaiah 35:8). Also, in our walk we should constantly seek the *"old paths"* (Jeremiah 6:16).

When I follow the path of the Lord, where will I go? What way will I follow? It will be in the path of righteousness (Psalm 23:3); in the path of love (1 John 4:19); in the path of faith (Hebrews 11:6); and in the path of service (Matthew 23:11,12).

May we preach the way so effectively, fervently, and faithfully that the lost of the earth can be the redeemed of heaven. *"... Lead me in the way everlasting"* (Psalm 139:24). †

E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, U.S.A.



"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"
(John 14:6).

Quick Commentary On Crucial Verses

NUM. 16:9

As rebellious Korah, some think their high calling of God is but a small thing (I Jno. 3:1)

Leah accused Rachel of thinking it was a small matter to take her husband (Gen. 30:15)

The church is the new Israel of God, yet many still consider it a small matter to forsake (I Pet. 2:1-12; Heb. 10:25)

Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

Christians are brought near to God by the cleansing blood of Jesus, but some can consider it a small thing (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 10:26ff.)

God selects those who are to stand before the congregation. No women were ever called to do this, Jesus called no women apostles and no woman to stand before the church to preach (I Cor. 14:34)

The place of worship belonged to the LORD, some then regarded it lightly (Nu. 25:26ff.) The church is Christ's but many consider it also a small thing (Matt. 22:5)

—Fester Northem



The Holy Priesthood

John Thiesen

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, mankind has been separated from God by sin.

It is this separation which has created the need for a priesthood to represent us to God.

THE CHURCH

Priests Are Mediators

A priest is a mediator who stands between God and sinners. His job, from the earliest times, has been to offer up sacrifices to God in order to make propitiation for sinners and to pray on their behalf to God. For example, Moses' brother Aaron was a priest. Every year, when offering up the sacrificial atonement animals both for himself and for all Israel, he laid his hands on the scapegoat and confessed all the sins of Israel before releasing it to carry the iniquity of the nation into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:21). No one could take this priestly authority to himself, but only those called by God for the purpose. *"And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron"* (Hebrews 5:4). Among the Jews, only Aaron and his sons were set aside for this holy work. It was important that the priest be a merciful person in order properly to approach God on behalf of others.

Even before God set up the Israelite nation, he had priests operating in the world. Melchizedek, for example, who came out to bless Abraham following his victory over the kings, was called *"the priest of the most high God"* (Genesis 14:18). During that same pre-law period, Moses' father-in-law was known as "the priest of Midian" and

offered sacrifices to God with Moses, suggesting he may have been a priest authorized by God (Exodus 3:1; 18:12).

God's Priesthood Today

Our High Priest today is Jesus Christ the Son of God, *"set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens"* (Hebrews 8:1). At God's right hand, *"he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Hebrews 7:25). The sacrifice He offered for our sins was His own blood on the cross. This supreme sacrifice of Himself supercedes all previous sacrifices offered in the world, which were only a shadow of His. *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"* (Hebrews 10:14).

Under Christ their High Priest, all Christians function as sub-priests, *"an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 2:5). These spiritual sacrifices consist of: (1) Praise and thanks of our lips; (2) Doing good to others; (3) Sharing with those in need (Hebrews 13:15,16); and making intercession by prayer for all people and authorities (1 Timothy 2:1,2). †

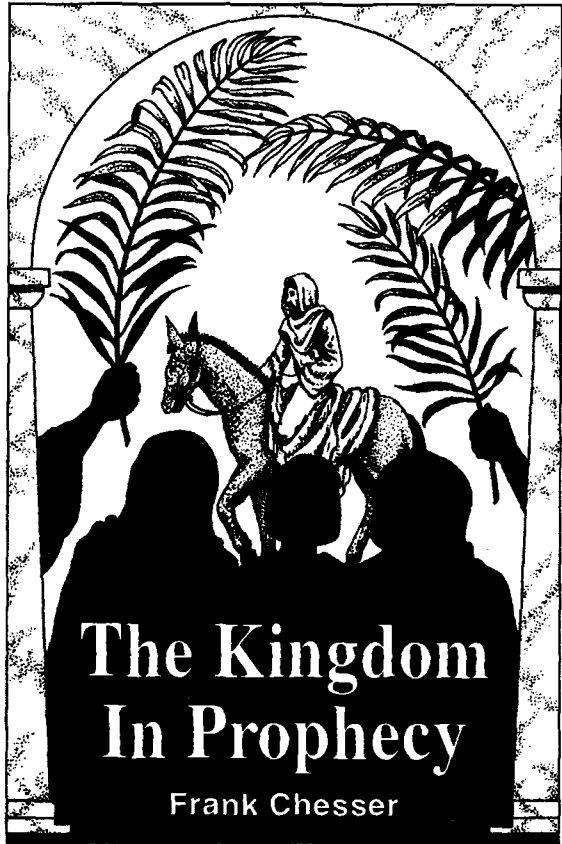
John Thiesen is involved in mission work in Malawi and preaches the gospel in Buffalo, Missouri, USA.

The kingdom and the church are one and the same (Matthew 16:18, 19). The kingdom was to be established during the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries (Mark 9:1). It was "at hand" in the first century (Matthew 4:17). It was to come "with power" (Mark 9:1). That power was to come with apostolic reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). The Gospel that was to usher in the kingdom was to be preached first in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

These promises join and culminate in Acts 2, resulting in the kingdom, or church. Jesus is presently reigning on the spiritual throne of David, in the kingdom, or church of the living God (Acts 2:29-33). At the second coming, the world will be consumed by fire (2 Peter 3:10), and Jesus will deliver the kingdom, or church, back to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). Thus, the concept of a

thousand year reign in a physical kingdom is only a figment of man's imagination.

The Old Testament anticipates the kingdom. God's promise to David regarding his kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16) transcends the old physical kingdom of Israel to enjoy ultimate fulfillment in the universal spiritual kingdom, the church. This is not human guesswork. This truth



THE CHURCH

is verified by David's own statement in Psalm 132:11 and the plainly stated fulfillment in Acts 2:29-33. This text explicitly declares that Jesus is now reigning on David's spiritual throne, which is the kingdom or church of the New Testament. As people obeyed the Gospel, they were added by God Himself to that very church and thus, they submitted themselves to the Kingship of Jesus (Acts 2:47).

Isaiah 9:6,7 is an undeniable prophecy of the coming of Christ. This text promises that Jesus would sit "*upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever*" (Isaiah 9:7). This prophecy has absolutely nothing to do with a physical kingdom, throne, rule, and a thousand year reign.

The Jews of the first century had that concept of the kingdom, and Jesus denied it for the three years of His earthly ministry. He stressed time and again the spiritual nature of His kingdom as described in John 18:36. Again, Acts 2 makes it plain that Jesus is sitting on the throne of that very kingdom and has been since the first Pentecost following His resurrection.

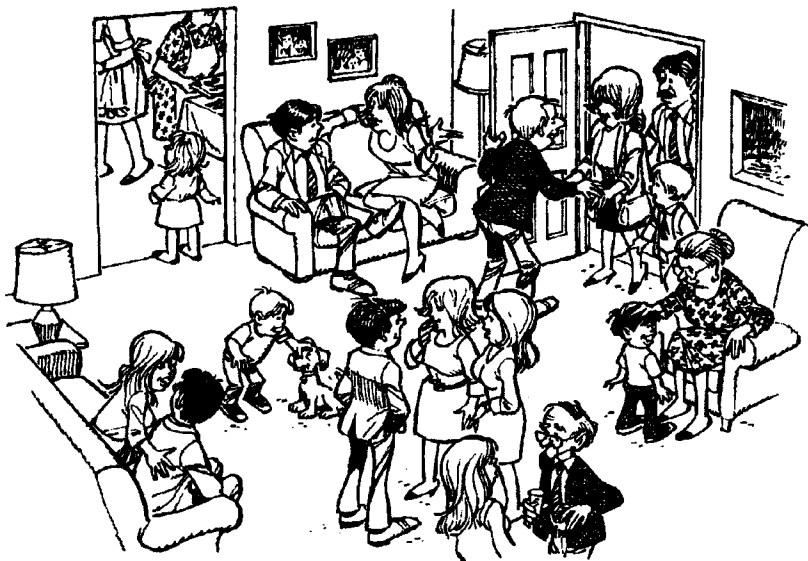
Daniel 2:44 prophesies of the establishment of the kingdom "*in the days of these kings.*" Who were those kings? Nebuchadnezzar's

image consisted of four basic parts: head of gold; breast and arms of silver; belly and thighs of brass; and legs and feet of iron, mixed with clay in the feet (Daniel 2:31-33). Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar that these four parts represented four kingdoms, commencing with Babylon as the head of gold.

The Babylonian kingdom was followed by the Persian kingdom, the Grecian kingdom, and finally the Roman kingdom. It was in the days of the kings of this fourth kingdom that the Lord's kingdom would be established. This harmonizes with all the other passages on this subject. The church or kingdom was indeed established during the rule of the Roman kings in the first century on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2).

What is the law of this kingdom? Jeremiah prophesied of its spiritual nature (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The Hebrews writer quoted this prophecy and applied it to the New Testament (Hebrews 8:6-13). Consequently, Jesus is now reigning over His kingdom (church) and is ordering its worship, work, and practice by His law revealed in the New Testament. †

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



God Calls Us To Be His People, His Family

Ron Bryant

The Christian faith is personal, but it is not individualistic. Each one who becomes a Christian becomes part of a fellowship of caring and sharing — a family of believers who belong to the Lord and to one

another, and who have responsibility to one another (Acts 2:41,47; Romans 12:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:1-6,11-17).

If there is any truth set forth in the New Testament, it is that Chris-

THE CHURCH

tians need one another, even as in the physical body the eyes and the ears need the hands and the feet.

Paul wrote by inspiration, "*But now are they many members, yet but one body, and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*" (1 Corinthians 12:20,21,27). In God's design every member of the body needs every other member. Likewise, in God's plan for the church and its functioning, individual Christians cannot go their own way.

Even when the figure of speech is changed and the church is spoken of as a family, the plan of God is still the same. God's plan for life in the spiritual family which was created in Christ is not one of individual self-sufficiency, but one of interdependency. The people of God are a family of interdependent members.

No Christian can afford to be careless about his or her place in the body of Christ, the family of God. This is basic, for it is God who adds the saved together (Acts 2:41,47). It is also vital, for it is bound up in the fact that "*Christ is the head of the body, the church*" (Colossians

1:18, 24).

In this plan we see that God's appointed means of strengthening each believer, of protecting each, and stimulating growth in grace on the part of each, is in the context of a fellowship — a fellowship of mutual commitment, and mutual caring and mutual sharing.

It is in view of these great truths that we each are to consider our purpose in the family, our participation in the fellowship — the work and worship, the ministry and outreach of the church. In view of *God's purpose*, we must not be careless about the worship, the fellowship, or the unity of God's people.

Undergirding all of this is the fact that God's eternal purpose for the church is bound up in the blood of Christ. Jesus purchased the church with His own blood! The church of Jesus is no mere social entity, of only temporary import! The church — the people of God — is a blood-bought family that God expects to function as **His family!** It is a family that is preparing for eternity. †

Ron Bryant labors for Christ with the Camelback church in Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A.



The believer's talents are not to be laid up for self but
laid out in service.

THE CHURCH

When we are in the Holy of Holies, we cannot at the same time be outside the Temple of God. When we are "in Christ" we cannot walk in the world. Either we are in the Kingdom of God or we are in the kingdom of darkness. We are either a child of God or a child of the devil. Holy Scripture does not speak of an intermediate relationship. Though the Lord does speak of one who is not far from the Kingdom, he cannot yet be declared "in" the Kingdom.

If one does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not, and cannot, belong to Him (Romans 8:9). We are either among the forgiven or among those who still carry the unmanageable burden of the guilt of their sins.

This sharp distinction of only two categories of spiritual location or relationship is not popular. Tolerance is the acceptable word. To have such a black and white perception suggests a lack of love. It is considered a sectarian spirit. The "narrow" way of which Jesus spoke continues to elude many people in conception and reality. The debate

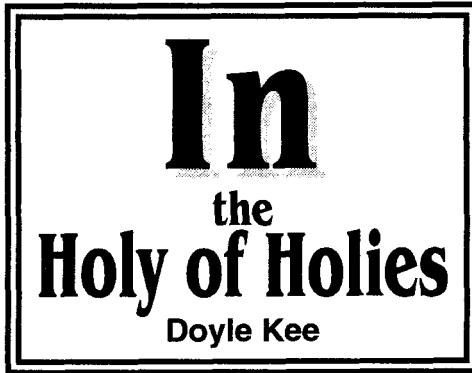
of whom God will accept into the eternal holy sanctuary will continue. It is possible, though, to have peace and joy because we have personally terminated the discussion. Assurance comes from the historical fact that we have entered the presence of God through the blood of Jesus. Obedience to the gospel guarantees that we will never be separated from God's presence.

Scripture declares, though, that this will not be the case for many, for "those who do not know God, and [on] those who do not obey the gospel of our

Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).

We will either be "in" or "out" of the Holy of Holies. Thanks be to God that we can be "in" through the door of His Son. Let us work to point those who are "out" toward the only sanctuary in which it is possible to share the eternal presence of our Beloved. †

Doyle Kee has done mission work in the French-speaking world for many years. He is presently in Geneva, Switzerland.



Behold a sower went forth to sow the seeds of evangelism in the hearts of Christians so that more reapers would go forth to reap the harvest of lost souls.

The Sower told of the love of God for the lost, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16).

He said Christ had suffered in man's place in order to pay the price of man's redemption.

"*But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8).

He quoted the charge given by Jesus to His disciples, "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation...*" (Mark 16:15). He said these words apply to His disciples today.

He then pointed to the com-

mand of Paul, "*And the things that thou has heard of Me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*" (2 Timothy 2:2).

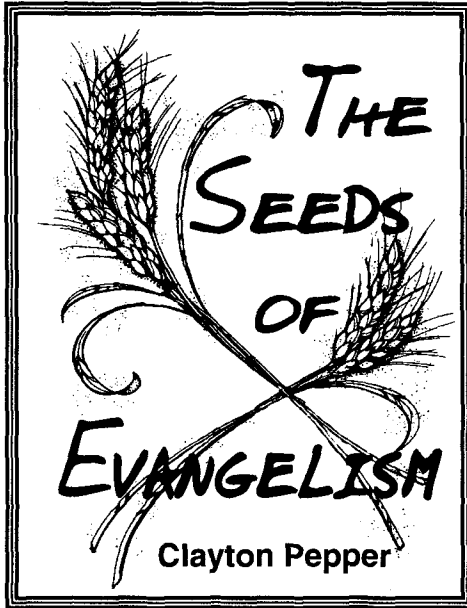
The sower reminded his listeners that all have been given talent and opportunity and that Jesus was like "A man traveling into a far country who called together his servants and delivered unto them his goods." Later, he returned for a day of reckoning.

The Sower concluded

with the warning that Christ will surely return; a day of reckoning will come for each of us, to determine how we used our talents in the work that He left in our charge (cf. Matthew 25:14-30).

How the Hearers Responded

◆ Some seed fell upon hard and indifferent hearts and the devil took away the word lest they should believe and obey. **They thought it**



CHURCH GROWTH

was someone else's job, not theirs.

◆ Others became antagonistic; they said the lost were willingly ignorant. If they wanted to hear the gospel, they would come to the church building.

◆ Some were prejudiced against any change in their methods that would reach more people.

◆ Some said, "You cannot reach the people here, they will not listen."

In response, The Sower told of the great success that many congregations were having by training soul winners who taught from house to house like Paul and the early Christians did. "And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42).

"How I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20).

◆ Some said, "Where would we get the workers?"

◆ Others said, "We are doing all right like we are."

The Sower concluded that they had rather let the people remain in ignorance and be lost than to put

forth the effort to save them!

The Sower thought of the words of Jesus to those of His day, "*Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves nor permit them that are entering to go in*" (Matthew 23:13)

Response of the Second Group

The second congregation who heard the Sower said, "This is a great lesson; we should begin at once." So they did.

Their previous teaching in the

church was largely void of how to reach the lost. Their Bible class literature was primarily written to defend the faith, not to advance it. The preacher said he

had not been not taught how to reach the lost in school, except for public preaching.

However, in the presence of many doubters and in the absence of preparation they began. Since they had not studied how to be effective, many mistakes were made. Some of the workers got discouraged and quit. Some criticized the work. After all, to them faithfulness to God had always been reg-

TRUTHFULLY, THEY
HAD RATHER LET THE
PEOPLE REMAIN IN
IGNORANCE AND BE LOST
THAN TO PUT FORTH THE
EFFORT TO SAVE THEM.

CHURCH GROWTH

ular church attendance, good moral living, and helping meet the church budget. If many came to church gatherings that was great, if only a few came they were still content. Since this group made up the majority they began to murmur against the work.

The elders knew that what the sower had said was true, but **they felt that God had given them the right to decide whether they should or should not use all available means to reach the lost.** To them the work seemed to be *optional*. Since there were complaints, they decided to stop the program. Soul winning was no longer supported or encouraged.

The Sowers thought of all the times he had heard the denominations condemned for not respecting biblical authority. **This group had grossly disrespected the authority of God.**

The Sower thought also of the times he had heard those words from the last chapter of Revelation quoted, *"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book"* (Revelation 22:18,19).

Response of the Third Group

The Sower then visited another congregation where he sowed the seeds of evangelism. They responded enthusiastically. They studied very carefully how others had been successful. There was much motivation for several months. The preacher seemed to put a priority on bringing the lost to Christ. He and the elders were active, they led the way.

But with the passing of months, other things seemed to become more important. At last, little was said about reaching the lost. The leaders became less involved in providing the example. The preacher seldom mentioned sin or lost souls in his sermons. Workers in evangelism began to feel that evidently it was not a very important task. Making a living, business interests and material gain seemed to take precedence. Recreational activities again became the focus of group activities of the church. A great deal more was said about losing a ball game than losing a soul. Bowling, golfing, fishing, gardening and other hobbies seemed to take up the members' extra time.

The Sower thought of how the scriptures say that **the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and pleasures would choke the word out of the lives of many and they would bring forth no fruit** (Luke 8). He thought of the

CHURCH GROWTH

Christians at Ephesus who had left their first love, and of those at Laodicea who were lukewarm and were told to repent (Revelation 2,3). Such heartbreaking thoughts of people who held God's truth in their very hands, yet lost all!

Response of the Fourth Group

The Sower visited a fourth congregation and there again he sowed the seeds of evangelism. This seed fell on good and honest hearts. They were people of prayer and love for each other. They gladly received the Word. The leaders arranged for a group of key people to visit a fast-growing soul-winning church. They studied their program. They studied how they had developed an evangelistic Bible school

The preacher regularly read and studied church growth materials. He was always enthusiastic and sought to keep the congregation enthusiastic about reaching the lost.

The elders and preacher realized that attitudes had changed in America and that they must have an **evangelistic plan for outreach** and **not depend only on programs designed to reach those who would come to the building**. They read books that would help them plan greater activities toward reaching the lost. They led the way. At least once each year they paid the expenses of key workers to attend a church growth and soul-winning

workshop. Some of the elders always accompanied the group.

The elders said that the Jerusalem church practiced daily evangelism and had daily conversions, "*Praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved*" (Acts 2:47). "*And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ*" (Acts 5:42).

They reasoned that in the past they had set goals for **attendance** and goals for **contributions**, but that they should also set goals for **conversions**. They concluded that all of our programs must have evangelistic content, and that *edification is not an end in itself, it is means to the end of reaching the lost. Benevolence is not an end; it is a means toward reaching the lost.*

The Sower then thought of the growth of the first church, the Jerusalem church, under the leadership of the apostles — how they taught daily and had additions daily. They longed for a renewal of the church which would have the spirit of evangelism to be like that congregation, with its first priority the reaching of the lost. †

Clayton Pepper is the director of listener communication for Restoration Network International, and is an advisor to the Clayton Pepper Center for Church Growth Studies at Ohio Valley College in Parkersburg, WV.

The One Who Never Let Go

Casey Michelle Burton

***I walked through life
Stumbling, falling over my own thoughts,
Trying to figure out why there was so much
pain.***

***If I continue to ask
I'll get nowhere.***

***I asked Him why
and He answered.***

He hugged me and told me He loved me.

***He gave me comfort
and shelter,***

He made me strong

***He made me believe that He would never
leave.***

He never did.

***He is the One who listened
when no one else would;***

***He made me feel love
when no one else could.***

***He promised He would never push me away
As so many people did.***

But then, I hurt Him.

***I listened to the one who had never
listened to me,***

*I followed the one who pushed me away,
the one who never would love me,
The one who caused pain.*

*My heart broke as I realized my error;
My eyes filled with tears as I tried to say
How sorry I was.*

*I wanted to go back and correct myself.
I couldn't see how He could ever love me
like before,*

But then He said,

"I love you."

*He forgave my
errors,
He hugged me
and wouldn't let
go.*

*Neither would I,
and soon I would
know*

*That the One who
loved me
had never let go.*



Casey Michelle Burton is the 14-year-old daughter of Curtis and Emalee Burton. She is a part of the Lord's church in Houston, TX, USA.

The photograph is of Joanne Salamon, daughter of Sylvio and Marianne Salamon, a Christian who worships with the church in Rose Hill, Mauritius, just off the coast of South Africa.

Do You Bring Out the Best or the Worst in Others?

W. T. Allison

A quarter of a century ago a sociology professor at John Hopkins University assigned a research project to his class. He told them to go to one of Baltimore's worst slums and study the environment of 200 boys. After they studied the habits, homes, and education of the boys, they were to predict how many of them would become criminals. The students' research predicted that of the 200 boys studied, 180 of them would wind up in jail.

Twenty-five years later the same professor assigned another class the job of locating the 200 boys to test the validity of the earlier predictions. Most of them were found. The students were amazed to learn that only 4 of the 200 had ever been in jail. The majority were solid, decent citizens.

In talking to these men, it was discovered that there was a common denominator in their lives. Each had been taught by the same school teacher. The sociology class located the teacher, now well over 70 years old, in a nursing home. When asked how she made these boys into

such fine men, despite their disadvantages, she answered, "Why, all in the world I ever did was to be kind to them and love them!"

Love, when properly understood and applied, will produce changes in the life that intimidation and fear can never make. Successful human relations can be boiled down to a single sentence: You will perform better for people who expect the best from you than you will for those who expect the worst.

That's how God treats us! When we were sinners, without hope, He looked at us and thought we could do something better. He saw potential in us. We were worth something in His eyes. That's why He took the great risk. That's why He sent His Son!

As a child of God, redeemed by the blood of His Son, **do you bring out the best or the worst in others?** Love and kindness change people. Such a simple thing to do! Will you help change the world? †

W. T. Allison is the preacher for the Creekwood church in Mobile, Alabama, U.S.A.

Peter was very human, as we all are. He had strengths and weaknesses, but he had faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. There-

Peter's

Imperfections

fore Jesus was able to correct his imperfections and misunderstandings, and to strengthen him. Christ will do the same for us if we have faith in Him and if we take instruction from His Word. We can learn some lessons from Peter's imperfections.

Peter Rebuking Jesus

On one occasion Peter actually rebuked Jesus. This account is in Matthew 16:21-23. Jesus told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and rise again the third day. *"Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord; this shall never happen to You!' But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.'"*

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness Satan had said he would give Jesus all the kingdoms of the

O. P. Baird

world if He would worship him. Jesus recognized that Satan was trying again to turn Him from His purpose and was using Peter to do it. At that point Peter and the other disciples thought Jesus would become King over Israel in an earthly kingdom. Peter thought he knew better than Jesus as to what was suitable. That did not demonstrate the kind of faith he had confessed shortly before.

It is very easy for people to think their ideas and plans are right without seeking to know the teachings and principles of God as revealed in His Word. We must not think like the world, but have the mind of Christ: *"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace"* (Romans 8:6).

Peter at the Transfiguration

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him up on a mountain and there, while He was praying, He was transfigured. They saw His

face shining like the sun and His clothes became as white as light. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, talking with Him (Matthew 17:1-3). They were discussing His death which was soon to occur. They spoke of His death as something He would *accomplish* rather than something His enemies would *accomplish against Him* (Luke 9:31). His death was spoken of that way because He came to save the people from their sins, and His death was necessary to accomplish that. Jesus was in control of the situation, and His enemies could not kill Him until the proper time came for Him to make that sacrifice. On another occasion He said, *"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father"* (John 10:17,18). O how He loves us!

The disciples saw Jesus transfigured and talking with Moses and Elijah. *"Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles; one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'* While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a

voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!' " (Matthew 17:4,5). When the cloud lifted, they saw Jesus only (verse 8).

The experience of the three disciples on the mountain shows that Moses and Elijah and other prophets were God's spokesmen pointing toward and preparing the way for Jesus who was to come, and that men now must learn God's will for them through Jesus and not through those who went before Him. The Word of Jesus is given to us in the New Testament rather than the Old Testament. This truth is stated also in the book of Hebrews, *"God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds"* (Hebrews 1:1,2). Peter did not understand this when he proposed honoring Moses and Elijah with Jesus.

Note that when Peter made his ill-advised suggestion he submitted it to the will of Jesus. He said, *"Lord, . . . if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles . . ."* His faith made him submissive to the will of Christ. †

O. P. Baird is a former missionary to Korea and now lives in Searcy, Arkansas, U.S.A.

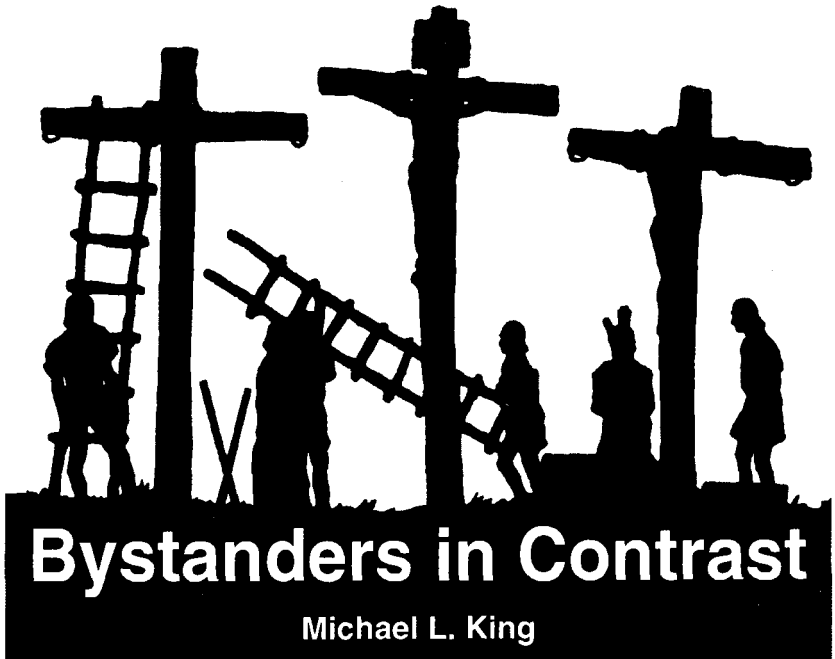
DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

The observers of the life and death of Christ were divided from day one as to who He really was. Some looked upon Him as Emmanuel, which means "God with us," but Herod and his followers sought Him to "destroy him," possibly due to the threat of having his kingship threatened (Matthew 1:23; 2:13).

Peter, speaking of Jesus, emphatically stated, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," while some of His other disciples viewed Him as John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets (Matthew 16:13-16).

As Jesus began His ministry, confirming His words with miracles, "his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11), but the Pharisees, when they observed the works of Jesus, declared they were done "by Beelzebub the prince of the devils," in spite of the fact that "all the people were amazed and said, is not this the son of David?" Their division prompted Jesus to further proclaim that "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:22-25).

More confusion arose during the final week of Christ's existence than any other time during His earthly pilgrimage. Some said, "Let him be cruci-



DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

fied,” and others asked, “*Why, what evil hath he done?*” (Matthew 27:23). While He was suspended on the cross, the scribes, chief priests, and elders challenged His ability to come down from the cross, denying His being the Son of God. Yet, at a distance were numerous staunch supporters, women who had followed Him from Galilee to minister unto Him. Among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome (Mark 15:29-32;39-41). The women were decisive about Jesus and are often referred to as being “The last at the cross and the first at the tomb.” They surely witnessed the diversity of opinion of the two thieves. One doubtfully “*railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us,*” while the other thief said, “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*” (Luke 23:39-43). Finally, observers could not agree as to whether the body of Jesus had actually been resurrected or stolen (Matthew 28:7,8; 12,13).

We are now separated by almost two thousand years from these historic events surrounding the life and death of Jesus. As we observe, can you see a contrast in the onlookers which could cause division and leave those who are unbelievers confused and in a quandary? Christians must give consideration to the potential for mixed signals being given by their lives. Paul instructed the Corinthians to avoid divisions and to “*be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment*” (1 Corinthians 1:10). James reprimanded his readers for allowing their mouths to speak both “*blessing and cursing*” (James 3:10). Have we reached the time in our own personal lives when we “*ought to be teachers*” but “*have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat*” (Hebrews 5:12-14)?

The Hebrews writer insists that we need to leave “*the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us go on unto perfection* (maturity).” If we are unable to do so, then we are not any different from those who crucified Christ. Those who “*were made partakers . . . and tasted the good word of God . . . and fall away; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame!*” “*Let us go on unto perfection . . . and of faith toward God*” (Hebrews 6:1-6).

Are we active in bringing souls to Christ or are we repelling them by having an obstinate and divisive spirit? Which of the malefactors flanking Christ’s cross do we most closely resemble? †

Michael L. King preaches for the Grant Street Church of Christ in Decatur, Alabama, U.S.A.

Kindness To The Dead

Glenn Colley

After widows Naomi and Ruth journeyed to Bethlehem and were first beginning to enjoy the benevolence of Boaz, Naomi praised his goodness with these words: *"Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead"* (Ruth 2:20).

It is easy to see what is meant by "kindness to the living," but how was Boaz kind to the dead? The answer, of course, is that by seeing to the needs of Naomi and Ruth, Boaz was honoring the desires and memories of their deceased husbands, Elimelech and Mahlon. When caring for their wives, he was showing kindness posthumously to them.

The thought of kindness to the dead becomes practical and even sweeter to us when we consider those Christians who will be tender-hearted to our mate, children, or parents we leave behind when we die. Our Lord spoke through the agony of the cross to ask John to care for sweet Mary after His death

(John 19:26,27). Few desires are deeper or more sentimental than this.

The Holy Scriptures contain many commands regarding the care of widows, for our Lord is very serious about how we treat those left behind when husband or father dies. Even before the Law of Moses, a Hebrew widow who had no children by her husband was allowed (and assumed) to marry the brother of her deceased husband, in order to be cared for and to raise up children (Genesis 38:6-11). Deuteronomy 25:5-7 commanded this union, and called it the brother's duty.

Exodus 22:22,23 shows us the Fatherly eye from Zion guarding the interests of those left behind when a husband dies. God says, *"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry."* Deuteronomy 10:17,18 says, *"For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which*

regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment."

In our Lord's stinging rebuke of the wicked Jews He said, "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation*" (Matthew 23:14). While it would, of course, have been wrong to "devour" the house of anyone or to have defrauded others, Jesus specifically noted what His listeners did to the widows.

How much less does God care for the widows in our dispensation? No less. Paul teaches us to honor widows who are widows indeed,

and desolate (1 Timothy 5:3-5). There were widows in the early church who, because of their poverty and need, were cared for at the expense of the Christians. This is proper and right today. We practice an impure religion if we do not care for widows and orphans. "*Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world*" (James 1:27).

Naomi, in praising the goodness of Boaz, taught us an added motivation and benefit for caring for widows: When we care for widows, we are caring for the living and the dead. †

Glenn Colley is the editor of *The Words of Truth*, and he preaches for the church in Jasper, Alabama, U.S.A.



Leave a Touch of Glory

Have you watched the sun descending
In a cloud-filled stormy sky —
How it leaves a golden halo
As it bids the day goodbye?

Here a touch of glory lingers
Like a blessing on the land —
A touch of golden glory
From a strong and unseen hand.

There are those whose lives remind us
Of the sunset's warming glow —
They leave a touch of glory
Sweetly lingering when they go.

— Helen Lowrie Marshall

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

One day, I was driving down the highway with a friend. Glancing at the speedometer, I noticed that I had unknowingly accelerated to well over the speed limit. "Man, I didn't know I was going that fast! It felt like we were only going 55." He looked over to see how fast we were going and laughed. "You got velocitized!" he said, grinning.

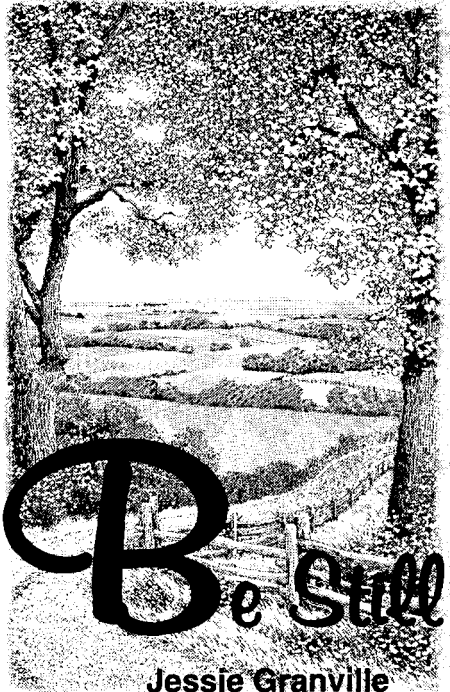
I tried to look the word up in the dictionary, but it was not there. Yet, it is such an appropriate word for our modern age.

The world is caught up in such a whirlwind of activities. We rush here so we will have time to rush there. We fall exhausted into bed late, and rise early to get a jump on the new day so we can get more done. We aren't content to pile up phone messages on answering machines. Now we carry phones with us wherever we go to be interrupted wherever we are.

Even our children are caught up in the rush. They have school and band practice and football practice and cheerleading practice and drama and chorus and yearbook. We rush them from place to place so they can do more and more.

We have become "velocitized". We are unaware of how fast our lives have become. We just know that we have less and less time to do more and more things. We have no time to exercise. We have no time to eat right. How else do you explain the proliferation of all the fast food restaurants? We have no time to talk to our friends. We have no time to spend with our families. Even more tragic, we have no time to pray. We have no time to commune with God. We have no time.

We are exhausted. We come home and flop in front of the TV, hardly



DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

able to fix dinner. We stare at the TV in a mindless stupor, knowing that we should be doing, doing, doing; but we are so tired, we can hardly move. We know that we should be reading our Bibles and studying. But our minds are numb with fatigue.

Some strong souls manage to get up earlier in the morning to get some quiet time to pray. Others stay up later. However, most of us, I'm afraid, don't do anything. So the church has once more drifted into a time of depending on the preacher and brotherhood papers to tell us what we should believe. We hold on to old traditions, because this brother says we should. We grab on to new traditions-in-the-making because that brother says we need to change. We are once again in an age of being "*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine*" (Ephesians 4:14 NKJV).

How do we regain our equilibrium? The world is pulling us back and forth all day long. Our brethren pull us left and right all day long. It is time for us, again, to learn to be still. "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10).

What good is it if we gain the whole world and lose our souls (Matthew 16:26)? What has all the rushing around accomplished?

If all we had was the hope of this world, our fever of activity would almost make sense. If all we had were these few years to do everything that had to be done, sure, let's get it done!

But for the Christian, the pressure is off. We are in a state of preparation. We have as much as 80 whole years to prepare for spending eternity with God and our Savior, Jesus. What we do every day helps or hinders that preparation.

What then is more important than taking the time to study God's word? What is more important than communing with your family and with God?

Let us take the time to stop the pull of outside forces and listen to God's word, *from* God's word. A Bible collecting dust on your coffee table is going to do you no good in Hell.

Stop expecting the world to condense all learning into a few magazine articles or sermons that can be inhaled in a few brief minutes. God's word cannot be condensed. It is rich and full. It is not a fast-food snack, but a full course meal. It needs to be savored slowly to be appreciated.

No doubt, it is a fast-paced world, and realistically, we have to keep up. But **do** take time for God. He is the only sanity in this insane world, the only quiet in the tumult. **Be still!** †

Jessie Granville is a Christian writer living in the USA.

What About Your Children?



Max Patterson

Hophni and Phinehas, sons of Eli, knew not the Lord (1 Samuel 2:12), did not respect the worship of God (1 Samuel 2:17), and were immoral (1 Samuel 2:22). Because of this disobedience God rejected the house of Eli and brought it to an end. In addition, this corruption of the priesthood was one of the primary causes for the people turning against God and requesting a king like the nations about them.

As the children of Israel fought the Philistines, Hophni and Phinehas were slain. When 98 year old Eli was told this, he fell out of his chair backwards and broke his neck and died. His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was thrown

into labor, and she bore Ichabod and died (1 Samuel 4:11,22).

One of the main reasons for the Lord's rejection was that Eli's sons were vile, "*and he [Eli] restrained them not*" (1 Samuel 3:13). Would Eli have restrained his sons had he fully realized what was going to happen?

Today we know from experience, and from the Scriptures, what will happen if we do not restrain our children. Therefore, as Christian parents, we must do our best to bring them up in the discipline of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4). †

Max Patterson preaches for the Hillcrest congregation in Neosho, Missouri, USA.

The Will To Discipline

Dale Grissom

Parents are making a serious mistake when they fail to discipline their children. As a result, many children grow up to be very rebellious and selfish, bringing much heartache to their parents. We can read in 1 Samuel chapters 2 and 3 that Eli's children brought shame upon him because he failed to discipline them. Often, today, we see parents sacrifice to give their children everything they want, even if it is something they don't need. Parents sin against their own children when they do not teach them to be respectful, responsible, obedient, and hard working.

It seems we have forgotten what the Bible teaches about raising children, and we are following the ways of the world. I think we should take a serious look at the number of murders being committed by young people, as well as the thefts, and the sexual promiscuity that is prevalent in the world. Many couples are living together out of wedlock, many have children born out of wedlock, and some choose

abortion.

It's later than we think; we have become a society that no longer blushes at the awful sins of an undisciplined nation. Many have become so hardened by sin that they will not respond to the teaching of the Gospel of Christ.

We are living in a difficult time to raise children. Many young people are out all hours of the night and their parents have no idea where they are. The parents should have told them "no" consistently. Instead, drinking, drugs, and prostitution have become a way of life for many. It is going to take the best we have to offer to discipline and control our children. Their peers are unrestricted and are participating in all kinds of sins, making the job of Christian parents much harder.

Parents, please do your best to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) *"And ye Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* Daily devotionals, prayer, and Bible study need to be a part of our lives and our children's lives. Parents, take back the control of your homes, and love your children enough to discipline them. †

Dale Grissom works with the Lord's church in Dexter, Missouri, USA.



Respect For Parents

Charles E. Burch

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, the fifth one reads as follows: *"Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"* (Exodus 20:12). Not only did God command those under the Law of Moses to honor their parents, but also under the Law of Christ Paul wrote, *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"* (Ephesians 6:1-3).

God also set forth capital punishment for the stubborn and rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Christ referred to this when He said, *" . . . He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death"* (Matthew 15:4). Solomon wrote, *"Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old"* (Proverbs 23:22).

God has placed a responsibility upon all to love, honor, respect, and help their parents. But the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day came up with a way to get around this command. In rebuking them, Jesus said, *"But ye say, whosoever shall say to*

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

his father or his mother, it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matthew 15:5,6). Instead of helping their aged parents with the means at their command, they claimed that it had been offered to God. Mark wrote, "*It is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free*" (Mark 7:11). "Corban" means a thing solemnly set apart by a formal vow to the sacred use of the service of God, hence it could not be used by or for any other person. Their traditions had invented a secret reserve beneath this form of words, which they could use for themselves.

Jesus accused them of making "void the word of God because of your traditions" (Matthew 15:6).

What about today? There is probably more disrespect in our permissive society today than ever before. Yet, it is just as much a sin as it was when the law was given. We hear a lot about child abuse, and this is awful. But parent abuse doesn't make headlines very often. We can be disrespectful to our parents by our language, by what we say, how we say it, and even by the way we live.

God demands that we respect authority and teach our children that respect. †

Charles E. Burch is the preacher for the Findlay Church of Christ in Sparta, Tennessee, USA.

Father

4 years: My Daddy can do anything.

7 years: My Dad knows a lot... a whole lot.

8 years: My father doesn't know everything.

12 years: Oh, well, naturally Father doesn't know that either.

14 years: Father? Hopelessly old-fashioned!

21 years: Oh, that man is out of date; what did you expect?

25 years: He knows a little bit about it, but not much.

30 years: Must find out what Dad thinks about it.

35 years: A little patience; let's get Dad's meaning first.

50 years: What would Dad have thought about that?

60 years: My Dad knew literally everything.

65 years: I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.

— News-Times, Montgomery, AL.

God's Family Values

Jack Harriman

Everyone is talking about family values and everyone claims to be in favor of them. But, of course, we do not all mean the same thing when we speak of family values.

The Standard For Family Values

For those who do not believe in God, the standard is whatever they want it to be, and it varies greatly from person to person. But for the believer, the standard is set by God and is revealed in the New Testament. So the family values of God become the family values of God's people.

Some of Those Values

- * One man and one woman married to each other as long as both shall live (Matthew 19:3-9).
- * Sexual faithfulness each to the other (1 Corinthians 7:2).
- * The love of the husband for his wife is patterned after the sincerity and depth of Christ's love for the church (Ephesians 5:25-29).
- * The wife loves, respects and submits to her husband as she does to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22; Titus 2:4).
- * The husband leads his family both physically and spiritually (Ephesians 5:23).
- * Father and mother rear children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4).
- * Children obey and honor parents when they are young and care for them when they are old (Ephesians 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:8).

The *greatest threat* to the family in our community is not actually the family values of unbelievers, but the "lip service" that is paid to God's family values by *half-converted "believers"*. †

Jack Harriman preaches for the Center Street Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U.S.A.

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the gospel of John, chapter seventeen, NKJV.

1. "The hour" — the pinnacle — of Jesus' earthly life had come. For what did He ask the Father? (V. 1)
2. How did Jesus define "eternal life"? (V. 3)
3. In this prayer, Jesus makes reference to His pre-existence with _____, and to the _____ He shared with _____ before the _____ was. (V. 5)
4. What did Jesus say He had revealed or manifested to the men God had given Him out of the world? (V. 6)
5. "Now they have known that _____." (V. 7)
6. The disciples were convinced of what two things, because they had received the words God had given Him? (V. 8)
7. "And _____, and _____ are _____. (V. 10)
8. What did Jesus ask God to do for His disciples? (V. 11)
9. Why did the world hate the disciples? (V. 14)
10. Was Jesus asking God to take the disciples out of the world? For what was He asking? (V. 15)
11. "Sanctify _____." (V. 17)
12. Jesus prayed for those who would believe on Him, that they would do what? (V. 20,21)
13. What did Jesus say He would give His followers? (V. 22)
14. How would the disciples be made perfect? (V. 23)
15. What did Jesus desire for His disciples? (V. 24)
16. How many times in this chapter did Jesus refer to God's name?
17. In verse 1 Jesus prayed for _____; in verse 9 He prayed for _____, not for the _____; in verse 20 He prayed for "_____".

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

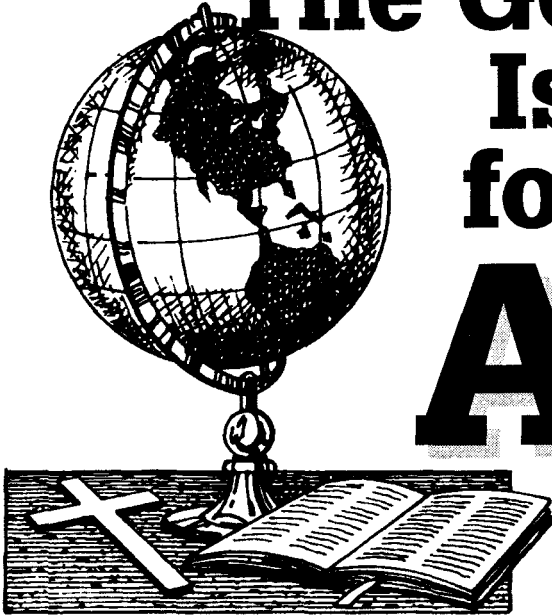
Verses Every Personal Worker Should Know

Ken Tyler

1. **The right attitude toward the Bible** — Deuteronomy 4:2; Deuteronomy 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18,19; John 10:35; Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9; Matthew 7:21-23.
2. **We live under the law of Christ — not the law of Moses** — Colossians 2:14; Romans 7:1-7; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11; Hebrews 9:15-17.
3. **The one church** — Matthew 16:13-19; Ephesians 1:22,23; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:16.
4. **The beginning of the church** — Acts 2:37-42,47.
5. **The plan of salvation** — **Hear** — (Romans 10:17); **Believe** (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:16); **Repent** (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30); **Confess Christ** (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9,10); **Be baptized** (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).
6. **Baptism is a burial** — Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12; John 3:23.
7. **Worship in spirit and in truth** — John 4:23,24; Matthew 15:9.
8. **Worship on Sunday, the first day of the week — Lord's Supper** (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20; Matthew 26:17,26-29; Acts 2:42); **Giving** (1 Corinthians 16:1,2); **Preaching** (Acts 20:7); **Praying** (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 4:2); **Singing** (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); **Studying** (Acts 20:7).
9. **The organization of the church** — Philippians 1:1.
10. **The qualifications of bishops and deacons** — 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4.
11. **Elders, bishops, and pastors are descriptive terms that refer to the same men** — Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:1,2; Titus 1:5,7.
12. **The role of women** — 1 Timothy 2:11,12; 1 Corinthians 14:34. †

Ken Tyler preaches for the Arab Church of Christ in Arab, Alabama, U.S.A.

The Gospel Is for All



Earl Edwards

While here on the earth, Jesus once said to His disciples, *“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look upon the fields, that they are white for harvest”* (John 4:35).

I am convinced that if Jesus were to speak directly to those of us in the church today He would tell us first of all to *“lift up”* our eyes to see the sad spiritual plight of many in our world. He would say that it should be evident that they need the Gospel. Second, He would tell us to *“lift up”* our eyes to re-evaluate the spiritual “help” available in our great God (Psalm 27:9,10; 131:1-3,8). But perhaps, above all, He would tell us, as He did those first century disciples, to *“lift up”* our eyes to the *“fields”* that are *“white for harvest.”* He would remind us that He desires that we *“make disciples of all the nations”* (Matthew 28:19), for *“the gospel is for all.”*

Those who have spiritual needs and the God who can fill their needs must be brought together, and that is the job of Christians who have gained spiritual vision from Christ. Returning to our text in John chapter four, notice that Jesus disdains material food, because He sees people streaming

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

out from the village of Sychar (verse 30). He sees fields that are “*white for harvest*” (verse 35).

Today there are urgent spiritual needs, and the church that has vision and is really “of Christ” will recognize the urgency of the work which needs to be done. Likewise, the person that is really a person of vision, a mature Christian, will feel that urgency.

White Fields Around the World

The Lord said, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:19). Mature Christian individuals and obedient churches will never be satisfied with going to only one nation when the Lord said “*all nations*.” We must therefore, “*lift up*” our eyes to the “*white fields*” of the rest of the world. We must, as Paul did, endeavor to “*preach the Gospel*” where Christ has not already been “*named*” so that those who “*had no news of Him*” shall “*see*” and “*understand*” (Romans 15:20,21). It is true that churches of Christ have made some progress in reaching such nations in the last few years. In fact, in 1939, when World War II broke out, we had only a few struggling churches of Christ in all of Europe, and all of these were in Great Britain. By 1977 we had about 195 churches of Christ in 20 of Europe’s 35 countries, so we have made some progress, but much is yet to be done. In fact, in Italy, where this writer worked as a missionary for 16 years, we have about 1200 Christians meeting in 45 or so congregations. And in Moscow, where he preached last summer, there are perhaps 100 members of the church of Christ. But, it must be kept in mind that Italy has a population of 62 million people and Moscow alone counts 12 million people. Thus, we have barely touched the hem of the garment in these places. Churches of Christ now have members in 133 of the world’s countries, but in at least half of these we have barely begun the task. Many in those countries have still not heard the Gospel. But the need becomes even more evident and urgent when we consider that of the world’s 242 nations, there were, as late as 1994, 109 which were still “*unentered*” by workers from churches of Christ — Countries like Burma (also called Myanmar, with 46.3 million), Burtkina Faso (in Africa with 10.4 million) and Senegal (with 8.4 million).

We Need to Take the Gospel to All

We must remember that Jesus said to “*make disciples of all the nations*.” Somehow we are not as committed to that task as we should be. J. M. McCaleb was a missionary for churches of Christ in Japan in the peri-

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

od from 1891 until approximately 1941. After he had worked in Japan for numerous years, one of his several supporting churches wrote him saying that it had decided to cut its support to him and redirect it to the "heathen" people of the U.S.A. McCaleb was so dedicated that he secured a secular job to be able to continue teaching the Japanese that he loved. However, it was on that occasion that he also wrote the great hymn that we often sing — "The Gospel is for All." Do you remember the words?

Of one the Lord has made the race,
Thro' one has come the fall;
Where sin has gone must go His grace:
The gospel is for all.

Say not the heathen are at home,
Beyond we have no call,
For why should we be blessed alone?
The gospel is for all.

Brethren, our God is a great God, and a languishing world needs to hear of His love and mercy. And, if we really decide to give of ourselves to reach these "*white fields*," we will learn by experience that it really is "*more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35).

We Must Focus on Others

But let me remind us that if we are going to be the kind of people that "get the job done" for the Lord we must be people with wisdom who "*lift up*" our eyes to the fields. We must quit focusing on ourselves and think of others. God help us all to think of others, and, when we do, we will become people with vision who will indeed "*lift up*" their eyes to the "*white fields*," because they know that the Gospel is indeed for all men. †

Earl Edwards is Director of Graduate Studies in Bible at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

A man awake will awake another.
The second will awake his next door brother.
The third awake can arouse a town by turning the whole place
upside down,
The many awake can make such a fuss it finally awakens the rest of us!
A man awake with dawn in his eyes, multiplies.

—Milton Jones

Our Mission:



Is It *Impossible?*

Wayne Barrier

The New Testament clearly defines the mission of the church in Matthew 28:19,20 and Mark 16: 15,16. To implement and carry out the mission requires an understanding of many other passages of Scripture, but none other captures the overall mission better than these verses in Matthew and Mark. The world now has a population in excess of five billion souls. Every year scores of millions are launched into eternity as they are overtaken by death. Each will stand before God in judgment, where a sentence will be given regarding the individual's eternal destiny — either a home in Heaven or eternal punishment in Hell and torment.

Are we successful in our mission to provide each of these souls

an opportunity to obey the Gospel of Christ? The answer is that most who die every day have not been taught the truth that can set one free (John 8:32). We have only a few hundred missionaries trying to reach most of the world's population. Every day we lose ground in this war with Satan because we have such a small army, which is often poorly equipped for the battle.

Is the mission impossible? I do not believe it is impossible. I do not believe God would command us to do something that He knows would be impossible for us to accomplish. I believe the problem is our *failure to seriously approach the task.*

If we suddenly discovered that we had a serious life-threatening ill-

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

ness requiring treatment immediately, we would approach the mission of finding and receiving treatment in a most urgent manner. If we knew our life was at stake, we would spare nothing to be cured. Our time, money, intellect, personal energy, and every other resource would be used, if needed. We would not hesitate to call upon others for help. We would certainly have many serious and extensive talks with God about this matter. We would not hesitate, or be the least bit embarrassed, to mobilize everyone and everything possible to achieve our mission to be healed in order to live longer.

We are all familiar with this process, having seen friends and family members in a struggle with serious illness. Most of us know that Jesus taught that saving one's soul is more important than anything in the world (Matthew 16:26). We also know that in order to find eternal life, we must lose (or give up) our carnal desires in this life for the sake of Christ (Matthew 16:25).

What about our mission to reach every soul

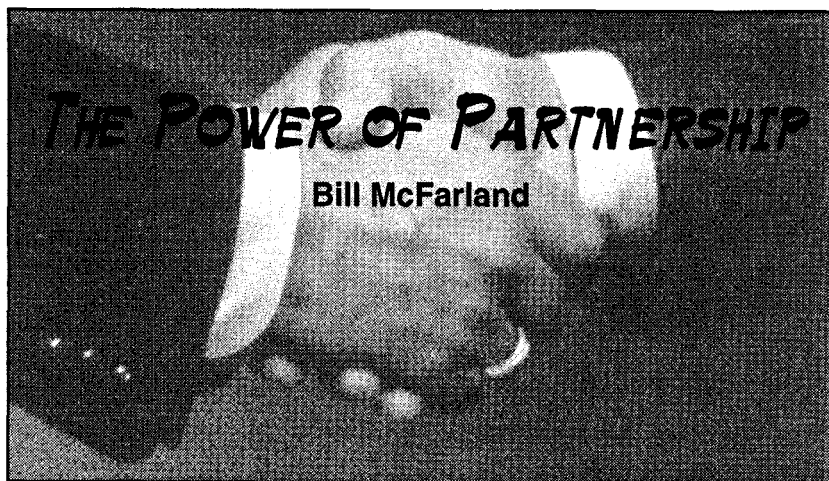
with the Gospel? Souls are at stake! How do we describe our overall evangelism effort? What about my personal effort for this great cause? I believe we could complete the mission if we were all to approach the task in the same way we would deal with a life-threatening health problem.

Our first century brethren completed the mission, with every person in the world having an opportunity to obey the truth (Colossians 1:6). We have the resources and tools to do the same today. We simply need to be committed to the task. *The mission is not impossible!* God will help us achieve total success if we will only do our part (Ephesians 3:20). †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, U.S.A., and is part of the World Evangelism team taking the Gospel throughout the world.

**SHAMGAR HAD AN OX GOAD,
DAVID HAD A SLING,
DORCAS HAD A NEEDLE,
RAHAB HAD A STRING,
MARY HAD SOME OINTMENT,
MOSES HAD A ROD,
HAVE YOU SOME SMALL TALENT
YOU'LL DECIDE TO GIVE TO GOD?**

— SELECTED



Fellowship is of great value for the Lord's people because *"two are better than one."* The preacher stressed this fact in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, where he pointed out four essential benefits of partnership.

◆ **Accomplishment.** *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor"* (verse 9). Two working together will get more done and bear more fruit than we would working by ourselves.

◆ **Encouragement.** *"For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; But woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up"* (verse 10). What a blessing it is to have someone to lift us up when we are down and to encourage us on the way!

◆ **Survival.** *"Again, if two lie together, they have warmth; but how can one be warm alone?"*

(verse 11). The needs and challenges of the Christian life are such that we cannot "go it alone." We are dependent upon fellowship one with another to keep faith from growing cold and dying.

◆ **Strength.** *"And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken"* (verse 12). Just as a rope of three cords woven together is strong, so is a Christian whose life is woven together with his brothers and sisters in Christ.

Fellowship in Christ has the power to bless our lives. There is no substitute for it. Let us make sure that we continue steadfastly in fellowship (Acts 2:42). †

Bill McFarland is the preacher for the National & High church in Springfield, Missouri, U.S.A.

PUZZLE PAGE

Fill in the qualities of God's people as described by Titus.

E
L
D
E
R

B
I
S
H
O
P

O
L
D
W
O
M
E
N

O
L
D
M
E
N

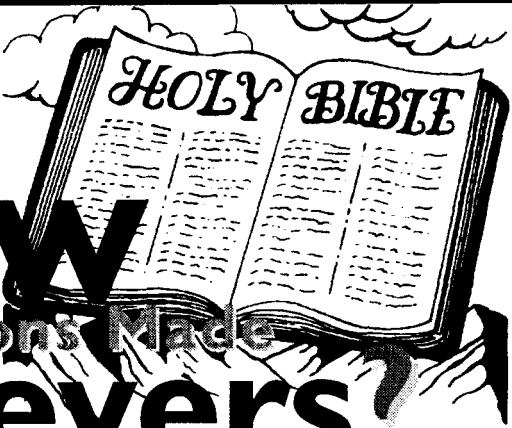
Y
O
U
N
G
W
O
M
E
N

Y
O
U
N
G
M
E
N

B
E
L
I
E
V
E
R

BLAMELESS
BLAMELESS
CHASTE
COURTEOUS
DOMESTIC
GENTLE
GODLY
GOD'S STEWARD
GRAVITY
HOLY
HONEST
HOSPITABLE
INSTRUCTOR
INTEGRITY
KIND

LOVE HUSBAND
MODEL
OBEDIENT
ONE WIFE
REVERENT
SELF CONTROL
SENSIBLE
SERIOUS
SOBER
SOUND FAITH
SOUND SPEECH
TEACH
TEMPERATE
TRAIN YOUNGER
UPRIGHT
UPRIGHT



How Are Persons Made Believers?

The apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, *"For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel"* (1 Corinthians 4:15).

The literal meaning of this statement is, *"I have made you believers through the Gospel."* (See 1 John 5:1.)

If people are begotten, or made believers, through the Gospel, they are not made believers by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the Gospel. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17).

There is no recorded instance in all the New Testament of a person becoming a believer and being converted to Christ apart from the Gospel, because as Paul says in

Romans 1:16, the Gospel of Christ *"is the power of God unto salvation."*

When Jesus gave the Great Commission to His apostles, He said, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:15,16).

In the very first Gospel sermon preached under the Great Commission, the apostle Peter, speaking as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance (Acts 2:4), unequivocally said, *"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38).†

G. F. Raines is a writer and preacher living in Celina, Tennessee, USA.

SALVATION

Acts 22:16, "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on His name." Do you realize that you will take the most important, life-changing step in your entire existence?

The answers to life's problems are found in Jesus Christ. For centuries man has been trying to find the answers on his own, but without God, all other solutions are either temporary or void.

Jesus said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

Friends, Jesus is the Way! Look what God has promised us through Jesus:

1. "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things passed away, behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

2. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name

of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

3. "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13,14).

Is it not exciting to realize and recognize those promises that we are new creatures, we have eternal life, we have forgiveness of sins, that we

have been transferred into the Kingdom of God and we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)! What more do we want? The promises of God concerning the believer go on and on.

Salvation is God's plan for the entire world (1 Timothy 2:4). God wants all to repent and be baptized into Jesus.

Water baptism is a symbolic representation of the penitent sinner being crucified, dead and buried

**Have You
Been
Born
Again?**

**If Not,
Why Not?**

George Funk

SALVATION

with Christ, and then raised up with Him (being born again) to new and everlasting life (John 3:5). After baptism, old things are passed away; behold new things have come.

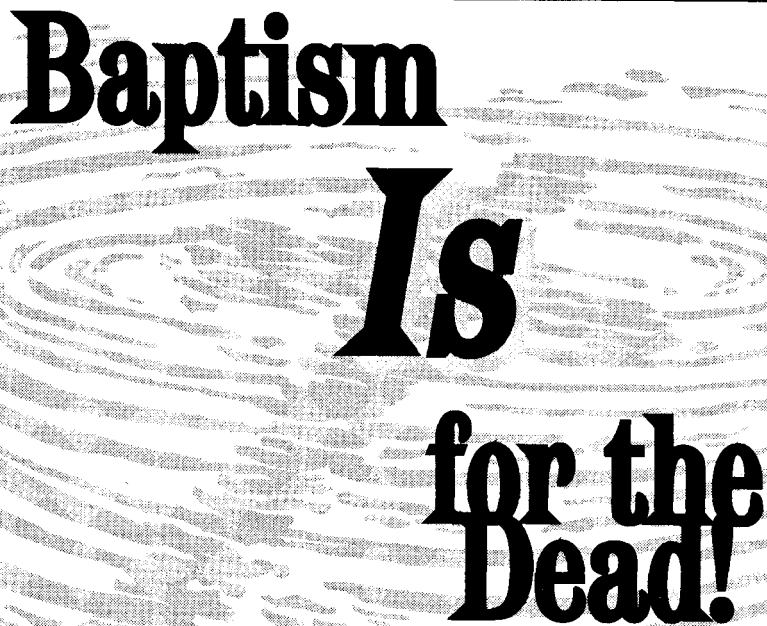
If you have not experienced water baptism, let me encourage you to follow the examples of those early believers in the Bible and be

born again (Galatians 3:27). "Put Jesus on" in baptism (Romans 6:3), "die, be buried and raised" and become His child. Oh, how important are His children! Being baptized into Christ is the most life-changing step you can take. †

George Funk is a South African evangelist and missionary who lives in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Evangelize!

Give us a watchword for the hour,
A thrilling word, a word of power;
A battle-cry, a flaming breath,
That calls to conquest or to death;
A word to rouse the church from rest,
To heed the Master's high behest;
The call is given: Ye hosts arise,
Our watchword is EVANGELIZE!
The glad evangel now proclaim
Through all the earth in Jesus' name;
This word is ringing through the skies,
EVANGELIZE! EVANGELIZE!
To dying men, a fallen race,
Make known the gift of gospel grace;
The world that now in darkness lies,
EVANGELIZE! EVANGELIZE!



Baptism Is for the Dead!

Francis David

All over the world baptism is a very controversial subject. People are confused about this command. Since baptism *is* a command of God, and part of the great commission of Christ, it should not be taken lightly. Yet the majority of people are convinced that it is not necessary for salvation. Most religious groups preach and teach that one can be saved without baptism.

In order to understand the truth on this important subject, we must rightly divide the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15). How sad it is that

people do not divide the word of God rightly, so they ignore verses that seem to contradict other verses, or that disagree with what they have been taught by their preachers. But the Bible does not contradict itself; whatever it says on one subject in one place must harmonize with what it says on the same subject in other places. *The Bible does not teach different ways of salvation or different doctrines about baptism.*

As we turn to the word of God, we see that Paul wrote, "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of*

God" (Romans 3:23). John says, "*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness*" (1 John 3:4). Because man has sinned, God cannot have fellowship with him. Sins separate us from God.

The Scriptures tell us that in order to have the forgiveness of sins, one *must* be baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). But the important thing we want to see is that *baptism is for dead people!*

Yes, baptism is for those who are dead in their trespasses (sins). When a sinner confesses his faith in Jesus and repents of his sins and is buried in the watery grave of baptism, he dies to his sins.. The old man who was *dead in sin* has now become *dead to sin*. Paul says again, "*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4-6). In baptism the body of sins is done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

We go further and read in the same chapter, verses 7 and 8, that **when a person has died he has been freed from sins.** He has died with Christ, but he shall also live with Him in the resurrection.

We come to verse 11 and here we see that Paul explains that we are to consider ourselves **dead**

indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 15:29, Paul is talking to the brethren at Corinth regarding the resurrection, and he asks a question: "*What will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?*" **A dead person — a person who is dead in sins — is the subject for baptism.** When this dead person obeys the command of baptism, he comes forth from the watery grave as a **new living person.** His old man or old manner of life is buried now. He or she is a new creature in Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:17).

To humans, **spiritual death** is not as *real and dreaded* as **physical death**, but if we could see dead souls as God sees them, we would have no problem understanding the graphic wording of "dead" in 1 Corinthians 15:29.

Friend, have you been baptized? If not, then you must study what the Scriptures say and act accordingly. You need to die to your old sinful life, and you can be sure that in Jesus your sins are washed away.

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). †

Francis David is a Christian preacher who lives in New Delhi, India.

SALVATION

Many preachers and religious teachers say that Paul was saved on the road to Damascus. The assumption is made that Jesus' appearing to him brought about his salvation. Is this true? What proof is offered that he was saved when Jesus appeared to him?

Three reasons are usually given for the basis of the conclusion that Paul was saved at that time: (1) Jesus appeared to him for the purpose of giving him salvation. (2) Jesus gave him the Holy Spirit as a seal of his salvation. And (3) Ananias called him "brother Saul" when he came to him.

Nothing is said in the New Testament to indicate that Jesus appeared to Paul in order to save him.

Such a teaching is merely an assumption and not a stated fact. If Jesus appeared to him for this purpose, this was an exception and not the rule. No where is it recorded that Jesus appeared to any others in order to save them. In all other cases a God-approved preacher preached Jesus and salvation (Acts 2:36-38; Acts 8:12, 35-39; 11:14).

The text shows that Paul was not an exception. Jesus did not tell him what to do, but rather told him, "Go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Ananias, whom Jesus sent, told Paul to

When

WAS

Paul

Saved?

Owen D. Olbricht



*"Arise,
and be
baptized,
and wash
away thy*

*sins, calling on the
name of the Lord"*
(Acts 22:16).

The appearance of Jesus was not for the purpose of bringing about salvation. Paul stated that "Last of all he was seen of me also" (1 Corinthians 15:8). If seeing Jesus brings about salvation, then Paul was the last person to be saved.

Jesus explained why He appeared to Paul. He did not say He appeared to him in order to save

SALVATION

him. He said, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16). This was Paul's call by Jesus to be an apostle. He could not witness with the other apostles the resurrection (Acts 1:22) had he not seen the resurrected Lord. Paul argued that he was an apostle, based on his having seen Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:1).

The New Testament does not state when Paul received the Holy Spirit. The safe conclusion is that he did not receive the Holy Spirit until after baptism. We know that Paul did not receive the Holy Spirit on the road to Damascus, because three days later when Ananias (Acts 9:9) came to Paul he had not received the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17).

The most likely conclusion is that Paul was not an exception but that he received the Holy Spirit as others received Him. Those who are baptized (Acts 2:38), obey Jesus (Acts 5:32), becoming sons of God (Galatians 4:6), and are the ones who receive the Holy Spirit. The only exception to this rule that is recorded in the New Testament were the first Gentiles, Cornelius' household, to whom the Holy Spirit was given in order to prove to Jewish Christians that God would accept Gentiles (Acts 10:47; 11:17; 15:7,8).

The fact that Ananias called Paul, "brother Saul," is not proof that Paul was already saved. Peter called his fellow Jews, "brethren" (Acts 2:29), but then told them to "Repent, and baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

On other occasions, Peter also called fellow Jews brethren (Acts 3:17), as did Stephen (Acts 7:2), and Paul (Acts 13:26,38; 22:1; 23:1, 5, 6; 28:17). Ananias did not call him "brother Saul" because he was a brother in Christ, but because he was a brother Jew.

According to Ananias, Paul's sins were not forgiven **until he was baptized** (Acts 22:16). Saul was not saved on the road to Damascus but, rather, he was saved when his sins were washed away by the blood of Jesus at the time of his baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

God does not show partiality. We must obey Him in order to be saved (Hebrews 5:9) now that Christ has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18-20). He said we must, "*Believe and be baptized,*" in order to be saved (Mark 16:15,16), which is what Paul did to have his sins forgiven (Acts 22:16). †

Owen D. Olbricht, the author of several books, teaches at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, USA.

PROVERBS 17:22



The very capable vice president of a company died, and early the next morning an ambitious young officer of the company came in to see the president and said, "It is so sad about our company's loss, but I'm sure you feel that everything should keep going on. I don't want to seem presumptuous, but I would like to talk to you about my taking his place." The boss, somewhat irritated by the timing and the arrogance of the young man, said, "That's fine with me, if you think you can fit in his casket."



Old Soldiers

Old accountants never die; they just lose their balance. (Charles Shaw)

Old anesthesiologists never die; they just run out of gas. (Sheria K. Martin)

Old procrastinators never die; they just keep putting it off. (C. P. Miscavish)

Old quilters never die; they just go to pieces. (Marie Radeck)

Old quarterbacks never die; they just pass away. (Craig Fleishman)



A man was filling out a job application for work in a factory and was greatly perplexed at one question: "Person to notify in case of accident?" He wrote: "Anybody in sight."



Son: "Dad, did God make you?"

Father: "Yes."

Son: "And did He make me?"

Father: "Yes."

Son: "He's doing better work lately, eh?"



Two senior citizens who knew each other met in the mall. One was distressed, however, because he couldn't remember the other one's name.

He finally said, "I am very embarrassed, and please forgive me, but I can't remember your name."

PROVERBS 17:22

The second one, looking somewhat dazed and bewildered, paused for a moment, and then said, "How soon do you need to know?"



Have you heard about the wife who became concerned about her husband's health? He was a physical wreck, weak and pale and flabby, stressed out, and constantly tired — totally out of shape. So she took him to the doctor for a checkup. When the examination was completed, the doctor came out to the waiting room and said to the wife, "Thelma, I just don't like the way your husband looks." She said, "Neither do I, but he is good to the children!"



Too many couples marry for better or worse, but not for good.



A church was hotly debating whether to buy a chandelier for the foyer. A business meeting was called to discuss the matter. A good old brother who came in late stood and said, "I'm agin' buying a chandelier for three reasons: (1) We ain't got the money. (2) Nobody in

this church can play one. (3) What we really need is more light for this lobby."



A man was walking along a road in the countryside and came across a shepherd and a huge flock of sheep. He told the shepherd, "I will bet you \$100 against one of your sheep that I can tell you the exact number in this flock." The shepherd thought it over and decided to take the bet. The man said, "973." The shepherd was astonished, because that was the exact number in the flock. He said, "That is amazing. I'm a man of my word, so take an animal." The man picked one up and began to walk away.

"Wait," said the shepherd. "Let me have a chance to get even. Double or nothing that I can guess your exact occupation." The man agreed to the bet. The shepherd then said, "You are an economist for the government." "Astounding!" responds the man. "You are exactly right! But tell me, how did you figure that out?"

"Well," said the shepherd, "put down my dog and I will tell you."

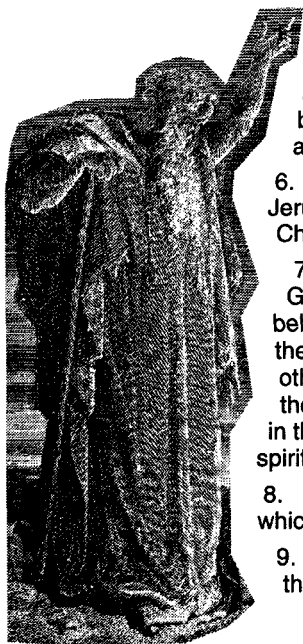


Dieters are people who are thick and tired of it.

Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word. I am an example of one spoke God's word, even when the people didn't like what I said and didn't want to listen or obey, a lesson for preachers of all time who may feel the repercussions of teaching unpopular truths.

1. **100** I was a prophet during the darkest period of Israel's history, written in the book that bears my name, beginning about 586 B.C.
2. **90** I was contemporary with Daniel and Jeremiah. Daniel and I lived in Babylon, while Jeremiah lived in Judea.
3. **80** I saw visions, much like those in Revelation, of the glory and holiness of God, being high and lifted up, radiating great light (2:24-28).
 4. **70** God said to me, "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel" (3:17).
 5. **60** I warned the captives that Jerusalem, with Solomon's mighty temple, would be destroyed because of the idolatry practiced among her people (Chapters 5 & 10).
 6. **50** I described God's love and marriage to Jerusalem in beautiful and poignant pictures in Chapter 16.
 7. **40** Throughout my life as a prophet, God had me to act out warnings in symbolic behavior, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile of some of the people and the deaths of others, and finally the restoration of the righteous to their homeland. Much of this had its final fulfillment in the the salvation of souls in the church, God's spiritual Israel. (Chapters 4,5,12,24).
 8. **30** I give a description of "the king of Tyre" which many think to be actually of Satan (28:12-19).
 9. **20** Fifty times in my book, God said, "Know that I am the Lord your God."
 10. **10** God showed me the vision of the valley of dry bones, signifying the restoration of Judah (Chapter 37).



My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.



Ehud was a left-handed Benjamite who delivered Israel out of the hands of Eglon, king of Moab. Ehud's work resulted in eighty years of peace in the land. Read his story in Judges 3:12-30.

The story of each judge centers around evil done by God's people. When Israel sinned, God raised up an oppressor. *"And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. Then he gathered*

to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years" (Judges 3:12-14). God's judgment against Israel's wickedness was designed to bring them to repentance.

1. God punished the sins of His own people (verses 12-14).
2. The lesson is that one can easily lose by his own sins what he has gained by the power of God (verse 13).

3. Israel's first servitude was eight years (verse 8), and this second one was eighteen years (verse 14). Failure to learn means one pays an even greater price.

4. Ehud was raised up after Israel had prayed (verse 15). There is power in prayer, as God answers us through His providential care.

5. Benjamin was most likely the weakest tribe at this time. Ehud was a lefthanded man from the tribe of Benjamin. But God can raise up power out of weakness (1 Corinthians 12:24).

6. Ehud came against Eglon with "*a message from God*" (verse 20). The Bible provides us with a message from God.

7. Ehud led Israel in total victory over her enemies (verses 27-29). God is pleased with nothing short of total surrender to His perfect will.

8. Ehud challenged Israel to follow him (verse 28). There is no substitute for good leadership.

9. Israel had rest eighty years (verse 30). Those who will obey God can enjoy eternal rest.

Ehud and the rest of the Judges teach us the need of faithful service to God. Obey the Gospel (Acts 2:36-41) and remain steadfast (1 Corinthians 15:58). God demands your faithfulness! †

Charles Box is a gospel preacher in Greenville, Alabama, U.S.A.

President Garfield's Appointment

James A. Garfield was a Gospel preacher, Civil War general, and President of the United States. History will never be able to judge what kind of leader he might have been because he was shot by a crazed office-seeker and died after only six months in office.

Early one Sunday morning a group of party leaders came by the White House to see him to discuss a bill they thought should be passed by Congress. They were surprised when he said he had a very important appointment and would talk to them that afternoon.

"But Mr. President," one man asked, "What could be more important than this?" Garfield arose and walked to the door, turned to the party leaders and said, "Gentlemen, I have an appointment at the Lord's table." He then left with Mrs. Garfield and went to Sunday morning worship.

Who Was Jerubbaal?

David Deffenbaugh

Jerubbaal? Who was he? Actually, it is not that name by which he is most easily identified. How about Gideon? Gideon is a man worthy of note. Far more than the average amount of space is devoted to his story in the book of Judges compared to the other judges' stories. Much is to be learned from this man of God.

Serving God in adversity.

Gideon was a judge in Israel. By definition that means adverse conditions. The work of a judge was to deliver God's people out of the adversity of oppression from an enemy. Gideon was found by the Lord, with the rest of the Israelites, hiding in mountain caves and dens for fear of the Midianites. More specifically, he was beating out wheat in the wine press (as opposed to the threshing floor), trying to keep at least some of the produce of the land from the marauding hordes from Midian. How much easier it would have been for Gideon to reject God's call because of the adversity of the times. It will not be at the most convenient moments that we are called upon to serve others either.

God uses the "unqualified."

Gideon's response to the Lord's call was to point out his lowly position. "*But Lord, Gideon asked, 'how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family'*" (Judges 6:15). Gideon thought that surely there was someone else more qualified than he to carry out this task. Quite often we too are quick to think of others more talented, with more time, with more experience, etc., etc., when it comes to the Lord's work that needs to be done. While all of those things may be true, something else is also true: God wants to use us in His service, even as

BIBLE CHARACTERS

“unqualified” as we may be.

The victory belongs to God. The best-remembered event from Gideon’s career as judge was the paring down of his army. God reduced the army from 32,000 to 10,000 to 300; a mere 300 men to defeat an army described “*as numerous as locusts*” and whose camels were “*as numerous as the sand on the seashore!*” God’s expressed purpose in doing so was that Israel not become boastful, saying, “*My own power has delivered me*” (Judges 7:2). So, we are reminded that as God’s children we possess the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), yet we have this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7). The victory of the army and of the church now, belongs to God.

Indeed, we are instructed from what “*was written in earlier times*” (Romans 15:4). †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the Lord’s church in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

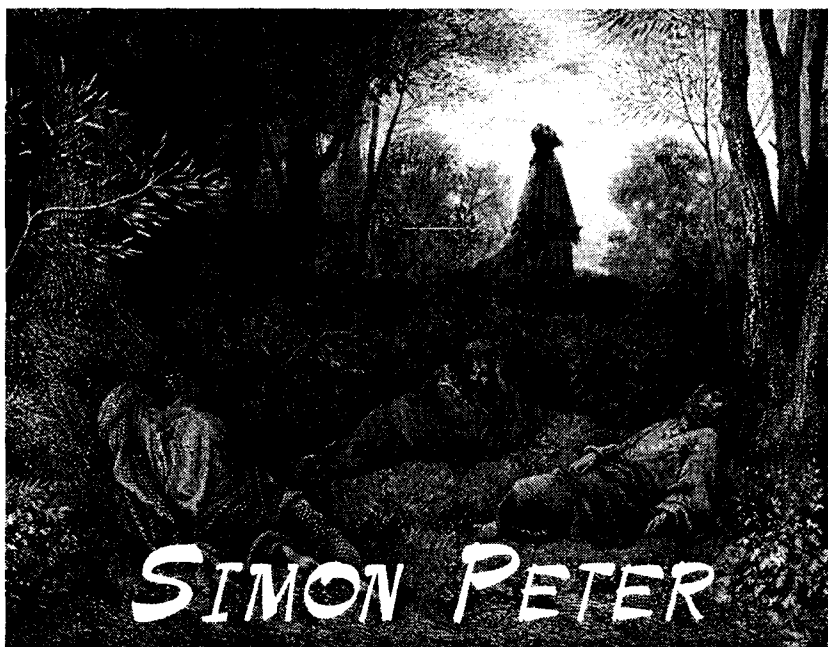
But I Can't Do Anything!

Can you bake a pie? Can you mix a cake?
Can you catch some fish down at the lake?
Can you sing a song? Can you say a prayer?
Can you shave a face? Can you style some hair?

Can you use a computer? Can you write a letter
To send to a friend to make him feel better?
Can you walk a dog? Can you read a book?
Can you show some young one how to cook?

We all can't preach, but we all can serve.
It just takes some thought and a little nerve.
So “gird up your loins”, jump into the fray,
And see what God can do with you today!

— Jessie Granville



SIMON PETER

He was a Galilean fisherman with his brother Andrew, and his partners, James and John. Jesus called him Cephas, which means "a stone." When the apostles are named, Simon is always the first to be mentioned.

Although John was the closest to Jesus, Peter was the forerunner in many areas. He was not bashful when it came to asking questions. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Nor was he hesitant in rebuking Jesus when he thought he was right. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Peter's loyalty was fierce,

Ray Hawk

and no one had to ask him where he stood. He declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."

When others wanted information about Jesus, they usually went to Peter. When Jesus asked questions of the apostles, Peter was usually the first to reply. He was not afraid to ask questions or to demand answers. "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" He wanted to honor Jesus and spoke of this on different occasions. "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Elias." Out of the Twelve, he was one of the inner three. Yet, Simon Peter was human.

In spite of his loyal statements, Jesus told Peter that his heart was in the wrong place, "*Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.*" In the garden, Jesus had asked His disciples to watch while He prayed, but Simon, with others, went to sleep. However, it was to Simon that Jesus addressed His remarks, "*Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?*" Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed twice, he would deny Him three times. When Peter realized he had fulfilled that prophecy, he went out and "*wept bitterly.*"

Jesus recognized the leadership abilities of Simon. He told him to "*Feed my sheep.*" Here was a complicated man who at one time was not afraid to go against his culture and enter the house of a Gentile to preach to him, even if it meant criticism from some in the church. Yet, on another occasion, he feared what would be said and refused to associate with Gentile Christians.

Some may tend to think that Peter was more of a god than a man. We, like Cornelius, might bow before him. Yet, Peter would tell us what he told the centurion, "*Stand up, I myself also am a man.*"

One cannot help but admire this

fisherman who became an evangelist and an apostle. Although the Holy Spirit inspired his written and spoken messages, he was given no special speaking *ability* or supernatural powers to be *bold*. He, like Paul, could say, "*And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God*" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

One might classify Peter as a home-town boy who made good. But, when everything is said, if it had not been for Jesus, Peter would have remained a nameless fisherman. Jesus took an outspoken man and turned him into one who spoke out for Him. He took a man who fed people with fish and made him into a feeder of human sheep. All that he was and became was because Jesus walked into his life. Peter had the wisdom to recognize that Jesus could make a difference. Do you? †

Ray Hawk works with the Campbell Street congregation in Jackson, Tennessee, U.S.A.



POOR MOSES?

Dalton Key

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Moses, the valiant leader of millions, the man whom God chose to deliver and lead His people out of Egyptian slavery, the revered law-giver, endured a life of rejection and heartache. His troubles began in Egypt and followed him for the whole of his 120 years.

He had just successfully led Israel in their escape from Pharaoh when the Amelekites attacked. It wasn't long before the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Amorites, and Midianites all joined together in an attempt to block Israel's path to Canaan.

His own people were no help to him either. Though God's chosen nation had been awed and sustained by miracle after miracle, they still wallowed in the mire of murmuring. They incessantly grumbled against God and His helper, Moses. They began complaining before they were out of Egypt and kept it up even when the Promised Land was in sight. To make matters worse, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram attempted to overthrow Moses. Marah, the Wilderness of Sin, Rephidim, Taborah, Kazeroth, Meribah, and Kadesh all found the Children of Israel either complaining or trying to overthrow Moses. At one point the people were all ready to stone him to death!

And his trusted leaders were many times untrustworthy and more

of a hindrance than a help. Aaron made the golden calf at the foot of Sinai while Moses was up on the mount receiving the law from the Lord. Miriam and Aaron attempted to usurp the God-given authority of Moses at Hazeroth. And of the twelve spies sent into the land of Canaan, ten led the already rebellious nation in a refusal to enter. Yes, Moses had his share of troubles.

And yet, through all of the muck of murmuring and insult of insurrection, Moses emerged a better man. Inspiration commends him as *"very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth"* (Numbers 12:3). He was meek, but by no means weak. He meekly stood his ground in the face of adversity. His life served to prove the yet-to-be-written words of Paul, who wrote, *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope"* (Romans 5:3,4).

The next time you are tempted to complain about your troubles, think of poor Moses. His troubles made him stronger, better. The same thing can happen to you. †

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

Burden Bearing

Bruce Buckley

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ...For each must bear his own load"
(Galatians 6:2,5).**

Was Paul dealing in double talk? The answer is NO.

The BURDENS of verse 2 and verse 5 come from two Greek words looking to different situations. The burdens of verse 2 represent an overload, more than people can bear. If they do not have help, they will sink . . . but this does not mean to take the burden from them, but simply to give help with the burden.

The burden of verse 5 has reference to the burden of a soldier. That burden had to be borne at all times. It could not be passed to another. We have burdens of many types today that cannot be passed to anyone else. There are physical burdens and disabilities that must be borne by individuals. We should try to get relief by medical means when and if possible, but in the long run, they must be borne, and hopefully without complaining. There are burdens of a non-physical nature also. Christianity places burdens on one that no other can bear. No other person can obey the Gospel for us; that is our burden. The practice of baptizing for those who are already dead is not according to the scriptures.

A sin may be forgiven, but its consequences may still remain a burden. Paul still had his thorn in the flesh and it was still a burden. He said his past as blasphemer and persecutor was out of ignorance and unbelief.

But the beauty of all of this is that while we are busy bearing burdens that are ours, we are at the same time learning more how to bear the burdens of others "AND SO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST" (Galatians 6:2). It is then that our own burdens become lighter and easier to bear. †

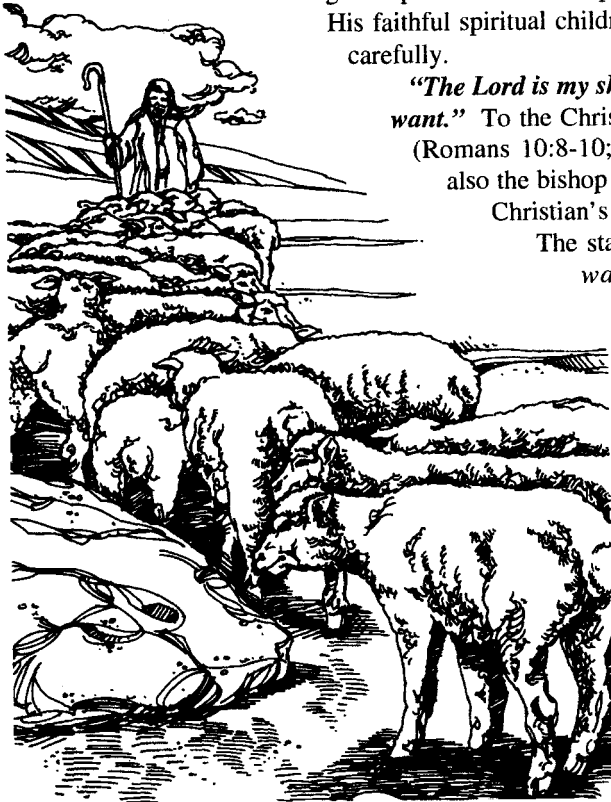
Bruce Buckley serves as an elder in the Chapel Avenue Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

God's Spiritual Blessings to Mankind

Don L. Norwood

Psalm 23

This psalm of David contains beautiful and simple statements, expressing the spiritual relationships between God and His faithful spiritual children. Let us study it carefully.



"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." To the Christian, Christ is Lord (Romans 10:8-10; Acts 2:36). He is also the bishop and shepherd of the Christian's soul (1 Peter 2:25).

The statement *"I shall not want"* expresses the idea that as a faithful child of God one will always have all the spiritual and material blessings that one needs (Matthew 6:24-33; 1 Timothy 6:6-12).

"He makes me to lie down in green pastures." Using this terminology with the idea of a shepherd and his sheep out

TEXTUAL STUDIES

in the pasture, it suggests that as we follow our Shepherd and do His will, we will have peaceful rest for our souls from the troubles and cares of the world.

“He leads me beside the still waters.” This suggests that the Lord will lead us in the kind of life that makes for stability and security (Philippians 4:4-8; Galatians 5:22,23).

“He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” After the rebirth, the person must learn and follow the teachings of Christ faithfully all the rest of his life (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Peter 1:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Physical death is inevitable for all people (Hebrews 9:27; Romans 5:12). A faithful Christian can face death with calm resolve and trust the Lord’s promises relative to it (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 14:13). The rod and staff were used by a shepherd to catch a wayward sheep and return him to the fold. This is symbolic of the Word of God which makes us understand the reason for death and how to prepare for it.

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” A table prepared seems to symbolize the Lord’s spiritual communion with His people (1 Corinthians 11:23-30; John 6:48-58; 1 Corinthians 10:16,17). It may also include His care for His people in all their physical needs as well (Matthew 6:33).

“You anoint my head with oil.” Anointing one’s head with oil symbolizes the Lord’s care of His children when they are sick, and especially when they are spiritually ill (James 5:13-15; Luke 10:34; Isaiah 1:6; Jeremiah 8:22; 46:11).

“My cup runs over.” This symbolizes the fact that a child of God has more than he needs in all aspects of his life (John 10:10).

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” The Psalmist wrote, *“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about”* (Psalm 32:10).

“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” While living in the flesh, the Christian is a member of God’s great household (1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 2:5,9,10). A home awaits the Christian in heaven (John 14:1-6; 1 Peter 1:4,5).

†

Don L. Norwood does full time mission work in India.

Wonderful Assurances

David Pharr

1 John 1:6-2:6

It is not unusual for a Christian to be concerned and even fearful over what he knows are shortcomings in his life. This lesson will consider a wonderful passage of Scripture which can help us see how God forgives our imperfections.

Read 1 John 1:6-2:6. After reading these verses carefully, go back and see the following truths from each verse.

Verse 6. "Walk" has reference to the life one lives. To walk in darkness means to live without the guiding light of God's Word. A hypocrite — one who claims to be in fellowship with God while deliberately living in sin — is a liar.

Verse 7. What does it mean to "*walk in the light*"? It means to walk in the pathway of life that God has lighted for us (compare Psalm 119:105). When we live a life that is directed by God's Word, we have fellowship and Christ's blood cleanses us of all sin. Notice that "*walk in the light*" does not mean sinless perfection, because if it did, there would be no sins for the blood to cleanse. The point, therefore, is

that a person can live a Christian life ("*walk in the light*") even though he may sometimes sin through ignorance and weakness.

Verses 8,10. The fact is that we all sin. No one lives absolutely above sin. As long as we are in the flesh we will have weaknesses and shortcomings. You are no different in this from any other Christian. It is this fact that makes the blood of Christ so vital to us. We are in constant need of the forgiveness He provides.

Verse 9. This verse tells us what we must do about our sins. We are to confess them. Remember that an alien sinner is required to be baptized for the remission of his sins. But after baptism we need only to confess them to be forgiven. To confess sins means to penitently acknowledge them, asking for forgiveness. Notice how certain it is that God forgives our sins when we confess them.

Chapter 2, verse 1. John, however, did not write these things to make us think sin does not matter. Instead, they are written "*that*

ye sin not." That is, that you make it your aim to overcome sin. No one walking in the light will want to commit sin. One who thinks he can just go ahead and sin now while thinking he can easily get forgiveness later does not really understand what it means to walk in the light.

Verses 1, 2. Still, when we are weak, when we do fail to do right, Jesus Christ has died to save us. God never fails to forgive His penitent children.

Verses 3-6. The way we know that we have the right relationship with God is by obeying His commands. Though we must admit that our obedience is imperfect, still we can know whether we have been baptized, whether we have quit deliberate acts of sin, whether we worship faithfully, etc.

A simple summary of the assurance of these verses might be worded this way: You know you have become a Christian. You are trying to live a Christian life. You know you often fail in this. But you confess your sins to God and to your brethren, and you know you are forgiven. Thus, by the grace of God and the cleansing power of Jesus' blood, you know you are God's child and that if you live and die in Him, you are on your way to heaven. †

David Pharr is the preacher for the church of Christ in Clinton, Tennessee, U.S.A.

What Sayest Thou of Him? (John 9:17)

He is **fairer** than the fairest
(Psalm 45:2).

He is **dearer** than the dearest (Ephesians 1:6).

He is **nearer** than the nearest (Matthew 28:20).

He is **humbler** than the humblest (Matthew 11:29).

He is **purier** than the purest
(1 Peter 1:19; 2:22).

He is **richer** than the richest (Ephesians 1:17,18).

He is **holier** than the holiest (Acts 4:27).

He is **mightier** than the mightiest (Romans 8:37).

He is **greater** than the greatest (Luke 1:32).

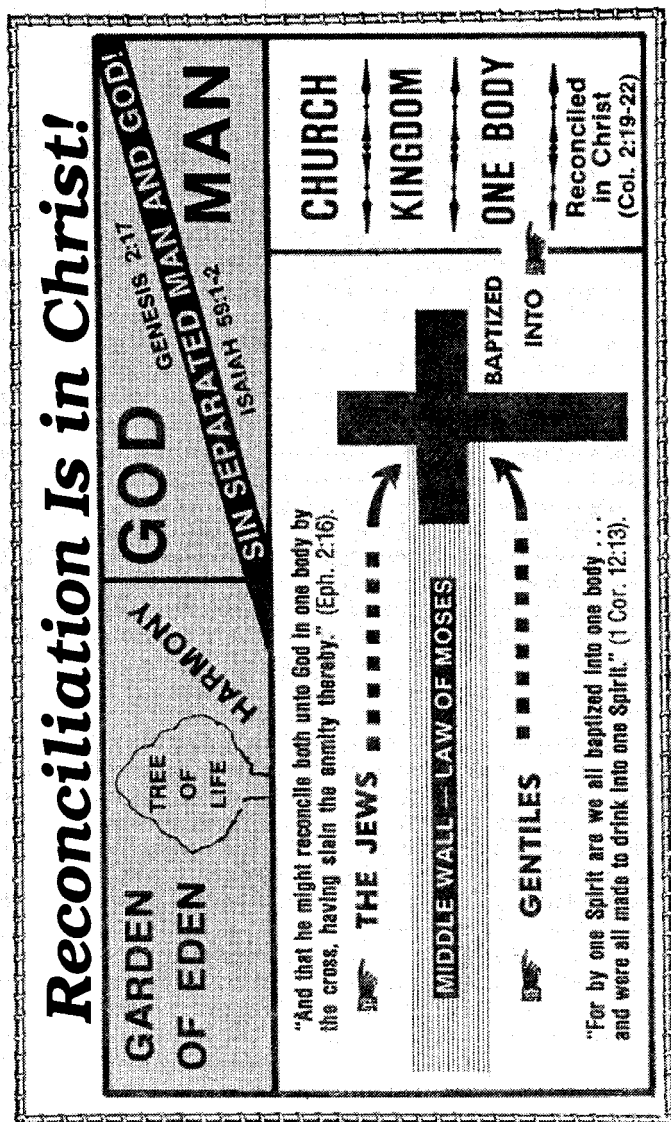
He is **sweeter** than the sweetest
(Song of Solomon 5:16).

He is **gentler** than the gentlest (2 Corinthians 10:1).

He is **higher** than the highest (Ecclesiastes 5:8).

Can you say, "**He is my Saviour**" (Luke 1:47)?

— Anonymous



Dillard Thurman

A Description of the Church

Jerry L. Davidson

Introduction:

1. Everybody has a name and a social security number, along with other descriptive features (gender, race, fingerprints, and blood type, etc.).
2. An individual can be identified by knowing certain characteristics. The church of the Bible can be identified by certain marks that are found in the Bible.
3. The New Testament church can be restored anywhere in the world by following the biblical pattern.

I. The founder and builder of the church is Jesus Christ

(Matthew 16:18).

II. Christ is the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11).

III. The church was established in Jerusalem in 33 A.D. (Isaiah 2:2,3, Acts 2:47).

IV. Christ is the only head of the church (Colossians 12:18; Ephesians 1:22,23).

V. The church's only rule of faith is the inspired scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16,17; Romans 10:17)

VI. Specific instructions for truth-seekers today are found in the New Testament (New Covenant). See Hebrews 1:1,2; 9:13-16.

VII. The importance of being in the church is stressed by the fact that Christ paid for the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7).

VIII. The church has descriptive names.

A. Collectively, the church is identified as:

1. Church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2).
2. House of God (1 Timothy 3:15).
3. Church of the Firstborn (Hebrews 12:23).
4. Churches of Christ (Romans 16:16).

B. Individually, believers are called:

1. Christians (Acts 11:26).
2. Disciples (Acts 11:26).
3. Saints (1 Corinthians 1:2).
4. Brethren (Galatians 6:1).

IX. The worship of the church is described in the New Testament.

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- A. Worship must be rendered "*in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:14).
- B. The day for weekly worship is "*the first day of the week*" (Sunday), according to Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2.
- C. The acts or avenues of worship are:
 - 1. Singing (vocal music) — (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19).
 - 2. Praying (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:1,2).
 - 3. Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29).
 - 4. Preaching and reading (2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Timothy 4:13).
 - 5. Giving (collection) — (1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:7).
- X. The terms for salvation and becoming a member of the church are described in the New Testament scriptures.**
 - A. Hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17).
 - B. Believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6).
 - C. Repenting of sin (Acts 17:30).
 - D. Confessing Christ (Romans 10:8-10).
 - E. Being baptized (immersed) — (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).
 - F. Upon being converted to Christ, one is added to the church (Acts 2:41,47).
 - G. A member of the church lives faithfully to God (1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 10:23-26).
- XI. Church (congregations) that are fully organized have:**
 - A. Elders who are appointed to be overseers (Acts 14:23; 20:17,18; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).
 - B. Deacons who have special ministries assigned them (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).
 - C. NOTE: According to the New Testament, the church has no higher organization than what is found in the local congregation — thus, each congregation is independent and autonomous.
- XII. The church being the body of Christ, He is the savior of the body** (Colossians 1:18,24; Ephesians 5:23,24).

Conclusions:

- 1. All of the foregoing points are earmarks of the church in the Bible.
- 2. Having the guidance and comfort of the Scriptures, believers are equipped spiritually in living the Christian life (2 Timothy 3:16,17; Hebrews 4:12). †

Jerry L. Davidson is a preacher of the Gospel who serves as an instructor at International Bible College, Florence, Alabama, U.S.A.

The Divine Calling

J.C. Choate

Hebrews 3:1

INTRODUCTION:

1. There are many callings.
 - a. The call to a vocation.
 - b. The call to responsibility.
 - c. The call of the world.
 - d. The call of death.
2. The important calling is the holy calling.
3. It may be answered or rejected.

DISCUSSION:

A. The deceit that is related to this subject:

1. Many believe that they are called of God by a direct operation of the Spirit upon their heart.
 - a. Some have "a dream".
 - b. Others see some "sign".
 - c. Still others hear "a wee small voice".
2. Then there are those who believe that they are called in some miraculous manner to preach.
3. None of these things are actually scriptural.

B. Those who do the calling, according to the Bible:

1. God calls us (Romans 11:29).
2. Christ calls us (Matthew 11:28-30).
3. The gospel calls us (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
4. The church calls us (Revelation 22:17).
5. The word calls us (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

C. The character of the divine calling:

1. It is a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9).
2. It is a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1).

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

D. The calling itself:

1. One is called to believe in God (Hebrews 11:6).
2. One is called to repent of his sins (Acts 17:30).
3. One is called to confess Christ (Matthew 10:32).
4. One is called to be baptized (Mark 16:16).
5. One is called to be a member of the church (Ephesians 5:23).
6. One is called to be a Christian (1 Peter 4:16).
7. One is called to worship God (John 4:24).
8. One is called to do the works of God (Philippians 2:12).
9. One is called to be faithful to the Lord (Revelation 2:10).
10. One is called to make his calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10).

E. The purpose of this calling:

1. That one might have peace (1 Corinthians 7:15).
2. That one might have liberty (Galatians 5:13).
3. That one might have hope (Ephesians 4:4).
4. That one might have salvation (1 Timothy 6:12).

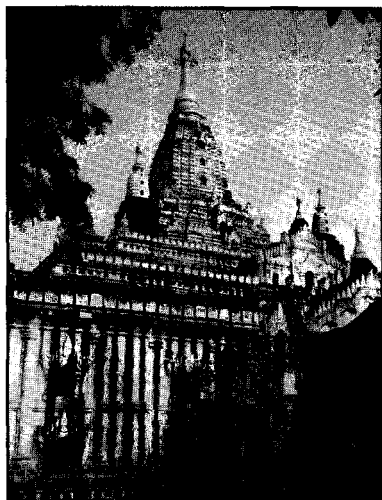
CONCLUSION:

1. It is not enough to hear the Lord's call — one must answer it to be saved.
2. Also, one must follow the Lord's will in order to answer his call.
3. Those who answer his call are blessed accordingly — therefore, make the right decision. †

J.C. Choate, Editor-in-Chief of *The Voice of Truth International*, also works with radio and literature programs in India and Asia.

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble. — 2 Peter 1:10

Myanmar, the Golden Land



Myanmar — the old British “Burma” — is rightly called “the Golden Land”. It is a beautiful tropical country, stretching 1275 miles along the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. Her neighbor on the west is India, with China and Thailand lying to the east. Mountains surround Myanmar on the west, north and east, “hill country” that is largely undeveloped and is inhabited by many tribal groups. The interior is heavily forested, with navigable rivers running through the rich and habitable valleys.

Though Buddhism began in India, it eventually became the religion of most of the people of Myanmar. The Shwedagon “Golden Pagoda” in Yangon (Rangoon) is a huge temple, begun

2500 years ago. The central stupa, 326 feet high, is covered with 8,688 solid gold slabs, said to be worth more than the gold held in the vaults of the Bank of England. The tip of the stupa is set with 5448 diamonds, and with 2,317 rubies, sapphires and topaz. Each year, faithful Buddhists buy more gold leaf to plaster on the stupas and monuments throughout the country, believing that these sacrifices earn merits that will enable them to be born into a more pleasurable existence in the next reincarnation.

The earliest inhabitants of Myanmar seem to have been displaced by “Burmese” who arrived from the area of Tibet before the 9th century. Later the Chinese conquered the country, and it was governed by the Shans until the 16th

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

century. At the end of three wars, Britain gained control over all of Burma in 1886 and ruled until independence was granted January 4, 1948. The Japanese occupied Burma during 1941-45 of World War II, involving the Allies in much flying and military activity "over the hump" — over the Himalayas and Mount Everest. Countless miles of temporary corrugated steel runways were laid as needed, and they were abandoned when the war was over. Today, 2x8 strips of those runways serve as fencing, sewer covers, partial walls around property, and many other surprising uses! Their design is such a familiar part of the scene that some newer concrete walls have been patterned after them. But they serve as a continual reminder of history — of occupation, war, and liberation.

Rangoon was built, or rebuilt, during the time of British control. It was laid out according to a plan, with most of the buildings being four stories, beautifully designed, and in perfect order along wide straight streets. In that era, Burma was the richest country in Southeast Asia, but after independence General Ne Win gained control. He

bound the economy in the chains of socialism, driving out the Indians and Chinese who had been beneficial leaders in civil service and commerce. The country went into a period of extreme isolation from the rest of the world, and for nearly 30 years time seemed to stand still. No construction, no repairs, no painting seemed to be done to anything; business dragged to starvation level, with prices soaring and wages nearly nothing. Finally, because of civil unrest, Ne Win abdicated power. Political turmoil has followed, with a socialistic, military government still being in control.

The Burmese people, following a conservative form of Buddhism mixed with ancient traditions of idolatrous worship (similar to the worship of "saints" in Catholicism),



Rangoon is rapidly taking its place as a modern, thriving city of the East.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

and animism, have also seen strong movements developed by denominational missionaries. Baptist and Christian Church preachers have had great influence, especially in the tribal areas.

As a people, the Burmese are extremely gentle and polite, soft-spoken, and hospitable. It was a wonderful thing when the first glimmers of spiritual light began to shine among them. In 1973, an Indian Christian by the name of J.J. Rock was living in Rangoon, working with Indian Airlines. He met Garth Vertannes who was one of the air controllers at the airport. With the passing of time Garth, his wife Sheila, and their daughter and son were converted. With their baptisms, toward the end of 1974, the Lord's church was begun in the country. The work of reaching others was very slow because of government restrictions about advertising, renting a public meeting place, and doing public teaching. However, the Vertannes themselves were very solid, conducting worship in their home and encouraging others to hear the gospel. The number grew slowly, and in 1977 a young man by the name of George Achard obeyed the gospel. He had first heard the message over Radio Sri Lanka and had taken a correspondence course through James and Eva Johnson in south India. George

taught his long-time friend, Gertrude, as well as her sister, and with the passing of time George and Gertrude married.

Though conversions have been slow, most have been very stable after their baptism. George developed into an outstanding teacher of God's word. He says that the passage of Scripture that served as a catalyst for him was 1 Corinthians 1:13: "*Is Christ divided....?*" "The question put me on to everything. The only answer to such a question is to restore everything back to what it was before [all the religious division took place]. This is the very special fact for me and personally I would like to share it with the whole world."

In 1994 Betty Khome returned to Rangoon after attending the National Bible Institute which is operated by Christians in Madras, India. She located George and the church, and put them in touch with Saing Htang, a Christian from the North Chin Hills, along the India/Burmese border. Through this meeting, George learned that there are several churches in that area, the truth having been brought over from Northeast India through personal teaching and literature.

Fellowship has now been established among these brethren. The church is growing and the future looks bright. †

Exciting Things Are Happening in Myanmar!

J. C. Choate

When my family and I were unable to go to India in 1961, we applied for visas for Burma but never received a reply. It was about that time that the military, socialistic government there was closing down all missionary work in the country and strengthening the policy of political isolation from the rest of the world.

I first went to Rangoon in 1963 with Gordon Hogan and Glenn Norton. We had attend the Asian Mission Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand and were on our way back to Pakistan, our country of choice for mission efforts after India and Burma proved to be closed to us. Visas at that time were good for only 24 hours! Later, in 1965, my family and I went by Rangoon on our way to the US after spending four years in Karachi, Pakistan, establishing and nurturing the Lord's church. I returned in 1966 to study with a family that Parker Henderson had studied with during the time he work in Thailand.

Later, Burma changed her policy and began to give visas for seven days. A few more years passed and

they stepped that up to two weeks. Now they allow 30 days! And we were surprised recently to see a poster at the airport which said that if one wanted more time in Burma he should go to a particular office downtown. It went on to say, that if one didn't want to do that, at the time of departure he could pay three dollars for each day of over-staying, up to one month, and beyond that, \$5.00 a day! That is saying that if one is willing to buy his time, he can actually stay as long as he chooses! How times have changed and thank God for that!

Burma itself has changed. The city of Rangoon has cleaned up, entered into a massive building program, and most anything needed is available now. There are also daily flights into the country from several different cities. Access is easier, restrictions on time have been relaxed, living conditions are no longer stringent. There is a catch, though, for those who would like to make working trips to Burma. Upon entrance, each person must buy \$300.00 of Burmese dollars. These may be used for hotel, food,

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

and local travel expenses, but they cannot be reconverted to US dollars or carried outside the country.

Over the last several years, my wife and I have been to Burma numerous times to help and encourage the small congregation in Rangoon. We have taken tracts, books, filmstrips and projector, along with medicines, and other needed items that were not available at the time. The work was very slow and difficult since the church was unable to rent a hall or advertise, and was restricted in the printing of literature. We finally were able to print one book — a correspondence course, **Bible Keys** — with the help of a religious friend.

1997 was the year that turned things around for the church in Burma and we are so excited about prospects for the future. It was actually in 1996 that we met two brothers from the North Chin Hills State (in Northwest Burma) who had come to Rangoon (now called Yangon). They were already members of the church and told of congregations in their part of the country. They had learned the truth through contacts with Christians across the border in Northeast India, brethren who shared books we had had translated and printed in the Paite language, the language common to people on both sides of the border. They told of approximately

300 members of the church, with one congregation having a membership of 200 and others with smaller numbers. One of the brothers decided to stay on in Rangoon to help with the local work.

After our return home we encouraged brother and sister Daniel Hamm to go for two weeks' work. While there they met a man from a "Bible Institute" and converted him. He had already been reading our books and magazines. Following this, the local brethren arranged a two-month Bible School and others were converted.

When Betty and I returned to Rangoon in May of 1997 we were able, with the help of the local brethren, to teach and baptize nine people, most of whom were members of our new brother's immediate family. One man, also, was converted from the North Chin Hills State, and still another brother had come down from that State to visit and study with us.

A second school was organized for October and November of 1997. Invitations were extended to members of the church in North Chin Hills State, along with non-Christians who might want to attend from that area and from Rangoon. As it turned out, around 40 enrolled for the school. A few ladies participated but most of the students were mature men, some in their 60's who

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

had been elders in denominational churches. One man walked 150 miles to attend. None asked for money but they did ask for our prayers since they would be returning to face those they had previously fellowshiped as brethren.

In October of 1997 some brethren came from Laos and Thailand to teach in the school. Wayne Barrier and I also agreed to help, teaching during November. We were there over a period of three Sundays. Nine were baptized; four had already been baptized in October, and after our departure two more obeyed the Lord. For the entire school, 15 were baptized.

During 1997 approximately 35 were obedient to the Lord.

On the third Sunday we were there, 53 met for worship, the largest assembly of Christians in Rangoon that we know about. It was a thrilling experience to be part of such an event.

Plans have been made for a six-week school in October and November of 1998. We are also laying the ground work to establish a permanent school or college to provide Christian training for the men and women of the north, and also for people from other parts of the country who are anxious to have this type of schooling. †



About forty participated in the classes conducted during October and November of 1997. Fifteen of this number obeyed the Lord in baptism, adding to the strength of Christians in Rangoon and in the North.

Dear Sirs:

I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____.

Please send your special prices for WBS teachers and their students.

I want to send \$25.00 per month, for a box of 35 copies of each issue of the magazine as they are printed.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Dear Sirs:

I want to **MAKE A GIFT** subscription of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** to the address below. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____.

The church has agreed to send \$25.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiple) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed. These are to be used in the work of the local church.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
2148 N. National
Springfield, MO 65803

Att. Byron Nichols

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

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
2148 N. National
Springfield, MO 65803

Att. Byron Nichols

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 17 (from page 70)

1. "Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You."
2. "That they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."
3. God; glory; God; world.
4. God's name.
5. "...all things which You have given Me are from You."
6. (one) that Jesus came forth from God
(two) that God had sent Him.
7. "...all Mine are Yours; Yours; Mine.
8. To keep them, in His name, united as God and Christ are one.
9. Because they were not of the world.
10. No; That God would keep them from the evil one.
11. "...them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
12. He prayed for those who would believe through the teaching of the Apostles, *"that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."*
13. The glory that God had given Him, so that they would be united.
14. Through their oneness with each other and God.
15. That they might be with Him where He would go.
16. Four times, verses 6, 11, 12, 26.
17. Himself; the disciples; *"those who will believe in Me through their word."*

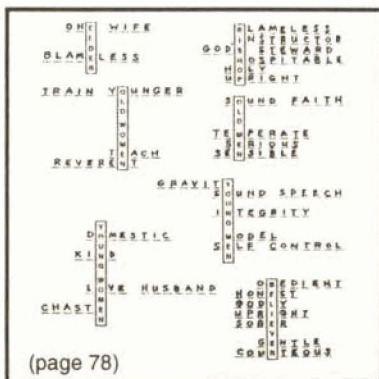
Who Am I?

(from page 88)



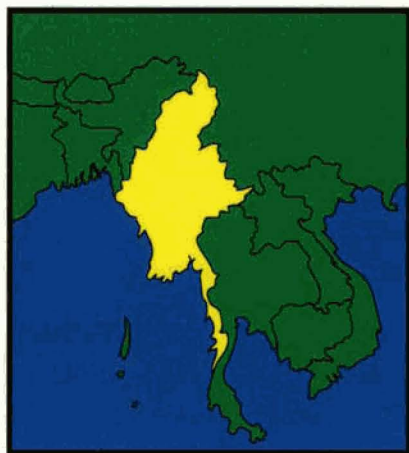
Ezekiel

The Book of Titus



(page 78)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



Union of Myanmar



Government: Military Regime
Head of State (Chairman):
Senior General Than Shwe

Secular Facts:

Location: Along the eastern coasts of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, in Southeast Asia, stretching 1275 miles north to south on the Indochinese Peninsula.

Land Mass: 261,220 sq. mi.

Population: 46,527,000, of whom 26% are urban and 74% are rural.

Major Cities: Yangon, Mandalay, Moulmein, Pegu, Bossein.

Language: Burmese, and tribal languages in the hills.

Ethnic Groups: Burman, 69%; Shan, 8.5%; Karen, 6.2%; other tribal groups.

Literacy: 81%.

Religion: Buddhist, 89%; Believers in Christ, 4.9%; Muslim, 3.8%; others, 2.2%.

Economy: *Natural Resources:* Timber, tin, copper, precious stones. *Crops* are corn, pulses, sugar cane, and rice. *Major trading partners:* Japan, China, Southeast Asia. Myanmar is reported to be the world's largest producer of illicit opium poppy.

Monetary Unit: khyat and the Burmese dollar.

The Church:

Congregations: There are less than ten congregations in the entire country, three in the Yangon area, and others in the North Chin Hills, bordering India. These would number approximately 400 Christians.

History: The earliest converts to true Christianity came in the 70's when Garth Vertannes and his family were baptized in Yangon. A small congregation developed through this initial effort, with missionaries from Thailand, J.C. Choate of India, and others, continuing to visit Burma occasionally.

George Achard heard the gospel over Radio Sri Lanka, took a correspondence course from India, and was baptized after meeting the Vertannes.

Through contacts across the Burmese/Indian border, and the use of books and magazines translated and printed in northeast India, the gospel filtered into the Chin Hills of northwest Burma. A few of these Christians were able to attend Bible training schools in India and returned to Burma as preachers. In Rangoon, a two-month school of intensive study is conducted by local brethren each year with the help of missionaries from neighboring countries and the US.