

# V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME FIVE \$4.00

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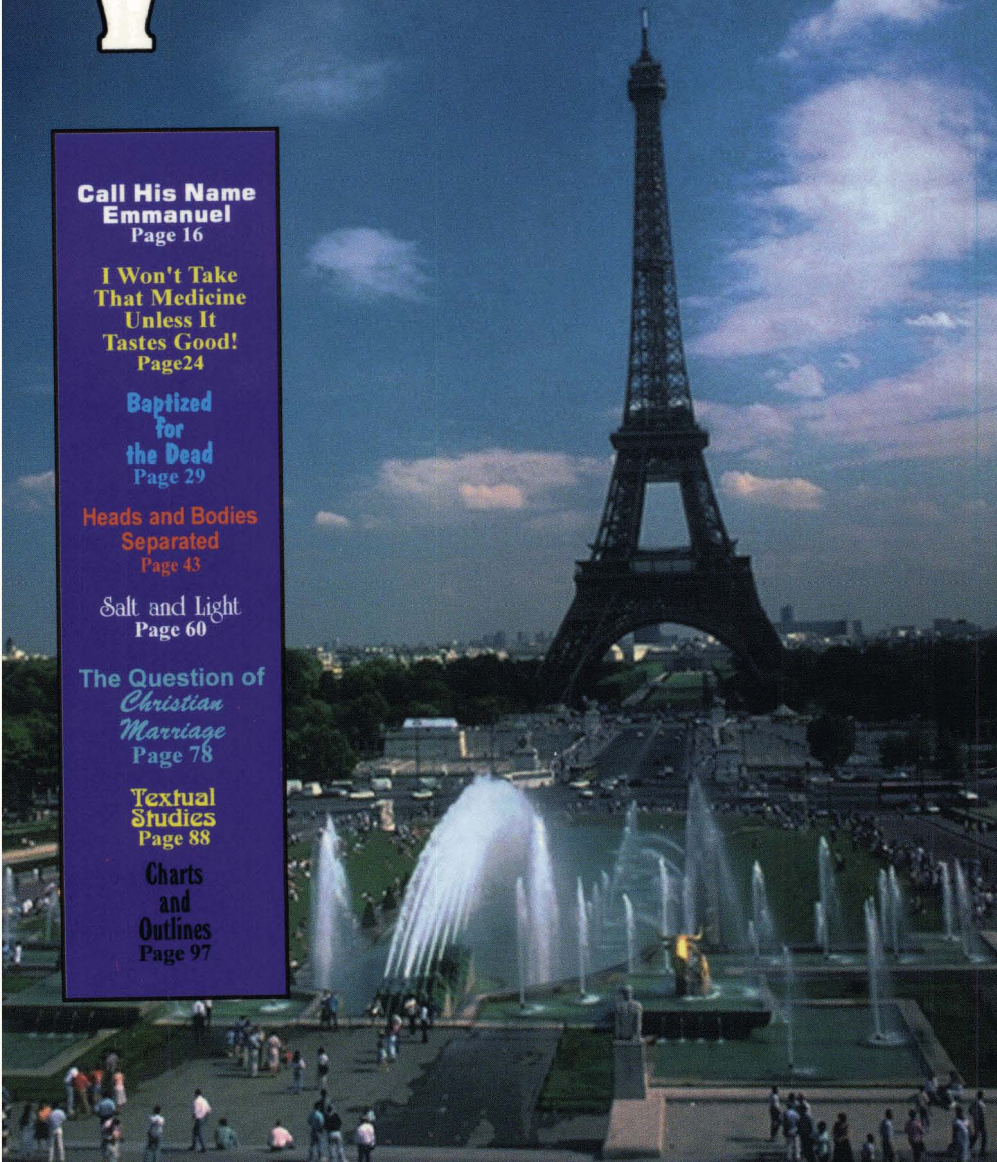
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# THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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## A WORD ...

The life's pursuit of many people is for wealth, money — riches, as men count riches.

The apostle Paul warned the young preacher, Timothy, "But those who **desire to be rich** fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Timothy 6:9).

The great tragedy is when the Christian's desire is for money. He rationalizes that it is not wealth he seeks, but just "enough" to be secure. So his central topic of conversation is money, and he and his whole family are working night and day to achieve that elusive "enough" — too often at the cost of their very souls.

But the Christian whose values are formed by God's word realizes that his focus must be on God rather than on financial gain. *God, in turn, promises to add to the lives of His children the physical things they need* (Matthew 6:33,34). What greater security could one want?



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# THE NAME OF CHRIST

J. C. CHOATE  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What greater name could we wear as individuals and as the Lord's church than the name of Christ? Peter said, "*Neither is*

*there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).

Paul declared, "*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named...Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen*" (Ephesians 3:14,15,21). If that name is good enough for heaven, then it should be good enough for earth. *To be ashamed of that name on earth will mean that the Lord will deny us before His Father in heaven* (Matthew 10:32,33).

Christ said that all power or authority belongs to Him in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). Hear now the words of the Apostle Paul: "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every*



tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11). How can one read those words without seeing the greatness and importance of *the name of Christ*, and could anyone think for a minute that *some other name would be equal to His*?

In Acts 11:26 we are told that the disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch. After Paul had preached to King Agrippa, Agrippa said that he had almost been persuaded to become a *Christian* (Acts 26:28). Peter said, "Yet if any man suffer as a *Christian*, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter 4:16).

It follows, then, that when one hears the message of Christ, believes in Christ (John 14:1), confesses with his mouth that Christ is the Son of God (Romans 10:10), and is baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38), he is added to the Lord's Family (Acts 2:47; 2 Timothy 2:19) and becomes known as a Christian, a follower of Christ. From that point in his life *he wears the name of Christ*, to identify himself, and to give honor to Him as his Saviour, Lord, and Master.

The scriptures tell us that Christ had promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18), that it began in Jerusalem as a result of a large number of people *hearing the gospel of Christ and obeying it* (Acts 2:1-41), and that *the Lord added to it all*

those who were being saved (Acts 2:38).

Christ was *the Rock, the sure Foundation, upon which the church was built* (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:11), Paul tells us that Christ *died* for the church (Ephesians 5:25) and *purchased it with His own blood* (Acts 20:28). He also says that Christ is the *Head* of it, the *Saviour* of it, and that it *wears His name* (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23; Romans 16:16). Finally, Christ will return one day to *receive His church* and to take it to heaven to present it to His Father.

Paul said, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). The Hebrew writer referred to Christ as having a *more excellent name* than the angels (Hebrews 1:4). James spoke of it as a *worthy name* by which ye are called (James 2:7). And John wrote of the Christians at Pergamos as being those who were *holding fast to the Lord's name* (Revelation 2:13).

From these passages we can see that the scriptures support the fact that in becoming obedient to the Lord we are to take His name personally and collectively to wear. Be assured the Lord knows those who are His and whether one is in position to be called by His name. What an honor it should be for us to be called Christians, and woe be to us

if we do not wear His name or if we bring shame and disgrace upon it.

In the first century, when the church had its beginning, there were no denominational groups. Therefore, regardless of the descriptive term or name used — whether it was “the church”, “the body of Christ”, “the house of God”, “the church of God”, “the church of the Firstborn”, or “the church of Christ” — everyone knew that it was the one church which belonged to the Lord. Any of these biblical designations could be used without causing confusion.

Today, however, there are more than a thousand denominational groups claiming belief in Christ. All of them have different doctrines and names and titles, some of which come from the Bible, while most were thought up by their founders or leaders. With all of the resulting confusion and division, it is wise for the Lord’s people to use only one of the biblical designations as a brotherhood-wide identification, to keep down confusion about us. In this way, Christians traveling from city to city, or to other countries, can easily locate the Lord’s church.

Of course, the use of one name for public identification does not

conflict with what the Bible teaches on the subject, and Christians certainly would be taught still that the church is also “the church of God”, the “family of God”, the “household of God”, “the church of the Firstborn”, etc. The fact is, if we *are* the Lord’s church we *will* wear His name. For sure, if we do not wear His name, we are not His church.

Are you a Christian or are you not a Christian? Are you a member of the church of Christ or are you not a member of the church of Christ? The name you wear or don’t wear tells much of the story.

When Christ comes again, He will be looking for those individuals, for that Family, for that church, which wears His name, and wears it according to the directives in His Word. If you are not found wearing His name, He will pass you by, because you don’t belong to Him, you are not a part of His Family.

Jesus Christ is “*the way, the truth, and the life.*” He said that no one will come to the Father, or will go to heaven, except by him (John 14:6). As Paul said, “*Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen*” (Ephesians 3:21). †

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**Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in heaven.**

**But whoever denies Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in heaven (Matthew 10:32,33).**



## Misery In Marriage

Byron Nichols  
Managing Editor

Surely we all hurt as we look around and see so much heartache and misery in marriages with which we are familiar. There is that ever-growing number of divorces, and then there is an increasingly large number of marriages that have failed, but where the husband and wife are still living

together and have no intention of separating or divorcing. We need to realize that it is very possible for a marriage to have failed and the couple still live together until death separates them.

There are so many complex marriage and divorce situations that call for so much wisdom to deal with that the right answer is seemingly impossible to find at times.

What is it all coming to? Where will it all end? What can we do? Why can't young people see the messes that are bound to develop?

There is definitely a need for the church to work harder at educating the young regarding marriage from a Bible standpoint. There is also a real need to educate from the standpoint of common everyday situations in married life.

The church certainly needs to teach what the Bible says about the various aspects of marriage, and those considering marrying need to give serious thought to the responsibilities that accompany the marriage vows. But what about the parents? Surely parents have a great responsibility to be training their children all along regarding marriage, and even more so as they approach marrying age.

It is my deep conviction that we need to be teaching folks to marry only Christians, but much more than that — only faithful Christians. There are several very important questions a person planning to marry needs to ask before going through with the planned marriage, but I believe the most important one is: **Will this person, as he/she is right now, help or hinder my chances of going to heaven?** It is far too dangerous to count on a significant increase in a mate's spirituality later. We must think in terms of the

*present* degree of spirituality, not what may develop. When both partners enter the marriage relationship already reasonably spiritually minded in relation to their age, they will both be very likely to continue to grow in spirituality throughout their married life.

Marriage counselors in general, and leaders of all religious groups, agree in their advice that people will significantly increase the likelihood of having a successful marriage by marrying within their own religious group. Otherwise, the problems are always present. *Always*. Even in those religiously-divided marriages where there is no direct opposition presented by the non-Christian, there is the lack of unity of priorities and purpose. There is the confusion that is presented to the children involved as they see plainly a very important matter of difference between their parents.

What can we do to avoid and eliminate many of these problems, what can be done to improve the situation? (1) Elders are to be shepherds and watch for souls. They need to do pre-marital counseling. They need to counsel, not just when they are invited, but in many cases where no invitation has been extended. How can elders be truly concerned about the flock and ignore situations that are of grave danger to the members of the flock? (2) Preachers need to preach more on the various facets of the marriage situation. Much more public preaching and teaching is needed to educate and remind us all as to what the will of God is regarding marriage responsibilities. (3) Teachers need to use the classroom to teach more of God's will on marriage. Those Scriptures dealing specifically with this subject should be taught in such a way that they will forever be instilled within the hearts of the young, so that when they are ready to get married they will know what kind of mate to look for and what kind of mate to be. (4) The church as a whole must honor and respect those to whom honor is due, including those married couples who are a living demonstration of the wisdom of God's plan for men and women in this most intimate, yet sometimes difficult, relationship of marriage. (5) Parents need to pray, set the right example in their own marriage, lovingly teach and train their children relative to marriage and its responsibilities, and teach their children regarding the proper priorities in life. (6) Young people must accept their responsibility to be receptive to the Bible and to wise counsel. Then, if the elders, preachers, teachers, the church as a whole, and parents are faithfully united in declaring the counsel of God on the subject of marriage, those beginning this most important adventure will do so on a solid foundation that will serve them well.

May the Lord help us to improve our marriages, and may we be more gravely concerned about helping others to choose the right kind of spouse and to be the right kind themselves. The eternal destiny of many is at stake.†

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**OUR GOAL**

Realizing that the responsibility given to the church by our Lord was the evangelization of the world, it seemed imperative to us that there be a publication for the church on a world-wide scale. **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** is our answer to that need.

Our goal is to use this magazine as no other has been used in the history of the church. In addition to the mailing of bundles to more than 50 countries, individual volumes have been printed for free distribution in 10 nations outside the United States.

We urge mission-minded churches to help us in our stand for the truth by supporting this work. Please call 601-283-1192.

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**My "Enemy"**

How often is it true for all of us:  
"I am my own worst enemy"?

No outside force can hurt me  
As I hurt myself . . . .

- / am the one
- Allowing attitudes
- Which close the longed-for doors;
- It is *my* pessimism
- That clouds *my* sunny days;
- / waste the hours of *my* life
- Procrastinating,
- Intending to do
- But never buckling down;
- It is *my* smallness
- That limits vision,
- My* jealousies stunting friendships,
- My* mouth causing trouble,
- My* lack of perception
- Which never sees *me* as *I* am,
- My* good intentions
- That this "enemy" neglects.

I am what I am.  
I cannot be bigger than myself.  
I cannot be what I am not.

Yes, as Pogo said,  
"We have met the enemy,  
And he is us."

I am my own worst enemy.  
I must take *myself* with me  
Wherever I may go  
And be with others only what I am . . . .

The lesson I must learn:  
If I want my world to be improved,  
I must improve *myself*.

— Betty Burton Choate  
from Sun and Shadows

# *Man's Need For God*

## **Ancil Jenkins**

How tragic to have a false knowledge of God. A friend of mine recounted a conversation he had with an acquaintance. My friend said that in the middle of their discussion she suddenly spoke of spiritual matters. She startled him by saying, "There probably isn't a God, and if there is, He might be a she."

What has brought man to this and other false pictures of God? It is not that God has failed to adequately reveal Himself to man. Nature is man's beginning textbook about God (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19,20). The Bible is our written source of knowledge of Him. He gave His final, fullest revelation in the person of Jesus (John 5:39; 20:30,31). Jesus told His disciples, "*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'*" (John 14:9; see also Colossians 1:19; 2:3, 9; Hebrews 1:3).

It seems there are two factors that keep man from knowing God as he should. One is man's intentional ignorance. Although God has provided man with the opportunity to know Him, many see little need or use of knowing Him.

The pride of man hinders his awareness of God. Man's only proper response to God is to praise and honor Him for what He is. This is done by worship in song and prayer. It is characterized by a sacrificial lifestyle. It is even done in the way we eat and drink (1 Corinthians 10:31).

What is the inevitable result of man's refusal to know God and glorify Him? Romans 1 presents two disastrous results. Man degenerates deeper and deeper into sin. His worship becomes idolatry, and his lifestyle becomes sensual. The result is acts that are perverse and are worthy of death (Romans 1:28-32).

Even more horrifying is God's response. Paul speaks of God giving up on such individuals (Romans 1:24,26,28). The inevitable and eventual result of a failure to know God is damnation. When a person deliberately refuses to know God, God reacts the same way.

How these thoughts should cause us to look to God's Word to see if we really know Him as He is! If we do not, let us seek to know Him, for only in Him is life that is life indeed. †

**Ancil Jenkins is a writer and preacher in Miami, Florida, U. S. A.**

# Doing The Father's Will

Matthew 21:23-32

Gary C. Hampton

## A Challenge to Christ's Authority

Jesus was walking in the temple area when the chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people confronted Him (Mark 11:27). They came at this time to expose Jesus as one who had no authority to teach in or cleanse the temple. It was likely their hope to retake their place as the dominant religious force in the lives of the Jewish people. So, they asked Him where He got His authority to do the things He did.

Jesus promised to answer if they would answer one question from Him. He asked them whether John's baptism was from heaven or men. The problem for these members of the Sanhedrin was readily apparent. If they said John baptized under heaven's authority, He would ask them why they did not believe him. They, after all, had neither been baptized by him nor yielded to the one who came after him, that is, Jesus (John 1:6,7,15,32-34; 3:22-36; 10:40-42). If they said his authority was from men, they would be faced with the anger of the multitudes who believed him. So, they said they did not know. By so answering, they showed an unwillingness to yield to those empowered by God. Therefore, Jesus said He would not answer their question.

## The Repentant Son

Jesus then told a parable about a father with two sons. The sons clearly represent the two classes of people among the Jews of Christ's day. The first class was that of the common Jewish people. In the parable, the father went to his first son and asked him to go into his vineyard and work. Though he was asked nicely, the son said, "*I will not.*" The publicans and harlots had rejected God's will, as could be seen by their sinful lives. Like this son, they openly refused to do God's bidding.

Later, the first son repented and went to work in his father's vineyard. Similarly, the publicans and harlots had yielded to the teachings of John (Matthew 3:1-6). When Jesus passed through Jericho, He met a publican named Zacchaeus. This man determined to make restitution for any wrongs

## **GOD**

he had done the people, and got to hear Jesus say, “*Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham*” (Luke 19:1-10). In other words, the common folks repented and went when they heard God’s Word proclaimed.

### **The Son Who Refused To Do The Father’s Will**

The second son represents the chief priests, scribes, and elders. When the father asked this son to go work in his vineyard, he immediately said he would. However, he never went. The Pharisees and others who considered themselves to be of the religious elite appeared to be anxious to do as God instructed. Yet, their lives showed disrespect for the Father’s wishes (Matthew 3:7-12). Matthew 23 is a record of Jesus’ scathing denunciation of their hypocritical response. They pretended to be quite religious while inwardly harboring vile sins.

### **Trapped By Their Own Response**

When Jesus asked which of the sons did the will of the father, they had to say the first. The answer now given to the Lord exposes the actions of the Sanhedrin as opposed to those of the publicans and harlots.

The religious leaders viewed the common people, especially the publicans and harlots, as having no special knowledge of God’s will. They saw them as being ignorant of God’s Word. They clearly did not see their response as giving anyone credibility (John 7:45-49).

### **Refusing God’s Spokesman**

Despite all of this, the publicans and harlots had recognized John as a prophet. They had heeded his call to repentance. The religious leaders had failed to respond to God’s call either before or after those they viewed as common sinners. The Pharisees demanded strict adherence to their demands for righteousness. John lived a righteous life. Yet, they refused to accept John as a spokesman in authority from God. The Lord knew such rejection showed the nature of their heart. There was no need for Him to openly proclaim that His authority had come from God. They would reject Him just as they had the Baptizer.

### **God Still Calls Us To Work In His Vineyard**


It is important that readers today see the parable as still applicable. All men today must still be called to repentance (Luke 24:46,47; 1 Timothy

## GOD

2:4). It is not enough to be a good moral person. Instead, each one who would be saved must obey the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21). Just as the father asked his sons to work "today," we must respond now to the Gospel call (Proverbs 27:1; 2 Corinthians 6:2). Further, it is possible to appear to be righteous to those around us without ever intending to do the will of the Father. We must recognize Jesus as God's spokesman for our time, and yield to the message He brought down from the Father (Hebrews 1:1-4). He made sure all truth was delivered by sending the Holy Spirit. We can know all that is necessary to have eternal life and be God-like (John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:3). †

**Gary C. Hampton is an evangelist in Valdosta, Georgia, U. S. A.**

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### Begin Today!

Dream not too much of what you will do tomorrow,  
How well you will work perhaps another year;  
Tomorrow's change you do not need to borrow  
Today is here . . .

Boast not too much of mountains you will master,  
The while you linger in the vale below;  
To dream is well, but plodding brings us faster  
To where we go . . .

Talk not too much about some new endeavor  
You mean to make a little later on;  
Who idles now will idle on forever  
Till life is done . . .

Swear not some day to break some habit's fetter,  
When this old year is dead and passed away,  
If you have need of living wiser, better . . .  
Begin Today!

— via Griffin Edifier

# There Is A God

## E. Claude Gardner

Look all around you and see the earth, water, mountains, rocks, trees, and myriad plants, animals, and human beings. They are tangible: they exist. How did they come into reality? One can make only two choices. There is a Supreme Being, the **one** living God who created the universe and all things in it. The other choice is that of the atheist who denies God. If there is no Creator, it would follow that our world somehow came into being as a matter of chance. The decision should be easy, because it is more reasonable to believe in God than to deny God and attempt to explain our origins on the basis of chance and accident. "*The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*" (Psalm 14:1).

Man and mountains did not make themselves, but it is self-evident they must have had a Maker, which is Almighty God. He is "*the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein*" (Acts 14:15). All Nature exclaims that God exists, for the psalmist sang, "*The heavens*

*declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork*" (Psalm 19:1).

The first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, starts with the assumption that God exists, and no arguments are given to prove it. Surely as man is made "*in the image of God*" (Genesis 1:27), he must come to the understanding that there is a God. Mankind universally worships a higher power than himself.

But some who accept a higher power believe in many gods. People fall prostrate before gods of wood and stone. Some worship other human beings; others worship animals, rivers, the sun, moon and stars; still others worship Satan. The Bible calls upon us to worship "*the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve*" (Matthew 4:10). Worship of the one true God forbids worship of icons, saints, popes, and ancestors.

The one eternal God is described in the Bible in a manner that we know He loves us, gives us hope and comfort, and has a desire and plan to eventually take us to



## GOD

heaven to live with Him eternally. Jesus said, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). *"... your Father (God) also is merciful"* (Luke 6:36). *The apostle Paul speaks of "the goodness of God"* (Romans 2:4). God offers one a new life of hope and forgiveness. A person can have a new beginning as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Who is the God of the Bible? He is holy, righteous, good, just, faithful in His promises, sovereign ruler, invisible, perfect, all-knowing, all-seeing, all-present, and from everlasting (2 Timothy 1:17; James 1:17; Matthew 19:17; 1 Peter 4:19; John 4:24; Acts 10:34,35; 1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 4:13, 1 Corinthians 10:26 and hundreds of other passages). He is worthy. We should bow down to Him in humble adoration.

Any and all nations that "forget God" are bound for crumbling and extinction (Psalm 9:17). This is as true for modern nations as it was for the ancient civilizations of Rome, Greece, and Chaldea.

God is one and one only, but He is made manifest in Three Persons: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:29; Ephesians 4:4-6).

God made man and placed him on this beautiful earth for a purpose — to seek and glorify God. Paul preached about God in Athens and declared, *"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is the Lord of heaven and earth — and hath made of one blood all nations of men — that they should seek the Lord"* (Acts 17:24,26,27). Our reason for being on earth is to seek God and to serve Him. When we come to Him with an obedient faith we will have a great reward in heaven. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

Do you believe in the personal, almighty God? If so, will you diligently seek Him by confessing your faith, turning from sin and Satan, and being immersed in water *"for the remission of sins"* (Acts 2:38)? Then you will have God as your Father, you will be one of God's children, and you will have brothers and sisters in the church, which is the family of God (Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:14-15; Romans 12:4,5). You will become a Christian (1 Peter 4:16). †

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

# CHRIST-CENTEREDNESS

## Leon Barnes

Christ is at the very heart of Christianity. Even the church gets its importance because of its relationship to Christ. He is the builder of the church (Matthew 16:18). He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The church is His body and *“the fullness of him who fills all in all”* (Ephesians 1:22,23). In Colossians 1:18 we read, *“He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence.”* The only other time the word “preeminence” is found in Scripture is in the book of 3 John, when the reference is made to Diotrephes loving to have the preeminence among the brethren, and there that spirit is condemned.

Every aspect of the church’s life is to place Christ at the very center. When we worship, we take the communion supper to remember His death, burial, and resurrection. When we sing, it is praise to God for the marvelous grace He showed in giving Christ as the atonement for our sins. When we pray, it is through the name and authority of Jesus, the Christ. The preaching should be centered in Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Even the organization of the church puts Christ as the head over all things to the church.

If we, as the body of Christ, keep the focus on Christ, the Lord and Savior, it will have a unifying effect on the entire church. It is when we take Christ from the spotlight and place one another under the light of examination that real troubles begin. Christ’s life is perfect. All of ours have mistakes, and many of them are very obvious.

But, understand, Christ-centeredness does not mean a failure to emphasize what Christ has taught in His Word. He is the one with all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). It is by the words of the Lord we will be judged in the last day (John 12:48). Respect for Christ must lead to submission to His will for our lives. *“Do you not know, to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants you are, whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?”* (Romans 6:16).

It is true, we need to shine the light on the Christ instead of on the church. It is true, He is to be the focus, rather than ourselves. But, it is not true that such a focus will do away with, or even lessen, the importance of

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either the church or the Scriptures. It certainly does not lessen the need for complete obedience to God.

What it will do is change our means of evangelism from "My church is better than yours" to "*Come see a man who told me all things I ever did. Could this be the Christ?*" The more those who come are led to focus on the greatness of our God and the marvel of His grace, the less the danger that they will be disappointed to learn that we, as the church, are not everything they thought we would be. We truly serve a perfect Lord, but we are not a perfect church, and we never have been. †

**Leon Barnes preaches for the Barrow Road church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, U. S. A.**

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### This God Can Do . . .

If God can hang the stars on high,  
Can paint the clouds that drift on by,  
Can swing the sun across the sky,  
What can He do for you?

If He can send a storm through space,  
And dot with trees the mountain's face,  
If He the sparrow's course can trace,  
What can He do for you?

If God can send us sunny days,  
And nature from her slumber raise,  
Till song birds lift their notes of praise,  
What can He do for you?

If God can do all of these things,  
Can count each little bird that sings,  
Control the universe that swings,  
What can He do for you?

If God can bring sweet peace to me,  
By Christ, Who hung upon the tree,  
And to my soul bring liberty,  
This He can do for YOU!

— Glenn E. Wagoner

# “Call His Name Emmanuel”

**Lewis G. Hale**

The angel of the Lord told Joseph, “A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

## **Big Bang?**

In science it has long been accepted that “nothing comes from nothing.” Yet, today many scientists have accepted the “Big Bang” theory. It assumes that there was once nothing, just a huge vacuum. Then there was a great explosion, and all existing matter came into being. Over a period of time it began to take form and design, even intelligence. All this from nothing! Yet, we are considered to be unintelligent to think that at one time there was nothing but an Almighty God, who in love and wisdom created all things.

## **God Is Revealed**

This God revealed Himself to His



creation. It is reasonable that a Creator would let His creation know what is expected of him, how to live, how to please the Creator. At first, all revelation was spoken. In the days of Moses, it began to be written down. This continued through the works of the prophets and the New Testament writers. This revelation we call the Bible.

## **Revealed Through His Son**

In God’s good time, He sent His Son to earth to become a man, to live and die as a human being. This Son is a revelation of God. Jesus said that the one who has seen Him has seen the Father. This Jesus was called “Emmanuel” because He was “*God with us,*” (Matthew 1:23). He now reigns at the right hand of God. But, strangely enough, He also dwells in the heart of every Christian. †

**Lewis G. Hale preaches for the Southwest congregation in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, U. S. A.**

# The City Of Damascus

**G. F. Raines**

Damascus, the very ancient capital of Syria in Asia, is said to be the oldest continuously populated city in the entire world. This city is renowned in the Christian world primarily because it was the city in which Saul of Tarsus was baptized into Christ. Please read Acts 22:1-16.

For many years, Damascus was a notable center of wealth, education, and power. The metalwork, silk brocades, steel sword blades, and wooden mosaics of Damascus are famous throughout the civilized world.

Josephus, the greatest of the uninspired Jewish historians, says that Damascus was founded by Uz, the son of Aram and grandson of Shem, a son of Noah!

Some of the historic things in Damascus have been preserved and are visited by many people every year; for example, the arch of the Temple of Jupiter, the palace and harem of the early Turkish rulers, the street called "Straight," and the old wall.

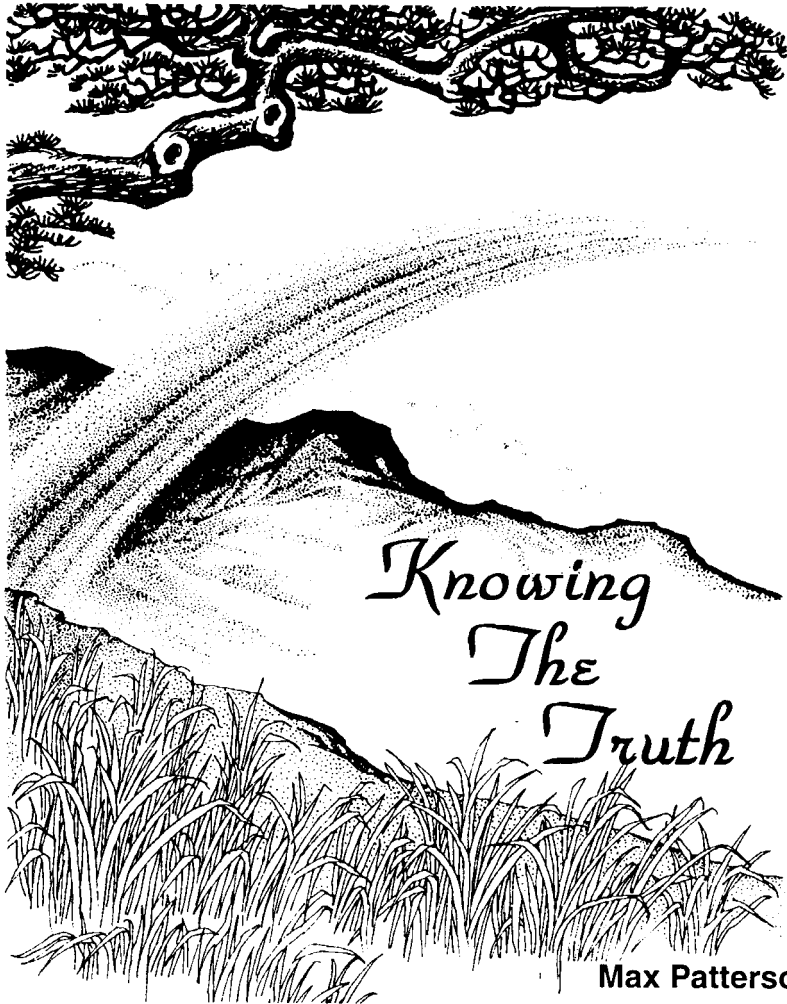
Jupiter (Zeus) in ancient mythology was the god of thunder, lightning, and rain, and was the king of all other gods.

J. W. McGarvey says: "The street called Straight is still unmistakably identified in Damascus by its contrast with all the other streets of the city; for while all the others are very crooked, making curves or abrupt angles at intervals of from fifty to one hundred yards, this runs nearly a mile with only five slight angles."

The wall of Damascus is memorable because it frustrated the intention of certain Jews who meant to kill Paul because he had preached Christ in the synagogues just after his conversion:

*"But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket" (Acts 9:22-25.)* †

**G. F. Raines writes and preaches in  
Newton, Mississippi, U. S. A.**



**Max Patterson**

Carl Sagan, in his book, *Broca's Brain*, says on page 283, "Religion has been scarred in its confrontation with science, and many people — but by no means all — are reluctant to accept a body of

theological belief that is too obviously in conflict with what else we know."

The above quotation is a prime example of ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth.



## EVIDENCES

No one doubts the intellectual capacity of education of such men — in their field. But perhaps Mr. Sagan has never been confronted with the “compelling evidence” that some of us know is available concerning God and Religion. He may never have examined this evidence because of personal prejudice, and may never have heard the facts.

There is not now, nor has there ever been, a conflict between true science and true Bible teaching. There is plenty of conflict between pseudo science (e.g. the theory of evolution), and religion. Sometimes we are so blind with prejudice we only **think** we know. Maybe this is why Sagan refuses to discuss these matters with some of our brethren who are knowledgeable in this field.

Biblical prophecy has not been scarred by science. The science of archaeology has actually been very helpful in confirming the prophecies and historical facts of the Bible.

Sometimes people don't have the facts. However, that doesn't mean the facts do not exist. Too, scientific proof is often based on the ability to repeat the happening. Through repeated experimentation, one is able to observe or measure certain things happening.

How are we going to use this method to prove that George Washington lived? Or, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead?

One cannot use scientific proof, because this type of thing is outside the realm of scientific proof. However, there are other ways of knowing that are well established and accepted. We simply need to learn to interpret the facts that are available and to reason correctly about them.

Knowledge based on observation is not the only knowledge we have. There are other ways of knowing. For example, I cannot know by observation that Abraham Lincoln lived. However, I can take the available evidence from that time (paintings or drawings of him, the testimony of eye witnesses who saw him and talked to him, his work, etc.) and it is enough to convince a reasonable mind that he existed. In the same way I can examine the eleven different groups (one group numbering more than 500) that saw Jesus after He was raised from the dead, plus other historical data, and be convinced that Jesus was raised.

What we need, desire, and want is honest people who are willing to examine all the facts, not part of the facts, or a set of manipulated facts, and then one can build a life on truth. *“You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). †

**Max Patterson proclaims the Gospel in Neosho, Missouri, U. S. A.**

# The Way We See It

## Jim Sheerer

The way we see it, the Bible is the most important book in the world. It is the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17). It is the **only** Word of God. There is no other book which comes from God.

The Bible tells us what God is like. It tells us what Jesus is like, and what the Holy Spirit is like. The Bible tells us how to have the right relationship with God. This book teaches us how to be saved and how to live the Christian life. It directs us in coping with temptation, suffering, disappointment, illness, and depression. It teaches us how to pray. It tells us everything we know about the church and its function. It assures us that there is a heaven and that there is a hell. In short, the Bible tells us everything we need to know in order to be saved and go to heaven.

This is the most important book for everyone to have in his/her home. We need to read it every day. We need to teach out of its riches. We need to meditate upon it day and night. We challenge each one of you to do this. You will be the one who is blessed.

## Do you have a heavenly Father?

There are many concepts of God. These range from 'the Force' (an impersonal Energy from which all things have sprung), to lifeless idols, to the worship of man himself as the embodiment of the eternal Spirit of God.

The Bible teaches, "*God is Spirit . . .*" (John 4:24). But He is neither an *impersonal Force*, nor an *indifferent and unconcerned Being* who is aloof from the affairs of men. Psalm 103:13 explains: "*As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him . . .*"

God promises: "*I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people . . . I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty*" (2 Corinthians 6:16,17).

"*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God!*" (1 John 3:1). As humans, we can obey God's teachings and be owned as His children.

**Next: If God is our Father, who is Jesus?**

# Preach The Word

Avon Malone

Paul pleads “*preach the word.*” To do otherwise is to prostitute the pulpit. To do otherwise is to feed the heavy, hungry hearts with garbage. To do otherwise is to dishonor Christ and to betray the burdened world we would seek to serve.

The devil would divert us. If by diversionary devices he can keep us preoccupied with superficial side-issues, the great work of preaching the Word will go begging. A powerless pulpit with no real message will be but a prelude to profound and deserved oblivion.

Why preach the wonderful word? Hear the answer given by the Word itself:

*“Of his own will he brought us forth by word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18). “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart,” (Hebrews 4:12). “Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth . . . and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 17:17; 8:32). “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God . . .” (Ephesians 6:17). “And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).*

Edmund Burke, the great English statesman, in defining the responsibilities of a member of Parliament to his constituents said, “He owes you not his industry only, but his judgment, and he betrays, rather than serves you, when he sacrifices it to your opinion.” *The gospel preacher owes you the judgment of God and His Word, and he betrays you when he sacrifices it to your opinion.*

How timeless the solemn charge, “**Preach the word!**” †

**Avon Malone teaches Bible at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma, U. S. A.**

# By What Standard Of Authority?

Wendell Winkler

By what authority do you practice the things you do in religion? Let us observe the following questions:

**Is "the majority" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. Through time the majority has been in the wrong. Where was the majority when the flood came? What about Sodom and Gomorrah? Jesus said many would go in the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13,14). The majority is not the correct standard of authority.

**Are "kinsmen" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. If they were, then every religion, even those that deny the divinity of Christ and reject the Bible as the infallible guide in matters of religion, would be all right if such was accepted by kinsmen. Kinsmen are not the standard of authority.

**Are "the creeds of men" the correct standard of authority?**

Surely not. They are contradictory to the inspired and infallible Word of God. They contain the doctrines and commandments of men, concerning which Jesus said, "*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matthew 15:9). The creeds of men are not the correct standard of authority.

**Is "I think" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. In Jeremiah 10:23 we read, "*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*" Also, observe Proverbs 14:12, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" "I think" is not the correct standard of authority.

**Christ and His testament is the correct standard of authority.** All authority in heaven and in earth has been given unto Christ (Matthew 28:18). His testament is complete, final and all-sufficient (John 16:13; Jude 3). Religious practices are to be based upon His word. Peter wrote, "*If any man speak, let him speak as of the oracles of God*" (1 Peter 4:11). In view of this, can you give book, chapter, and verse from the New Testament for what you practice in religion? †

**Wendell Winkler is Chairman of the Bible Department at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama, U. S. A.**

# Truth

We read in Ephesians 4:14-16 about "*speaking the truth in love.*" God's purpose is accomplished through "*speaking the truth in love.*" There is an intimate relationship between truth and love. Truth directs; love motivates.

and

Joe Malone



Love

Let us notice three things involved in "*speaking the truth in love*":

(1) The truth is to be spoken. God's Word is truth (John 17:17). Our eternal happiness depends upon our acceptance of it. Hence, it is hardly too much to say that the cruelest thing we can do to others is to withhold from them needful truth. Further, unity is not so dear nor peace so sweet as to be purchased at the expense of the truth (Matthew 10:34-38).

(2) The truth is to be spoken in love. The more painful the impression which truth is expected to impart, the more urgent the need of dealing with it in love. When truth is set forth, it is to be with evident desire to do good and because of a genuine love for the hearer. When it admonishes one of his faults, it does so in the spirit of meekness, bearing in mind that all are susceptible to error.

(3) "*Speaking the truth in love*" implies **being true** as well as **speaking truth**. Loyalty to truth is the backbone of Christianity. "*Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth*" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). Christians live that way — and their message is heard!

†

Joe Malone, a Gospel preacher for many years, died recently in Fort Worth, Texas, U. S. A.

# "I WON'T TAKE THAT MEDICINE UNLESS IT TASTES GOOD!"

Garell L. Forehand

I hope this will be taken in the spirit in which it is intended. We ought to be always getting better. Growth and improvement are the hallmarks of the Christian life. We recognize, of course, that attitudes characteristic of immaturity should be forever laid aside as we begin to actually develop in the Lord. "*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but now that I am become a man...*" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Growing up involves our coming to appreciate those things that we know are best for us, whether or not they are what we feel like embracing. With these thoughts in mind, let me suggest that there is a growing problem in the church today that, in reality, should be outgrown.

We have so emphasized that truth is to be spoken "*in love*" (Ephesians 4:15) that we have

somehow developed an attitude which in essence asserts, "I won't seriously consider the truth until it is spoken *like I desire it to be spoken*." How often we hear fellow Christians bitterly decry the tone used in delivering the truth to them as being strident, overpowering, or unloving. How often we see them feel justified in totally ignoring the truth itself when their perception is that it was couched in "unloving" communication. There is something dreadfully wrong with this viewpoint.

First, let me make it clear that we should always deliver the precious message, as well as specific rebuke or correction, in as loving a manner as we know how. That, in itself, is a part of growing up. And without it the speaker is not in the right, nor is his message as readily accepted by its intended recipient. But please understand that



## THE WORD OF GOD

Ephesians 4:14,15 is written for the would-be speaker, not the hearer. And though we may speak extensively, we must all participate as hearers from time to time. It is to those occasions that we address this reminder.

Let me suggest something that may sound radical to some. Truth can be taught, Christ can be proclaimed, and the Gospel may be delivered to the eternal saving of souls without loving communication or a loving speaker. Notice what Paul described to the Philippian brethren. *“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice”* (Philippians 1:15-18).

Just granting for the sake of discussion that some today are actually proclaiming the truth out of jealousy, a contentious spirit, hypocrisy, and even intended torment for faithful Christians, it still becomes rather obvious that many don't rejoice that truth is being disseminated. In fact, it is apparent that many of us simply *refuse to*

*consider the message at all if we feel it has been delivered in an unsatisfactory manner.*

How can we ever let truth become so *unimportant* to us as to *discount* it when our feelings are not edified? We, of all people on earth, should understand that men are to “buy the truth” regardless of its price or their feelings. We, of all people, should be objective enough to leave the rest of the world a bright example of what truth-seeking is all about.

God's saving Word can operate independently — separate and apart from love, sincerity, or gentleness in the one who delivers it. Hear Jesus discuss the responsibility of truth-seeking hearers when such teaching prevails. *“The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you to observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not”* (Matthew 23:2,3).

Truth delivered should be obeyed. But bad attitudes and sinful lifestyles on the part of the teachers should of course be avoided. The seed of the kingdom can be sown by spiritual blackbirds or careless and lazy farmers, and yet produce much fruit for the Lord. The Word of God is the living and powerful *“sword of the Spirit”*, whether or not a true Christian soldier is wielding it. Therefore, let us fully under-

## THE WORD OF GOD

stand that it is the message, and not the type of messenger, that is essential for salvation.

I think I would be remiss if I failed to suggest that what we often consider to be unloving or excessively harsh preaching and correction is sometimes (though not always) merely methodology that is abrasive to our own personalities. It may not actually be unloving at all as offered by another person. The apostles even disagreed with the manner in which Jesus offered some strong teaching to the erring religious leaders of His day. *"Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?"* (Matthew 15:12). Would the Jews of the first century have been justified in refusing the truth delivered to them by Jesus and John after it had been prefaced with a reference to their being *"sons of snakes"*?

Let's really think about this one. And let us do our best to always speak the truth in love. I am certainly not trying to make excuses for those people in the church who fail in their duty to deliver the message properly. But, on the other hand, may we never demand to be spoon-fed with sugar before we will eat what is good for us. †

Garell L. Forehand is the preacher for the Granbury Street church in Cleburne, Texas, U.S.A.

### Drinking From the Saucer

I've never made a fortune,  
and I'll never make one now.  
But it really doesn't matter  
cause I'm happy anyhow.

I go along my journey  
reaping better than I've  
sowed.

I'm drinking from the saucer,  
cause my cup has overflowed.

I don't have many riches,  
and sometimes the going's  
tough.

But while my kids still love me,  
I think I'm rich enough.

I'll thank God for His blessings,  
His mercy he bestowed –  
I'm drinking from the saucer  
cause my cup has overflowed.

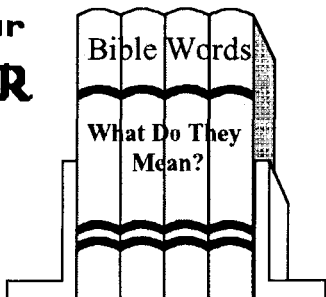
If He'll give me strength and  
courage,  
when the road grows steep and  
rough.

I'll not ask for other blessings –  
I'm already blest enough.  
May I never be too busy  
to help bear another's load.  
I'm drinking from the saucer  
cause my cup has overflowed.

– Copied

# It Helps to Enrich Your BIBLE WORD POWER

BY FENTER NORTHERN



**A**re you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words found in Matthew 16:16-21. After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

1. **Christ** *n.*—A: saviour. B: son of God. C: son of man. D: anointed
2. **Simon** *n.*—A: one who listens. B: rock. C: simple. D: an apostle.
3. **Barjona** *n.*—A. Hebrew byword. B: Peter's wife. C: Son of Jonah  
D: Peter's son.
4. **Peter** *n.*—A: fisherman. B: teacher. C: rock. D: disciple.
5. **rock** *n.*—A: pebble. B: large rock or boulder. C: Sand.  
D: Quagmire.
6. **flesh** *n.*—A: skin. B: an animal body. C: of human origin. D: meat.
7. **church** *n.*—A: a cathedral. B: house of worship. C: called out  
assembly. D: where collections are taken.
8. **gates** *n.*—A: access to a state of being. B: a road or path.  
C: drawbridge to a castle. D: pearly portals to heaven.
9. **hell** *n.*—A: fire. B: torture. C: grave. D: curse.
10. **prevail** *v.*—A: outrun. B: persecute. C: storm. D: overcome.
11. **keys** *n.*—A: denotes power over. B: Access to a house or building.  
C: Starts an automobile. D: small islands along a coastline.
12. **bind** *v.*—A: tie a *string* around. B: sign a contract. C: get married.  
D: put under obligation of law or duty.
13. **heaven** *n.*—A: where the clouds are. B: seat or throne of God.  
C: where the planets are. D: nirvana
14. **loose** *v.*—A: open a gate. B: release from bonds. C: not tightly  
packed. D: dangling.
15. **suffer** *v.*—A: to permit or allow. B: be overtime at church. C: to  
be in a bad plight. D: to be defeated.
16. **raised** *v.*—A: to return from death to life. B: be promoted in position.  
C: be burned with fire. D: be lifted into the air.

**"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"**



1. **Christ** (Gk. Christos)—D: anointed. While Christ is the Savior, Son of God and Son of Man, the Greek word simply means anointed, or chosen.
2. **Simon** (Gk. Simon)—A: one who listens; his name was changed to Peter.
3. **Barjona** (Ar. Barionas)—C: son of Jonah, Simon Peter's surname.
4. **Peter** (Gk. Petros-masculine gender) — C: small rock
5. **rock** (Gk. petra)—B: a large boulder, referring to the confession of Christ as the Son of God.
6. **flesh** (Gk. sarx)—in this context, C: of human origin, generation or relationship.
7. **church** (Gk. ekklesia)—C: a called out assembly; in this context the separation of believers from disbelievers.
8. **gates** (Gk. pule)—A: access to a state of being; in this instance, death. Although Jesus would enter the state of the dead, this would not prevent him from keeping his promise to build his church.
9. **hell** (Gk. hades)—C: grave; the intermediate state of the soul after death. Elsewhere hell is also translated from *gehenna*, the valley of Hinnom or place of torment.
10. **prevail** (Gk. katischuo)—D: overcome. The power of death will not be superior to the power of life in Jesus.
11. **keys** (Gk. kleis) A: denotes "power over." To give Peter the keys of the kingdom was to place in his hands the saving power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16)
12. **bind** (Gk. deo)—D: to place under obligation of law or duty. To preach the gospel is to bind Jesus—the way, the truth and the life—upon all believers. (See John 14:6)
13. **heaven** (Gk. ouranos)—B: where the seat or throne of God exists. "Shall be bound also in heaven," is saying that there is no chance of expecting salvation on any terms other than those in the Gospel as preached on earth.
14. **loose** (Gk. luo)—B: release from bonds or bondage. When the glad tidings (gospel) is preached, those who are obedient to its terms of salvation are loosed from their sins.
15. **suffer** (Gk. poschos)—C: to be in a bad plight. It means to be under circumstances of pain and agony. This may range from mental torture when under temptation to sin, to the affliction of physical pain or death by unbelievers. (See Acts 14:22)
16. **raised** (Gk. egiro) A: to return from death to life. Although Jesus would be put to death in Jerusalem, he would fulfill his promise to build his church by resurrecting himself on the third day following. The empty grave of Jesus stands as stark testimony that the world will be judged by Jesus, the Son of God. (See Acts 17:31)

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**Vocabulary Scale**

7-10 correct.....	good
11-13 correct.....	Bible Student
14-15 correct.....	Bible Scholar

# Baptized For The Dead

Sunny David

I Corinthians 15 has been rightly called "The Resurrection chapter." One of the most prominent and great doctrines of the Bible has been the resurrection of all people who have ever lived or will live until Christ comes back on the day of judgment to reward the just and the unjust. Hear what the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

*Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*

In essence, the apostle was teaching that Christ's resurrection was the greatest proof of our own resurrection, which will occur at His coming to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31). The God of heaven who raised Christ, the Man, from the dead, will also by His power, make us alive, as He did Christ, after His death. In this context, the apostle, in 1 Corinthians 15:29, asked the Corinthians: "Otherwise 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?"

Some have held that there was a custom then of baptizing people, living persons, for the benefit of persons who had died without baptism. It is thought by some that in 1 Corinthians 15:29 Paul was using an argumentum-ad-hominem, that is, an argument based upon what some people were doing at Corinth. However, had such a custom existed there or at any other place then certainly the apostle Paul would have rebuked it, as he did in every other case, instead of using it as an example to teach the most

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

important truth of resurrection. The apostle rebuked the Corinthians when some of them were causing division in the church (1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 3:1-4). He also rebuked them for their immorality that was defiling the church (1 Corinthians 5). In another instance, the apostle reprimanded the Corinthians for their corrupting the institution of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

Paul the apostle, in 1 Corinthians 15, was specifically dealing with the doctrine of resurrection, which certain false teachers were denying. He argued that since Christ rose from the dead, so in the same manner all will rise from the dead. And, it was in the hope of the resurrection of the dead that they were baptized. The Corinthians were baptized (Acts 18:8), but before going through the act of baptism one must repent or *die to sin* (Acts 2:38), and that is precisely what the Corinthians had done. Before their baptism — their burial in the water-grave of baptism — they had died to sin. They were put in the grave of water as dead men and women. A living person is not buried, but a dead person is. Their baptism was a “planting” in the likeness of the burial of Christ, and was a raising in the likeness of His resurrection from the dead. They had gone in the grave of water, through their baptism, as dead men and women, and were raised from the tomb of water to walk in the newness of life (Romans 6:3-5). The inference is, their baptism was in the very likeness of the death and burial and resurrection of Christ. But if Christ had not risen, and the dead rise not, then their emblematic burial in water and coming out of the watery tomb of baptism had no meaning. Why were they baptized for the dead? What must they do if the dead rise not? How vain a thing had their baptism been if there will be no resurrection? Must they stand by it or renounce it? Yes, the Corinthians were baptized for the dead, with the view of their own death to sin, through repentance, they were buried in the tomb of water and had come out of it, declaring their own death and burial and resurrection to walk in the new Christian walk.

The same apostle wrote the Colossians and said, “*Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead*” (Colossians 2:12). Continuing, he told them, “*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*” (Colossians 3:1-3). The Colossians were living indeed. But the apostle told them: “*For you died.*” When did they die? Of

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

course, before their baptism! They too were baptized for the dead, like the Corinthians, as all others are. Don't baptize a living person! A living being cannot be baptized scripturally. One must repent, die to the old man of sin, before going down into the tomb of baptism and coming out of it a new creation. †

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### Failure Is Never Final.

**The only time you can't afford to fail is the very last time you try.**

Failure doesn't mean I'm a failure;

it just means I haven't succeeded . . . yet.

Failure doesn't mean I have accomplished nothing;

it just means I have learned something.

Failure doesn't mean I've been a fool;

it just means I had enough faith to experiment.

Failure doesn't mean I've been disgraced;

it just means I dared to try.

Failure doesn't mean I don't have what it takes;

it just means I must do things differently next time.

Failure doesn't mean I'm inferior;

it just means I'm not perfect.

Failure doesn't mean I've wasted my time;

it just means I have reason to start over.

Failure doesn't mean I should give up;

it just means I should try harder.

Failure doesn't mean I'll never make it;

it just means I need more patience.

Failure doesn't mean I'm wrong;

it just means I must find a better way.

Failure doesn't mean God has abandoned me;

it just means I must more diligently seek His will.

—Lewis Timberlake

# Why Jesus Came

O. P. Baird

Many scriptures tell us why Jesus came. He came so that those who believe on Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). He came to seek and save those who are lost (Luke 19:10). He came that we might have life abundantly (John 10:10). He came to serve and give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). He came to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

The scripture to which we shall give special attention here is from the first epistle of John: "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*" (1 John 3:8).

God created the world and the living creatures, including human beings. When He had finished creating it all, He said it was all very good. But then the devil came with his temptations and brought sin into the world. The devil has always tried to destroy the work of God, and Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil. He destroys the work of the devil now in the lives of those who believe in Him as the Son of God and follow Him. He will com-

pletely destroy the work of the devil when the devil and his followers are cast away from God into everlasting punishment.

"*The wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23). Jesus came in a body of flesh, "*that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*" (Hebrews 2:14). It is in His death that we find deliverance from the wages or result of sin. It is important to know how a sinner gets into Christ's death. The Bible gives the answer. The apostle Paul asked the Christians at Rome, "*Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*" (Romans 6:3). To the Galatians he wrote, "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:26,27). This shows that a sinner does not get into Christ and into His death before the sinner is baptized. That does not mean that a sinner is baptized into Christ if he is not prepared for baptism. The preparation for baptism is believing in Christ



and repenting of being a sinner. When Peter told the people in Jerusalem that they had crucified the Son of God and that God had raised Him from the dead, the people believed that Jesus was Lord and Christ. Because they believed this, they cried out and asked what they should do. *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:37,38). *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls”* (Acts 2:41).

Salvation is by faith in Christ, and it must be faith that trusts Him and receives Him by receiving His Word. How do we receive the Word of Christ? We must receive it the way the people received it to whom Peter preached. Peter was speaking the Word of Christ, and the people *“received his word”* by doing what He told them to do. They certainly would not have been receiving His Word if they had not done what He told them to do. Christ is destroying the work of the devil when He shows sinners His love and moves them to receive His Word. †

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

## God Takes Care

“Look at the birds of the air: for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? . . .

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink?’ or, ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:25-34).

As we live our lives day to day, let us not forget the awesome power of God and His tremendous love for us!

The Bible is filled with wonderful things He has done for His children, including giving His Son on our behalf. We can place our trust in Him. We must study His word, learn His will, and apply it to our lives — and in that state of loving obedience as a child to his father, we can know that God will take care of His children.

— Author Unknown



# NO ONE IS TOO GUILTY!

David W. Chadwell

“God cannot forgive me! Jesus could never save me! My sins are unforgivable!” When a person combines such guiltiness with self-contempt, he easily can conclude that God cannot save one so evil. The wicked person who allows his

guilt to keep him from acting on his knowledge of God and faith in Jesus creates the ultimate spiritual tragedy.

Jesus stated simply in John 3:16-18 that divine love moved God to send His Son to this world.

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

God's objective is not to *condemn* humanity through Jesus — humanity stands condemned through its own sinfulness. God's objective is to *save* humanity through Jesus. The willingness to act on the faith one places in Jesus removes any person from condemnation.

The person overwhelmed by the realization of his or her sinfulness often thinks this is too good to be true! But it *is* true! When Jesus surrendered His life to atone for sin, He atoned for every sin. Every sin from the rebellion of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) to the last sin prior to the eternal judgment is paid for by Jesus' blood (Romans 3:25,26). If every person of every generation accepted God's forgiveness in Jesus, this could not exhaust God's redemption, grace, or mercy.

No person capable of faith and repentance is beyond God's forgiveness. Jesus verified this repeatedly during His ministry. He extended the opportunity to "*drink the living water*" to an outcast Samaritan woman who had been married to five husbands and was living with a man to whom she was not married (John 4:10-18).

He said, "*Your faith has saved you; go in peace,*" to a penitent woman whose sexual immorality was known throughout her community (Luke 7:36-50).

He appointed a tax collector as

one of His twelve disciples (Matthew 9:9-13). Tax collectors were notorious for greed and dishonesty. Any Jew collecting Roman taxes was classified among the worst of sinners. Jesus was strongly condemned by the "acceptable religious leaders" of His day because He associated and ate with tax collectors and sinners. To those charges He replied, "*The sick, not the healthy, need the doctor. I came to call sinners, not the righteous.*"

Severe condemnation resulted from Jesus' practice of teaching, healing, and associating with religious and social outcasts. He delivered such people from every form of evil — including demon possession. In the eyes of the "religiously acceptable," Jesus' work with such people could not be justified.

The greatest evidence that God and Jesus can save the most ungodly person is Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul. This man's evil cannot be exaggerated. In the name of God, he tried to destroy Christianity! With full consent, he held the clothing of the men who stoned the Christian, Stephen, to death (Acts 7:58-8:1). He committed himself totally to the destruction of Christianity in Jerusalem by conducting house to house searches for Christians (Acts 8:3). When he found them, he dragged them out of their houses and put them in prison.

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He harassed Christians by making threats and declaring his intentions to murder them (Acts 9:1). In this hatred he obtained permission from the Jewish high priest to enter a Damascus synagogue in Syria to arrest, place in chains, and return to Jerusalem any Christians he found (Acts 9:2).

Years later, under arrest himself for belonging to Christ, he freely acknowledged his former wickedness. He declared that in those days he had persecuted Christians to death and imprisoned both men and women (Acts 22:4,5). In those days he did many things in opposition to the name of Jesus. He voted for the execution of Christians he placed in prison. In synagogues he used force in efforts to make them blaspheme. He was obsessed with his hate for Christians (Acts 26:9-11).

On his journey to Damascus he met the resurrected Jesus face to face and spoke directly to Him (Acts 9:1-9; 26:12-18). In one flashing instant, Paul knew Jesus was God's Son. **He had been opposing and fighting God!**

When Jesus sent Ananias to instruct Paul, Paul — in his new faith and knowledge — was baptized. Every sin he had committed was washed away (Acts 22:16).

Years later Paul wrote that his salvation was the unshakable proof that Christ Jesus came to save sinners, for he was the foremost sinner of this world. As the world's foremost sinner, he received mercy in order that Jesus Christ might prove His perfect patience. Paul is the undeniable proof that Jesus can save anyone who believes in the resurrected Son of God (1 Timothy 1:12-17).

Any person capable of placing faith in the resurrected Jesus and repenting can be forgiven of any evil. When any evil person acts on his faith and repentance by being baptized into Christ, he will be cleansed as perfectly from every sin as was Saul of Tarsus. No one is too guilty for salvation in Jesus Christ! †

**David Chadwell is a preacher and writer in Oxford, Mississippi, U. S. A.**

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

# The **WHY** Of Our Faith

David Deffenbaugh

Faith is absolutely necessary. Much emphasis is given to what faith is, but no less important than the **what** of our faith is the **why** of our faith. Peter explains, *“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence”* (1 Peter 3:15). Not only must Christians know **what** they believe, but also **why** they believe it.

The Bible speaks of only one valid source for faith, and that is the Word of God itself. *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ”* (Romans 10:17). Any other source is insufficient. There may be several reasons why people believe what they believe. For many people, their faith started with their parents and grandparents. This certainly is a valid means of transmitting faith. God commands the teaching of children by parents (Deuteronomy 6:7; Ephesians 6:4). Timothy’s faith was begun by this very means (2 Timothy 1:5). However, the *why* of his faith could not be explained solely on this basis. Paul also tells that *“from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 3:15). Timothy’s faith, like any valid faith, had to have as its source the Word of God.

Obviously there is a place in God’s plan for preaching and teaching in the spread and development of faith (Romans 10:13-15). However, God never intended for these proclaimers of the Gospel ever to become the foundation of anyone’s faith. That role can be filled only by the Word. The Berean Jews stand for all time as testimony to the necessity of measuring the message by the Word (Acts 17:11). They were not willing to accept even the message of Paul at his word alone.

Examples of inadequate faith abound. All children of God must evaluate themselves carefully, not only as to **what** they believe, but also as to **why** they believe it. Paul admonished, *“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!”* (2 Corinthians 13:5). Only then can we say, *“This is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith”* (1 John 5:4). †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the Northside church in Harrison, Arkansas.

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY



# Jesus Christ Is Coming Again

**David Pharr**

Among the things which Christians believe is that Jesus is coming again. The Bible tells us that as the apostles watched Jesus ascend, "*two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus,*

*which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:10,11).

Christians happily embrace the sweet promise of Jesus, who said, "*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive*

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

*you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*" (John 14:3). Thus, we are "*looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13), because "*we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*" (1 John 3:2).

The greatness of Jesus' return will be more than human imagination can grasp. It would be folly to suppose that we could understand all that is involved. The splendor and power of His coming will be more than earth's languages can explain and more than human minds can understand. Yet God has told us some things about what will happen when Jesus comes. From the Bible we can be sure of certain doctrines about the Lord's return and about the end of the world.

1. The Bible plainly promises that Jesus is coming (Acts 1:9-11; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7). Many do not believe what the Bible says about the certainty of Christ's coming (2 Peter 3:3,4), but Peter shows that what seems to be a long day is only because of the longsuffering of God, and that the day of the Lord indeed will come (2 Peter 3:8-10).

2. No one knows when Jesus is coming, not even angels, not even

Jesus Himself (at least during His earthly ministry), only God the Father (Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:32,33; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3). It is strange that people have attempted to foretell the date. All such efforts have been foolish and vain. Only God knows the day He has appointed (Acts 17:31).

3. All of the dead will be raised. "*There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust*" (Acts 24:15). This shows that there will be one resurrection day for all men, including good and bad people. Jesus made this absolutely plain in John 5:28,29. When Jesus comes, the dead in Christ will be raised. At the same time, the righteous who are alive will be changed. Then the righteous who are raised from death and the righteous who are changed will be taken up to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54). At the same time sinners will face Christ for judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). All the dead will come before the "*great white throne*" (Revelation 20:11-13), and there will be a judgment of all people (Matthew 25:31-46). Because they will be judged, the wicked will cry because of His coming (Revelation 1:7), but the people of God will be glad with "*exceeding joy*" (1 Peter 4:13).

4. The universe will be

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 21:1). There will be a “*new heaven and a new earth,*” but it will not be here. Instead, the new dwelling place of God’s people will be the place Jesus went to prepare (John 14:1-3). Then we will be in heaven where Jesus is now.

5. The rule of Christ over His kingdom on earth will come to an end. Christ established His kingdom, which is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, on the day of Pentecost. He had foretold that the kingdom would come within that generation (Mark 9:1). In the same text He said it would come with power. The power was to come when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles (Acts 1:8), and that happened on the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2. At that time Peter explained that Jesus was raised “*to sit on his throne,*” where He will reign until all His enemies are His footstool (Acts 2:31,34,35). Paul shows the significance of this in 1 Corinthians 15:23-26. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, which will be accomplished in the resurrection. “*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God*” (1 Corinthians 15:24). †

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# Forgiveness

Peter asked the Master,  
“If my brother sin,  
How oft must I forgive  
him?”

Till seven times...or ten?”

“Though thy brother do  
thee wrong  
Till seventy times seven,  
Whene’er thy brother doth  
repent,  
Forgive . . . like God in  
Heaven.”

I read these words and  
ponder  
On my own sinful years.  
How oft has He forgiven  
me  
And dried my contrite  
tears?

What a wonderful Savior!  
How merciful is He . . .  
So Loving and forgiving  
And oh, so patient with  
me!

– Carol Richardson



## 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 a good example to follow as one who was obedient to God.

1. 100

When God called me to be His prophet, I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." (1:6)

2. 90

During my time, the people of Israel worshipped idols, "Saying to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.'" (2:27)

3. 80

I grieved for Israel, saying, "O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart. . . Destruction upon destruction is cried, for the whole land is plundered." (4:19,20)

4. 70

When drought, famine, and hardship came upon the land, I said these words from God: "Your iniquities have turned these things away, and your sins have withheld good things from you." (5:24,25)

5. 60

God was so angry with the people of Israel because of their unfaithfulness to Him that He said to me, "Do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to me; for I will not hear you." (7:16)

6. 50

God's words were like a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I could not refrain from speaking. (22:9)

7. 40

I prophesied of the new covenant God would make with His people through the Messiah. (31:31-34)

8. 30

I prophesied of the Messiah. (23:5,6)

9. 20

I wrote two books in the Old Testament.

10. 10

I was known as the weeping prophet.

My Score \_\_\_\_\_

See answer on inside back cover.



# Cultural Church Changes

Tom Holland

When the church of Christ began in the first century there was an inevitable clash with the culture. The church was comprised of saints (1 Corinthians 1:1,2; Ephesians 5:25-27). Their values were a contrast to those of the world out of which they had, by the Gospel of Christ, been called. Greed was replaced by the joy of giving. Lust was crucified by the sense of integrity, and the profane fled from the determination to honor God and His Word.

However, the culture was not about to accept the demand for change without a fight. Tactics such as intimidation, fear, and even physical torture were utilized in an effort to break the spirits of God's children. The saints' condemnation of an ungodly culture caused them to be subjected to wooden neck and leg stocks, beatings, torture racks, lion' dens, imprisonment, and often death.

If God's people in the first century had operated on the principle of some people in the 20th century, the book of Revelation would not have

been written, because compromise with the culture would have prevented the conflict. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit would not have inspired Peter to write a book on suffering. Paul's inspired warning, "*Yea, and all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*" (2 Timothy 3:12), would be meaningless language.

The culture wants change, but it wants the church to do it, according to the needs of the culture. Unfortunately the culture does not have values of quality that really enhance life now, much less offer any real hope for an eternal future. What can people who live for **now** exclusively offer people who want to live eternally? The silence is the answer.

Change is needed for sure. However, a God who has all knowledge must be trusted to identify the change that is needed (Isaiah 55:8-10). The true revelation of the necessary change is bound in the Bible. †

**Tom Holland is a writer and preacher in Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.**

# Heads and Bodies Separated

Basil Overton

Can anyone recall ever seeing a human head moving around not connected to a human body, or a human body moving around not connected to a human head? If all human bodies and heads were disconnected, neither the heads nor the bodies would continue to live.

The New Testament portrays Jesus as the head of His body, which is His church. There are those who think they can have Jesus without having His church, but that is not possible. If you have Jesus, you will also have His church. You

will be in His church, and you will honor Him as head of the body, the church (Colossians 1:18).

Nobody can preach the true Christ who does not preach His church.

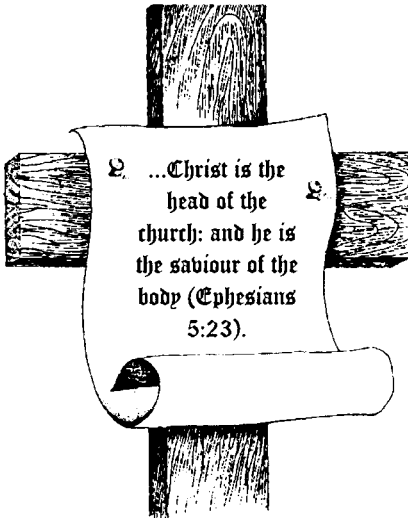
If one preaches on Christ's love, he would have to preach that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

If one preaches Christ as Savior, he will have to preach that He is the Savior of His body, which is His church (Ephesians 5:23).

If one preaches on the blood of Christ, he will have to preach that He purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28).

If one preaches on Christ as king, he will have to tell that He is king over His kingdom, which is the church (Colossians 1:13,18; 3:15).

One cannot preach the true Christ without preaching His church! Even so, one cannot be in Christ and not be in His church! One cannot be in Christ until he is baptized into Christ! (See Romans 6:3,4). †



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

# The Common Salvation

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

*"...I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation"* (Jude 3).

Jude identified himself with those to whom he wrote as a recipient of the *"common salvation."*

It is our common salvation for these reasons:

**(1) It deals with a common sickness.** It delivers from sin, and *"all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Like sheep, we have all gone astray. Our relationship with God is severed (Isaiah 59:1,2). This is the common experience of all humanity.

Many false diagnoses have been given by erroneous teachers. They are physicians with no cure. One says the patient is suffering from a lack of education. Another says his environment needs to be changed — give him better living conditions. But these suggestions fail to deal with the basic need. **The root of human misery lies within the heart.** The king's robe, the pauper's rags, the soldier's uniform — all cover a heart that is evil and needs cleansing.

**(2) It presents a common remedy.** There is only one Gospel, and one Savior. All men are saved alike. There is one *"great physician."*

That common story is presented in the book of Acts — stirring, arousing, and leading people of all backgrounds to the Savior.

Only Christ can impart *"abundant life"* (John 10:10). Salvation is in *"no other name"* (Acts 4:12).

Society is sick. The world lies in darkness. But, there is light. *"... Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Colossians 1:27).

**(3) It is brought about by a common faith.** Paul spoke of the *"common faith"* that produces the common salvation.

Faith, as often used in the New Testament, includes the sum of man's response to God. It is produced by *"hearing the word"* (Romans 10:17). It is demonstrated through obedience. Faith brings about the grace of God in us (Ephesians 2:8).

Christians all over the world possess a *"like precious faith"* and are part-takers of the *"common salvation."* †

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# Elders As Leaders

Jimmy Jividen

Elders are leaders, whose leadership is to be quite different from most leaders. Their leadership model is not that of a business executive, a military officer, or a politician, but that of a servant, exemplified by Jesus Himself. Jesus taught, "*Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve*" (Matthew 20:26-28).

An elder's leadership is not that of a democracy in which the leaders are elected to do the will of the people. The elder's allegiance is to the Lord, not man. The will of the people is not always the will of God.

Like a shepherd who protects his sheep from wolves, elders protect those they shepherd from teachers who would lead them astray. Blessed are those who have shepherds they can follow even through

the valley of the "*shadow of death*" without being afraid.

An elder's leadership is not modeled after the Gentile rulers of whom Jesus spoke. They sought to "*lord it over*" and "*exercise authority over*" those under their charge (Matthew 20:25). He is not like Diotrefes who loves "*to be first*," but like Jesus, who took upon Himself "*the form of a bond-servant*" (2 John 9; Philippians 2:7).

An elder *compromises* his leadership role if he only reflects the will of the people. He *abuses* his leader role if he becomes a dogmatic boss who strives to control by political power and force. He *neglects* his leadership role if he refuses to be "out front" leading the way. He must live a life that can be imitated.

Elders are spiritual leaders who should show the way to others. They should be respected and honored for their work's sake. Two passages emphasize this: "*Remember those who lead you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith*" (Hebrews 13:7). "*Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor*" (1 Timothy 6:17). †

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## THE CHURCH



# *The Household of God*

**Harvey Porter**

The scriptures use many illustrations to describe the church. It is sometimes called a building, with each Christian as a stone in the whole structure. It is pictured as an army with Jesus as the commander and all of us as soldiers. It is a vine with Jesus as the core and His followers as the branches which should bear fruit. One of the most beautiful and easiest to be understood is the picture of the church as the family of God.

Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus and said, “Consequently,

*you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:19).*

Paul again used this figure when he wrote Timothy, “*Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is*

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*the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).*

All of us have had a father and a mother. They are necessary for us to come into existence. God had and still has a wonderful plan for what the home ought to be. Unfortunately many homes have not been as He directed, and many parents and children have had misery. But those who have had good parents learned love, comfort, and being wanted and cared for. They have learned responsibility. They are a part of the family. There is unity and each is a vital part. There are no unimportant parts.

The church is a family. It follows the same basic principles of those who love each other and live in unity and harmony, helping and caring for each one, and laughing and crying together. In a spiritual way they all have been born into the same family, they have the same Father, they have the same spiritual blood line (cleansed by the blood of Jesus, their elder brother). They are all in line for the inheritance of the Father, so rich and wonderful that it defies description.

This family has responsibilities like any good family on earth. Everyone has to work and share the load. This world abhors “freeloaders,” and so does heaven’s family. A family ought to love and trust

each other. In fact, we all know that the earthly family cannot last long without these two necessary ingredients. Love is at the heart of all we do — every relationship. The God of love not only expects it of His children, He demands it. He disowns us if we do not practice it.

These truths need to be emphasized. We all need to be aware of the great joys and benefits of knowing and acting like the family of God. Our earthly families may have been broken and unhappy, but God has given the whole world a family that should and can have all that we all are seeking in a family. It will demand a lot of all of us. It is easier to love those that are close to us, but we can have an attitude of love toward those we may not yet know. It will require some effort on the part of all of us. †

**Harvey Porter preaches for the Lord's church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A.**

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You quickly lose  
interest in the  
church if you  
have nothing  
invested.

# Church And Kingdom: Are They The Same?

**William Woodson**

No small amount of importance is attached to the question above concerning the church and the kingdom of God. This is especially true in what is termed Dispensational Premillennialism: that the kingdom of God was promised in Jesus' day, but the promise was withdrawn; that the church was given instead, and now in the age of the church believers wait for the coming of the kingdom of God — the supposed one-thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. What is one to make of this view, especially the relation of the church and kingdom?

There can be no doubt that the kingdom was announced as "at hand" (Matthew 3:1,2; Mark 1:14,15). Was this promise/provision kept? Indeed so. We are translated into the kingdom (Colossians 1:13); we are called into it (1 Thessalonians 2:12); John was "*in the kingdom*" just as clearly as he was "*in tribulation*" and "*in the isle called Patmos*" (Revelation 1:9). The "kingdom of God" was not and is not identified in Scripture as the supposed thousand-years reign of Christ on earth.

How, though, does the kingdom relate to the church? The answer is: The kingdom relates to the church in the same way that the church relates to the body of Christ, the temple of the Lord, the family of God, etc. That is, each term (church, kingdom, body, temple, family, etc.,) designates the same group of people from different viewpoints as they relate to each other, and especially to God. Those believers who are in the body are not different from those who are in the church, the temple, the family; and in the same way those in the church are not different from those who are in the kingdom. The church designation indicates the fact of being called by the Gospel to come to God and serve Him; the kingdom designation indicates the fact of being completely submissive and loyal to the rule of God over His people by Christ and the Gospel.

Jesus indicated He would partake of the bread and fruit of the vine with His followers "*in my Father's kingdom*" (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16-18). We



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know, further, that the Lord's supper was/is to be observed when brethren "come together in the church," when God's people have "come together in one place" (1 Corinthians 11:18,20). The same people who partake the Lord's supper with Christ in the kingdom do so in the church when they are assembled to do so. Hence, the church and kingdom are the same people viewed from different standpoints; and in no way are those words to be distinguished so as to mean we are in the church now but not in the kingdom. †

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*Are we missing some of life's greatest blessings when we fail to make the time for solitude and extended periods of fasting and prayer, without interruption from the secular world?*

*Of Jesus we read, "So He himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" Luke 5:16.*

### Life's Greatest Blessing

Oh, this life is full of trouble  
As we journey on our way.  
Trials and temptations face us  
Each and every day.

But we have a blessed Lord  
Who died upon a tree;  
His blood He gave to cover  
The sins of you and me.

Oh, my Lord will care for me  
Along life's weary way,  
If I only trust Him  
To help me every day.

Yes, He gave His life for us  
That we might have a way  
To climb life's troubled road  
And then with Him to stay.

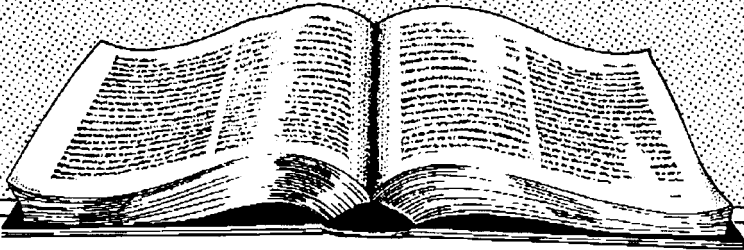
If our sins have been forgiven  
And on Him we do depend —  
He will guide us safely  
To the very end.

The road may be rough and rocky,  
And our courage may grow thin.  
But with our Lord to guide us,  
We are sure to win:

A home beyond the Jordan  
Where the streets are paved with gold.  
Then, our troubles will be over,  
In the Bible — we are told.  
— Bertha Haney

# WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH ?

Jerry Jenkins



In a world where there are so many things wrong, it is marvelous to find something that is right. When we focus on the faults, we cannot see the good. We can become so obsessed with the negative that it blinds us to many things that are good and right.

## THE PLAN IS RIGHT

The church originally existed in the mind of God. It is not accidental nor an afterthought. Paul affirmed: *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the*

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*manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Ephesians 3:10,11). After sin entered into the world, God's answer was the powerful message of the Gospel. This message was communicated by His family — the church. The time was right (Galatians 4:4), the method was right, and the mission was right.

### THE PRICE IS RIGHT

God gave His only Son for the church, and Jesus gave His life's blood for it.

### THE PEOPLE ARE RIGHT

Because you know some who do not properly represent the Lord's work does not mean that all the people are wrong. God's people are right because they are saved (Acts 2:47). The church is as a hospital which extends help to those who need it. The finest people anywhere are in the church.

### THE PLEA IS RIGHT

We are not the only people who are honest and sincere in our beliefs and practices, nor are we smarter, richer, or better-looking. That which distinguishes us is our plea to follow Christ and His Way to the very best of our abilities. To propagate the church in its purity as it

was built is our goal.

### THE PURPOSE IS RIGHT

The mission of the church is to glorify God and to make known His message to a lost world.

### THE PROMISES ARE RIGHT

The promises to God's family include the promise of Pardon, the promise of Prayer, the promise to extend all Scriptural Blessings.

Indeed there are many things right with the church. We urge you to come and help us in the greatest work known to mankind. †

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God doesn't promise that serving Him won't be painful. Loving mankind has been painful for Him ever since sin entered the world. Pain will continue for Him, for us, for all of creation, until sin is destroyed . . .

— Betty Burton Choate

# The Book of Acts for adults



Match the clues on the right with the people of Acts on the left.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Luke                  | A. Will prophesy                               |
| ___ 2. Simon                 | B. See visions                                 |
| ___ 3. Felix                 | C. Dream dreams                                |
| ___ 4. Sons and daughters    | D. Receive outpouring of the Spirit            |
| ___ 5. Peter                 | E. First martyr of early church                |
| ___ 6. Apostles              | F. Blind for three days                        |
| ___ 7. Ananias               | G. Governor of Caesarea                        |
| ___ 8. Matthias              | H. High priest                                 |
| ___ 9. Lydia                 | I. King  |
| ___ 10. Philip               | J. Governor after Felix                        |
| ___ 11. Old men              | K. Wife of Felix                               |
| ___ 12. Festus               | L. Preached to Ethiopian eunuch                |
| ___ 13. Aquila and Priscilla | M. Raised Dorcas from death                    |
| ___ 14. Gamaliel             | N. Apostle after Judas                         |
| ___ 15. Stephen              | O. Former magician                             |
| ___ 16. Barnabas             | P. Lied to the Holy Spirit                     |
| ___ 17. Crispus              | Q. Pharisee in the council, teacher of the law |
| ___ 18. Anaias and Sapphira  | R. Went with Paul on first missionary journey  |
| ___ 19. Saul                 | S. Caused division between Paul and Barnabas   |
| ___ 20. Servants             | T. Went with Paul on second missionary journey |
| ___ 21. Drusilla             | U. Preached on Mars Hill                       |
| ___ 22. John Mark            | V. Seller of purple                            |
| ___ 23. Paul                 | W. Ruler of synagogue in Corinth               |
| ___ 24. Young men            | X. Author of book of Acts                      |
| ___ 25. Agrippa              | Y. Miraculously freed from prison              |
| ___ 26. Silas                | Z. Tentmakers who opened their home to Paul    |

# Make Your Life Count!

Maxie B. Boren

With this simplistic statement, the Bible tells us of a man: “. . . and all the days of Methuselah were 969 years; and he died” (Genesis 5:27). Other than that, we know very little about him. He was the son of Enoch and the grandfather of Noah; that’s all. The reason we remember him is because he lived longer on the earth than any other man — 969 years — and he died. Like a bird which passes through the air leaving no trace, so also was Methuselah.

Contrast that with the life of Jesus. He lived only 33 years, but did He ever make them count! Look at (1) His teachings, and (2) what He did: He gave to the world the greatest teachings it had ever heard, or ever will hear. His words impacted the minds of the people who lived in that day as if they had been hit by a sledge hammer . . . “No man ever spoke like this man!” (John 7:46). And His words have continued to impact the minds of every generation since then, world wide! And His deeds . . . “simply amazing” would best describe what He did. We have four accounts of His life that open the New Testament, and they are full of what He did. And yet, the last of these writers ends his narrative with these words: “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25).

Make your life count! Tell people about Jesus . . . what He taught and what He did. And follow His example of love, kindness, and gentleness. †

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*Jesus lifted childhood up and set it in their midst. If the patter of little feet on the stairs and the sound of little voices in the house are music to us, and if the pressure of little fingers and the touches of little lips can make us thrill with gratitude and prayer, we owe this sunshine to Jesus Christ.*



# The Prudent Pause

Tim Nichols

We live in a time in which restraint and self-discipline are not widely considered to be virtues. Impulse guides behavior more than reason. The gap between the impulse and the resulting action is sometimes so small that, to many, it seems not to exist. Many seem to be willing to pronounce any **act** justified if the **impulse** that prompted it is in any way justified.

But we are accountable to God for our actions whether the world recognizes our accountability or

does not. When tempted to do a thing that is wrong, we are equipped with the God-given ability to pause and think before acting. What happens during that pause may have eternal consequences. The Philadelphia Youth Study Center used to have this slogan: "The difference between the delinquent and the non-delinquent youth is the pause between the temptation and the act." The slogan is just as true if we delete the word "youth."

As we pause in the midst of temptation we ought to remind ourselves that we do not usually have to act swiftly. We sometimes make rash decisions rather than allow ourselves to choose our actions or words slowly and deliberately (Proverbs 6:18; Romans 3:15; James 1:19). Slow down. Widen the gap between the impulse and the action.

Take the time to think about the earthly consequences of your actions.

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How will your actions affect your family, the church, your friends, or your own reputation? Do you want to live with those consequences?

Take the time to consider all of your options. Under pressure we sometimes develop "tunnel vision." We see only one course of action when, in fact, there are many options available to us. Look for them. At least one of your options will always be morally right (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Take the time to consider the eternal consequences (Revelation 21:8). The fear motive may not be the "highest" motive in the rating system that some brethren use, but we ought to be grateful that God has revealed both His goodness and His severity (Romans 11:22). If a knowledge of God's wrath helps us to gain one ounce of resolve to do

right and avoid evil, then we ought to be pleased to have such knowledge.

Take the time to contemplate the goodness of God. He is the source of every good gift (James 1:17). He loved you enough to give His Son that you might have eternal life (John 3:16). Pause to think of the debt of gratitude that you owe.

Pause to consider God's Word. It contains divine guidance that can keep you from evil (Psalm 119:9-16). Sometimes in the midst of temptation, when tempers or passions are hottest, we search the Word of God less when we need it most. It is during such times that we would do well to heed the words of our Heavenly Father, Who said, "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10). †

**Tim Nichols preaches for the Lord's church in Keyser, West Virginia.**

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### Just a Moment . . . .

Modern life is geared to the clock. It is futile to think we can evade the tyranny of the ticking time-piece. An early educational task is learning to tell time, but an even more valuable lesson is learning what time tells us. Some become slaves to the clock, and clock-watchers are not always the best workers, but those who long for eternity need to pay attention to the clock.

Clocks remind us that time only comes one second at a time, and that is how life is lived. If you want to be the person of the hour, learn first to make every second count.

"Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15,16).

— Olden Cook

# Decisions

## Dalton Key

We are constantly faced with the task of making decisions, the outcome of which may affect our quality of life here, and determine our eternal destiny “over there.” Decisions which have to do with right and wrong are of great importance.

We cannot be free from the responsibility of decision-making. The following are a few guidelines which may be of help to you in your decision-making.

**Does the Bible specifically mention this thing? If so, is it condemned or condoned?** Two examples of sins specifically forbidden would be (1) sexual relations outside marriage (Hebrews 13:4) and (2) lying (Colossians 3:9; Revelation 21:8).

**Does this fit within the framework of the Bible’s perfect principles?** For instance, one of the more basic principles of the Bible teaches that man is to work for what he has (Genesis 3:19; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). One who expects to live off the wealth of others, or receive “something for nothing,” would be in violation of this principle.

**Will this harm my body?** According to inspiration, we are not our own; we are the Lord’s (1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Romans 14:7,8).

**Will this help (or hurt) my Christian influence?** In all that we do and say, we must be “*an example of the believers*” (1 Timothy 4:12; Philippians 2:15; Matthew 5:15).

**Will this strengthen (or weaken) my fellow Christians?** “*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*” (Romans 14:19).

**Will this be injurious to anyone’s health or reputation?** Paul tells us that “*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor*” (Romans 13:10).

**Are my motives pure?** In Christianity, not only are actions important, but the motives behind the actions are important as well (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Galatians 5:26; Matthew 6:1-18).

**Will this make me a stronger Christian?** Anything which would discourage from spiritual growth should certainly be avoided.

**Ten years from now will I look back on having done this with sorrow**



or rejoicing? "The memory of the just is blessed" (Proverbs 10:7).

*Would Christ do this?* This provides the acid test. The mind of Christ is to be our mind (Philippians 2:5); He is to be our example in all things (1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21). †

Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches in Amarillo, Texas, U. S. A.

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## *"Accentuate The Positive, Eliminate The Negative"*

- *Cultivate a pleasing disposition.*
- *Learn to be tolerant.*
- *Genuinely love people.*
- *Be as courteous as possible.*
- *Follow the Golden Rule.*
- *Obey God rather than men.*
- *Guard your temper.*
- *Watch your words.*
- *Purpose to do right, regardless.*
- *Be a peacemaker, not a peacebreaker.*
- *Cast no stone unless you are perfect.*
- *Disarm your enemy by admitting your faults.*
- *Understand that others have problems too.*
- *Judge righteous judgment.*
- *Be faithful to the Lord and to His church.*
- *Set up a schedule of prayer and Bible reading.*
- *Wear a smile and the world will smile with you.*
- *Read the Lord's sermon on the mount.*
- *Find the verse that says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

- *W. A. Holley*

# GOD'S CARE

Don W. Walker

*“Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Psalm 37:24, 25).*

The fact of God's constant care is displayed all the way through the Sacred Text. Peter wrote that we should be found *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”* (1 Peter 5:7). The writer of Hebrews records these comforting words. *“ . . . he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:5, 6).

We thrill to the words of the Psalmist when he wrote, *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* (Psalm 46:1). One of the most well-known of the Psalms also centers around this wonderful thought. *“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want . . . ”* (Psalm 23). When Jesus challenged

the apostles with the great commission He promised, *“ . . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”* (Matthew 28:20).

All of these passages and many more should give us strength and courage to press on in this chaotic and wicked world. When I truly understand and believe that *“all things work together for good to them that love God”* (Romans 8:28), then I will follow through with His desires, knowing that *“If God is for us”* no one can be against us victoriously (Romans 8:31).

Appreciating the all-seeing eye of God and the provisions for victory that He has provided (Psalm 139 and 1 Corinthians 15:57) will give us confidence in what we can accomplish for good.

When we are overwhelmed with the every day rigors of life, we must remember that we have to *“lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and... run with patience the race that is set before us”* (Hebrews 12:1). †

**Don W. Walker preaches the Gospel in Stephenville, Texas, U. S. A.**

# D SREGARDING THE D RECTIONS

Bill McFarland

One of the most moving accounts in all the Gospel record is the story of the Lord's cleansing of the leper, as told in Mark 1:40-45. Mark vividly tells us how the leper came confessing his convictions that Jesus could make him clean. The Lord, moved with compassion, reached out to touch him and heal him. He then strictly charged the man to say nothing to anyone and to do the things the law of Moses required.

The story, however, does not end there. Despite the Lord's instructions, this fellow went out *"and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter"* (Mark. 1:45).

I can understand why he might have done it. He must have been so excited over what had happened that he felt he just had to tell people. Maybe what the Lord said just had not made any impression on him.

But the fact of the matter is that

the Lord's direction can't be disregarded without unfavorable consequences. In this case the result was that Jesus' ministry was hampered. What the leper did caused such a stir that the Lord could no more enter openly into a city to teach.

Today if we are not careful, we begin to assume that certain of the Lord's directions don't make much difference. We decide to do what **WE** think is fitting. The thought seems to be that unless **WE** see some good reason for obeying the Lord, we need not do so.

What we need to remember is this: there are always reasons for what the Lord asks of His people. His ways are good and wise. When His will is ignored there are always consequences, either for ourselves or for others. †

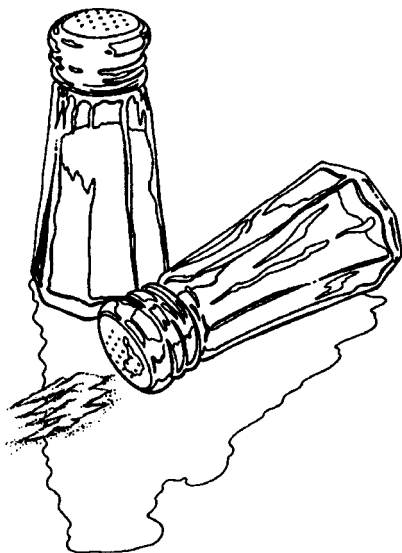
**Bill McFarland preaches for the National and High congregation in Springfield, Missouri, U. S. A.**

# Salt and Light

Wayne Barrier

Christians are described in many different ways in the Bible. These descriptions range from “peculiar people” to “saints” and “ambassadors.” Each descriptive term helps the student of God’s word understand the way Christians should worship, live, think, relate to each other, and deal with the world. The description of believers as recorded in Matthew 5:13-16 is especially important as Christians often find themselves as a minority in society. Jesus says:

*“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp-stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men, that*



*they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

These verses of Scripture are among many that indicate that Christians will often find themselves in the minority. Human reasoning and conventional wisdom tell us that we must be in the majority, and aligned with the “group having consensus” to have influence and power to effect the behavior and belief of others. Jesus teaches otherwise. These verses are especially encouraging as we struggle with the seemingly overwhelming majority who are not Christians.

First, if we are “salt with flavor,” we can do just as a small

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quantity of salt when used to flavor and preserve food. We can change the majority. We can keep our flavor by maintaining our faith in God. We tend to become discouraged and retreat when we realize we're in the minority position as a faithful Christian. We must realize our responsibility in this situation. If we don't, we are good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

Christians are not only the salt of the earth, but the light of the world. A small candle can give enough light for many to find their way in darkness. A few faithful Christians can make a lot of light in a world of darkness. Christians must let their lights shine so others can know how to live in light too. Today's world is filled with darkness — every sin imaginable. Christians are the only hope that the darkness can be penetrated. We can stop some of the merciless killing, human abuse, dishonesty, godlessness, infidelity, and the multitude of other sins destroying the world and the quality of life today.

Our lights cannot be seen and our salt will not be spread where needed without effort. As Christians we are commanded in Matthew 28:19,20 to *"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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded*

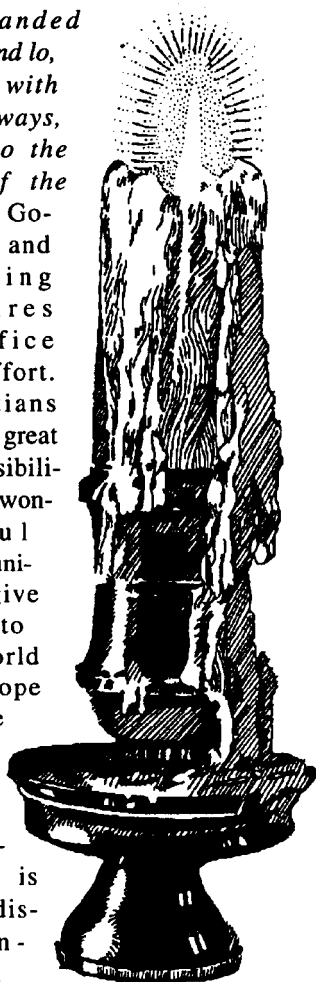
*you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Going and teaching requires sacrifice and effort. Christians have a great responsibility and wonderful opportunity to give light to the world and hope to the hopeless.

Being a minority is not a disadvantage.

Christians have God's help, always.

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# Count It All Joy

Frances Parr

One of the most difficult tasks a Christian undertakes, it would seem, is to follow the advice in James 1:2 and "*count it all joy whenever you fall into various trials.*" How can anyone feel joyful when a beloved relative dies, one's home burns to the ground, the job is lost which supports the family, or any of the millions of problems people are forced to endure in earthly life?

When terrible things happen to people striving to pattern themselves after Jesus it is puzzling, to say the least. Jesus Himself said in John 10:10 that He had come so that we might not only have life, but have it more abundantly. Is there a conflict between His words and the message of James?

Reading further in the first chapter of James one can see a pattern emerging. An exercise in a college language course is to take a sentence and use the last word as the beginning of another thought. This process is followed until a full cycle is achieved. James used this method in verses 2-6 to illustrate the growth of a Christian. Trials are tests, testing reveals faith, faith

encourages perseverance or patience, patience produces maturity, and in maturity there is wisdom.

He then goes on to build on the thought again. If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God. Wisdom is not a miraculous gift from Him. He teaches it lesson by lesson, using the method above. In the work place it has been named apprenticeship, training for service, on-the-job training, and various other descriptive titles. God instituted it — learning by doing.

Jesus, in heaven equal to God, became flesh and blood on earth. One of the reasons for this was so that He could endure, first-hand, the trials and tribulations of humans. Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15 says He was tempted in every way, such as we are, and suffered because of those temptations. Having felt exactly as we do, He is able to understand and help those who are tempted or have problems of any kind.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:7-16 that Christ gave "gifts" to His followers. Listed are those "gifted" as prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They were to prepare

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

God's people, or the church, for works of service. He wanted Christians to learn and practice these works until they (or we) were united and mature in the fullness of Him.

As we pass through the events — pleasant and excruciating — of this life, why not consider that we can benefit from “on-the-job training,” so to speak? A mother who has lost a child can empathize completely with another woman who has suffered this tragedy. She can say, “I understand how you feel; I've been there, too.”

A man who has been out of work and tried to cope with feeding, clothing, and sheltering his family during a time when no money was coming in can fully share the anguish when a friend loses his job. While anyone in the Family of Christ can sympathize and feel sorrow at another's unfortunate situation, the one who has been there is personally able to understand more completely.

The Bible has scores of illustrations of God testing His special people. He wanted them to learn how strong or weak they were. In school, teachers test students to determine their levels of learning. Each one of us daily tests many things, for the same reason God tested His children. In the kitchen, a finger is tapped in the middle of a

cake to see if it is done. When the winter wind is frigid, a person checks doors and windows, making sure they are tightly shut. Games testing ourselves in Biblical knowledge are both fun and rewarding. The list could go on and on.

This is not to say that in times of adversity a person should feel that God is responsible or looking on with approval. We are told, however, that no matter what the nature of the problem, God can cause it to work for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

If trials are viewed in the perspective of being another step in the equipping or preparing for service to others, one can indeed “*count it all joy*”. Nobody can be happy about soul-wrenching events in their lives. It is possible, however, to realize that the experiences of each day can be used in more and more extensive service to the Master.

*“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you. To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen”*  
(1 Peter 5:10,11). †

**Frances Parr is a Christian writer living in Olden, Missouri, U. S. A.**



# It's Great To Serve

Tom Kelton

The role of a servant is not one most people seek. Serving seems automatically to put one in a lower position than those being served. But being a servant is the ideal for the Christian. In Philippians 2:3,4 Paul wrote, "*Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*"

Often we do what we do to advance ourselves. Sometimes our service is performed for purely selfish reasons. Our desire for personal prestige is sometimes an even stronger motivation than our desire for wealth. It means a great deal to us to be admired, respected, and esteemed. We want others to know how important we are.

When we are determined to conquer or defeat others, we put ourselves in competition with everyone else. Even the disciples were not free from



this temptation. There was intense competition among them. When they argued who was the greatest, Jesus said, *"Whoever would be great among you must be your servant."* But what Jesus said seemed to them to be a mistake. Even after three years of close association with the Master, the disciples still found this strange teaching difficult to understand.

On the night in which He was betrayed, Jesus demonstrated what it means to be a servant. He took a towel and basin of water and washed the disciples' feet. He said, *"I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you . . . A servant is not greater than his master"* (John 13:15,16). It seems contradictory that immediately after this incident, when Jesus performed a slave's duty and identified serving with true greatness, He said, *"Now is the Son of Man glorified and in him God is glorified."*

Maybe Jesus was able to be so humble because He never lost sight of who He was. He was able to humble Himself and become nothing because He knew with certainty that He was the Son of God. If we can remember who we are, follow the example of Jesus, and humble ourselves, we will achieve true greatness. †

**Tom Kelton is a writer and preacher living at Pharr, Texas, U. S. A.**

## Be a Friend

Take time for friendship when you  
can.

The hours fly swiftly, and the need  
That presses on your fellowman,  
May fade away at equal speed  
And you may sigh before the end,  
That you have failed to play the  
friend.

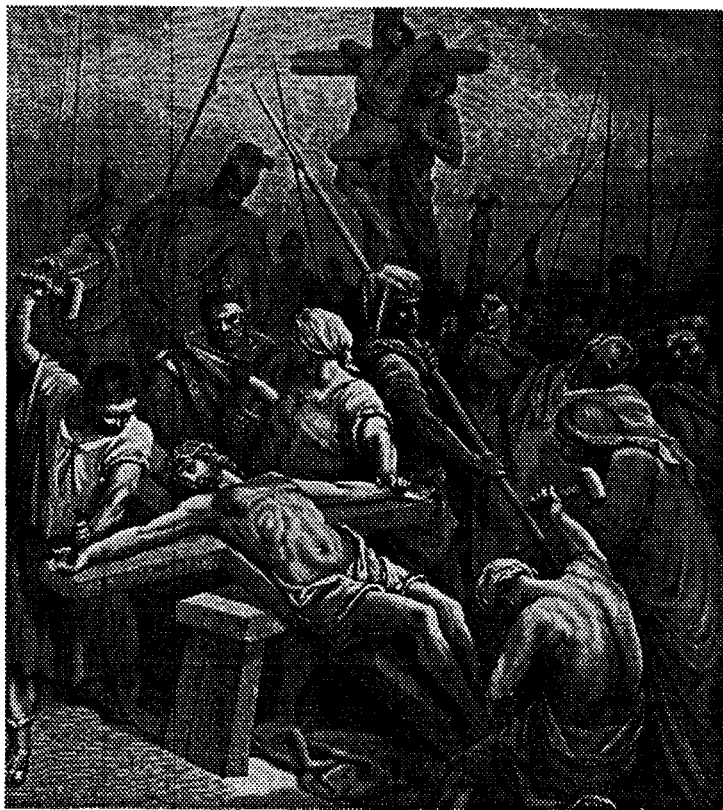
Not all life's pride is born in fame;  
Not all the joy from work is won  
Too late we hang our heads in shame,  
Remembering good we could have  
done.

Too late we wish that we had stayed,  
To comfort those who called for aid.

Take time to do the little things  
Which leave the satisfactory  
thought,

When other joys have taken wings,  
That we have labored as we ought  
That in a world where all contend,  
We often stopped to be a friend.

— From Gilroy Church of Christ



# *Ye Know Not What Ye Ask*

Owen Cosgrove

Everything was beginning to happen at once — the faultfinding questions, the triumphal entry, the second cleansing of the Temple, the crucifixion — so much was going on. The time was passing so quickly.

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Egos were rampant. *"Who's the greatest?" "You are not going to wash my feet." "To what purpose was this waste? We could have added that money to the treasury . . ." "If all should be offended, I will never be offended."*

Even Zebedee's wife, bowing and scraping in obeisance, had a very selfish motive. "I want you to make my boys First and Second Vice President in your new kingdom." How often are our ambitions totally out of touch with reality and spirituality?

*"Are you able to drink of the cup I am about to drink?"* Jesus asked. *"We are able,"* they replied. They had no idea what they were saying. They couldn't even stay awake during His agony in Gethsemane.

The betrayal, Peter's denial, the mob, the trials, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the beatings, the ridicule, the disgrace, the disappointment, the fatigue, the excruciating pain — oh, so little we often realize what pain and burdens others bear! So is the cross to everyone who seeks Christianity as a fun trip down glory road. So is everyone who is more interested in being a "big shot" than an humble servant in Christ's kingdom.

"The rulers of the Gentiles love to appear to be important — but this is not what I want for you. For you two who have made this request and for you others who are so indignant, I want you to learn to be servants and to sacrifice of yourselves."

Within ten years, James lay dead, killed by the sword by the authority of Herod Agrippa I. Years later the beloved apostle John, exiled to Patmos, wrote the stately, magnificent, and majestic book of Revelation, made all the more rich and grand by the bitterness and loneliness of persecution suffered almost from the very inception of the church.

"Father, forgive us of our pride. Forgive us of egotism and vainglory. Thank you for Your love for us in whatever suffering we must bear for Your cause. Help us from it to appreciate more than ever what our Savior has done for us. In His Name. Amen." †

**Owen Cosgrove is a writer and preacher living in Waxahachie, Texas, U. S. A.**

### What of Tomorrow

I do not know what still awaits,  
Or what the morrow brings;  
But with the glad salute of faith  
I hail its opening wings!

For this I know — that in my Lord  
Shall all my needs be met;  
And I can trust the heart of Him  
Who has not failed me yet.

# What Does It Mean To Be Faithful To Christ?

**Don L. Norwood**

*Faithfulness to the Lord means that a person will completely trust the Lord and show this trust by doing one's best to obey the Lord's Word.* Christ Himself is the prime example of this kind of faithfulness (Hebrews 3:1-6; Hebrews 5:7-9). A person must be convinced that he or she is lost in sin (all responsible people are lost in sin until they are reconciled unto God in Christ, Romans 3:23; John 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:1-3; John 3:36). He or she must learn the Gospel facts, that Christ came and gave His life to save everyone. That person then must choose to become obedient to Christ and be saved, or ignore the Gospel and continue to be lost. In deciding to obey Christ, one must come to realize that it requires complete obedience with the whole heart (Luke 14:25-33; Matthew 16:24,25). One must realize that repentance requires that the person turn to God with a desire to learn and obey His will (Matthew 7:21;

Romans 12:1,2).

*Doing the Lord's will requires some suffering along life's journey* (1 Peter 1:3-9; 5:5-11; 4:16-18). In these times of suffering one must be faithful to the Lord and be patient about it (James 1:12). Being faithful to the Lord requires that a person put away certain attitudes of mind and replace these with an attitude that the Lord teaches (Colossians 3:5-17; Ephesians 4:17-32). Being faithful requires that one put away the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:13-21) and do the works that are taught by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24; Titus 3:3-8).

*Being faithful to the Lord requires that we learn to love everyone, even our enemies* (Matthew 5:43-48). This love (Greek: Agape) causes us always to act in others' best interest and seek to do them good, even when they behave in an undeserving manner.

*To be obedient to Christ, one must assemble with the local church*

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

*of Christ regularly and worship with the spirit and the understanding* (John 4:23,24; Hebrews 10:23-30; 1 Corinthians 14:14,15). To be faithful one **must** take advantage of every opportunity to study and learn the Lord's will (Ephesians 5:15-17; 2 Timothy 2:15). To be faithful to the Lord, we must all do our best to learn to teach others the Lord's Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 24-26). We must also do our own part in building up (edifying) our brethren (Ephesians 4:15,16; Galatians 6:2-5).

If a member of the Lord's body misses the assemblies of the church unless he is too ill or otherwise unable to attend, that person is NOT faithful to the Lord. Christ's Word (the whole New Testament) is the law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12). Transgression of His teaching is sin (1 John 3:4). If we willfully sin, then we separate ourselves from His blood that cleanses us of sin (Hebrews 10:26). When a person neglects to worship regularly and neglects to study the Word of the Lord, that person fails to ". . . eat the flesh of the son of man and drink His blood" (John 6:48-58). This means to learn and assimilate His Word in our minds and to remember His great sacrifice for us when He died upon the cross (see John 6:52-58). When we fail to assemble to break bread (commune with the

Lord and His people, 1 Corinthians 10:16,17) and feed on the Lord's Word, we tread under foot the Son of God and count the blood of His covenant of none effect (read Hebrews 10:23-30).

Yes, we must be faithful until the time of our death (Hebrews 3:12-14). If we will be, we will inherit the crown of eternal life (James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). We must not neglect so great a salvation (Hebrews 2:3). †

Don L. Norwood preaches for the church in Mason, Texas, U. S. A.

### Why Don't You Go To Worship?

**TOO BUSY:**

Read Hebrews 9:27.

**TOO MANY HYPOCRITES:**

Read Revelation 3:4.

**TOO TIRED:**

Read Matthew 11:28.

**SOMEONE HURT**

**MY FEELINGS:**

Read Matthew 6:12.

**CLOTHING NOT**

**GOOD ENOUGH:**

Read James 2:1-5.

**CHURCH NOT POPULAR:**

Read Matthew 7:4,13,14.

**HAD COMPANY:**

Read Luke 10:38-42.

**WEATHER TOO BAD:**

Read Romans 8:35.

**DON'T WANT TO:**

Read Hebrews 4:1.

# *Life's Blank Pages*

**Eulene Ramsey**

Do you live life one day at a time? Some people never learn this art, and others learn it only after some calamity in their life forces them to do so. I often wonder if the reason the Lord chopped time up into hunks of only 24 hour segments was because He knows that most of us weak humans cannot deal with more than that at one time.

I like to think of my life as a notebook filled with blank pages, to be used one page per day. When I awake in the mornings I see a white blank page ready for me to record the events of that one day. In order to fill that page with wholesome items it is vital that I start the day with a prayer to the Father, asking His help for the task ahead, and thanking Him for all the other days He has given me.

That early morning prayer impresses on my mind the wonder-

ful privilege of calling myself a Christian, and serves to remind me that along with that privilege comes an equal responsibility to see that my actions never bring reproach to that Name. It also reminds me that He will be my partner for the day. In that early prayer I need to ask Him to help me recognize opportunities for doing good. Have you ever rushed right by a wonderful opportunity, only later to realize that you could have helped someone along their way? I need to remember Jesus' account of the judgment when he can say, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (Matthew 25:35,36), and to realize that each time I help a fellowman I am also helping Him.

Before I start writing on the blank page it will help tremendously if I remember one simple command which will influence my relationship with every person I meet during the day: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). If I could incorporate this directive into my Christian character to such a degree that it becomes a part of my very being, many of the problems of life would be solved!

Since much of my day will revolve around my family, it is doubly important that I make that relationship one of peace,

love, and unity. It may be important that I ask Him for help during this new day to control my tongue, to be patient when I feel impatient, to speak words of encouragement rather than to criticize and find fault. The Christian home plays such a vital part in today's world that I should be careful of the part I play.

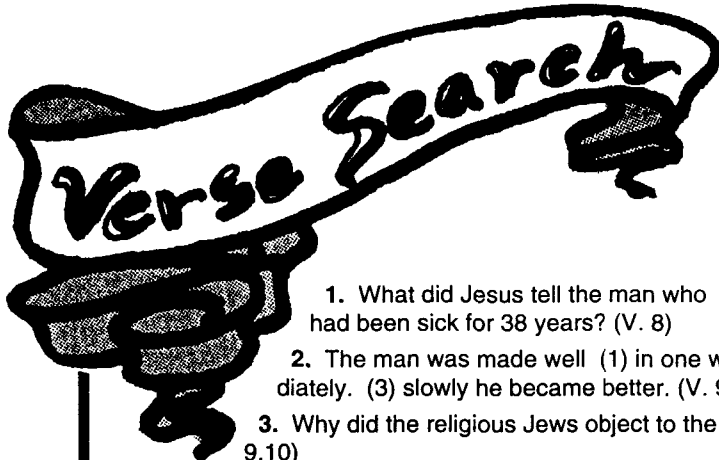
Then when the day is over and I have filled my blank page with an account of my activities, it is important that I take time to think back and review the page. After I have checked it carefully and honestly, it is time to once again go to my Father in prayer. I need to thank Him for the blessings of that period of time. If there are indications of weakness on my part, I need to recognize those and ask Him to help in overcoming them. If there are instances of friction with anyone, the time to make things right is before that day has been filed away.

The power of prayer is so great that I would be foolish not to avail myself of its blessings. Only when I have started each page with prayer, and ended it with another prayer, am I ready to write "finished" to that page and look forward to a new one tomorrow.

**Eulene Ramsey works for the Lord with the J. C. Choate family in Winona, Mississippi, U. S. A.**



# Verse Search



Supply the missing information from the gospel of John, chapter five.

1. What did Jesus tell the man who had been sick for 38 years? (V. 8)
2. The man was made well (1) in one week. (2) immediately. (3) slowly he became better. (V. 9)
3. Why did the religious Jews object to the healing? (V. 9,10)
4. Contrary to the requirements of deep personal faith made by modern "healers", did this man have faith in Jesus' ability to heal him? Did he even know who Jesus was? (V. 12,13))
5. Why did the religious Jews want to kill Jesus? (V.16)
6. The second reason the Jews wanted to kill Jesus was that, He also said that \_\_\_\_\_ was His \_\_\_\_\_, making Himself \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ " (V. 29)
7. To whom has the Father committed all judgment? (V. 22)
8. Can we truly believe in and honor God if we do not believe in and honor Jesus Christ, His Son? (V. 23)
9. Whose voice will herald the resurrection of the dead to life? (V. 25)
10. "For as \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ in Himself, so \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ to have \_\_\_\_\_ in Himself." (V. 26)
11. Who will be resurrected from the grave? the righteous, to what? the evil, to what? (V. 28,29)
12. Jesus named three witnesses to His identity as God's Son. Who or what were they? (V. 33, 36, 37)
13. The Jews searched and studied the scriptures to understand what God said about eternal life, but they did not see the writings about \_\_\_\_\_ . (V. 39)
14. "But you are not \_\_\_\_\_ to come to \_\_\_\_\_ that you may have \_\_\_\_\_." (V. 40)
15. In whose name, or by whose authority, did Jesus come into the world? (V. 43)

*[See inside of back cover for answers.]*

# She Shall Be Praised

Jeril (Polly) Cline

“All right, I’m home. Now what?”

Let’s look at the ideal manager of the home, the woman in Proverbs 31. Open your Bible and circle the verbs, for those action words reveal the inner and outer person: she does, looks for, works with, brings, rises, gives, considers, buys, plants, girds, makes, senses, stretches, grasps, extends, is not afraid, sews, supplies, smiles, shares, teaches. Here is a productive, purposeful, content woman. She is busy with a variety of endeavors, all of which have to do with the management of her home, and which are done from her home base.

Her relationship with her husband is mentioned first and last, verses 11 and 28. Their mutual love, trust, and honor is primary to the success of their home. The husband is secure in his wife’s ability to manage their resources. He knows his own character is protected by her in word (“*in her tongue is the law of kindness*”) and deed (“*she does him good all the days of her life*”). She is the guardian of his weaknesses, and he guards hers. Because of the confidence each has

in the other, they are able to do their work well, each fulfilling his/her God-given role.

From early morning till evening (verses 15 and 18) her time is spent diligently caring for those in her household, as well as those less fortunate, the poor and needy (verse 20). There is no time for gossip, television soap operas, or feeling sorry for herself. She is creative with what she has been given, and like the two talent person in Matthew 25:22, she has taken what God has entrusted to her and gained more.

It is not surprising that the Lord is revered by her, verse 30. He has established her priorities. This is why she is able to reach her maximum capacity for good. He is blessing her labors. As surely as Potiphar saw that God was blessing Joseph’s management of his household, those who know this woman and her husband realize that God is blessing their home.

Not incidentally, her children honor her. They see her worth and understand the values she has lived out before them. Hard work, a sense of gain, the joy of life . . . all

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these make for a wonderful mother — a mother who does not feel like she is being stifled, a mother who does not resent her children, a mother who does not feel unfulfilled because she is “only a homemaker.” This woman is not caught up in the way the world measures success. She is not self-deceived. She is not vain about her charms. She is happy to be what God meant for her to be. She finds fulfillment in the place God intended her to find it.

Can I learn from her? Must I do all she did? Yes and No.

I need to pray about how I view my God-given role. I need to grow in faith to trust that God will help me be the woman He created me to be, with what I have, where I am today.

God never expects more than I am capable of doing, 2 Corinthians 8:12. But He does expect me to trust Him for the power to live and do that which He has asked. No soldier serves at his own expense, 1 Corinthians 9:7. What God asks of me He will empower me to do, 2 Corinthians 4:7. And in the way of God, the very things we want come not so often as we think they do, but by a route that requires faith/trust in Him. To try to achieve it by any means other than His eventually underscores the great distance between our answers and His, between failure and success.

The woman who is learning to live like this shall be praised, Proverbs 31:30, by God and man. †

**Jeril (Polly) Cline is a Christian writer living in Blue Ridge, Georgia, U. S. A.**

### What Can You Do?

What more can we do than live a Christian life? Nothing!

Being a Christian means following Jesus' example, speaking the truth, obeying the authorities, repaying our debts, forgiving trespasses, caring for the truly needy, loving one another, being a good neighbor, helping the sick, worshipping God, guarding our tongues, hating sin, trusting God's promises, obeying God's commands, providing for our families, abstaining from sexual immorality, being a loving mate, training our children, obeying our parents, being patient, repenting of sins, being a good worker, confronting sinful brothers, teaching the lost, giving generously, and more.

When you think your life has little effect on the world, think again. This is bearing fruit. You can't do more than this.

— Rick Cunningham

THE WORTH OF A WOMAN . . . .

# Sarah Called Her Husband 'Lord'

Betty Burton Choate

Sarah was an unusually beautiful young woman in the land of Ur, in what is Iraq today. She was pledged in marriage to Abraham, her half-brother.

What type of woman was Sarah? Was beauty her only asset? What can we learn of her from the Scriptures?

1. She loved and respected her husband. 1 Peter 3:6 says, "...Sarah obeyed Abraham, *calling him Lord...*" Obviously the word was used sincerely, because Sarah's life showed her dedication to her husband. When God called Abraham, telling him to leave his home and his people, Sarah accompanied him willingly. Such travels, in places of heat and famine, living in tents, would have been difficult for a woman but Sarah followed wherever her husband led. Throughout the remainder of her life she had no settled home, yet the Scriptures record no complaint.

With the same attitude, Christian women are encouraged to

be submissive to their husbands (1 Peter 3:5).

2. Though Sarah was extremely beautiful, she was an example of modesty. The earlier verses in 1 Peter 3 admonish Christian women to conduct themselves in a godly manner: "*Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God*" (1 Peter 3:1-4).

3. But was Sarah an oppressed wife, forced to submit to her husband's wishes? No. On two occasions, while living as foreigners in countries strange to them, Abraham was afraid that Sarah's great beauty

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would cause his own death. *"He said to Sarai his wife, 'Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you that they will say, "This is his wife;" and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you'"* (Genesis 12:11-13).

Admittedly, Abraham's solution to his fear was cowardly. It showed a lack of character and a lack of faith in the God who had brought him there. But his approach to Sarai was that of a husband who was pleading for help in preserving his own life, not that of a master giving orders to an inferior.

As a godly woman, willing to risk herself to protect her husband, Sarah obeyed Abraham's request.

4. In one point, though, Sarah made a mistake common to humanity. God had promised Abraham a son through Sarah, but ten years passed and still there was no child. Genesis 16 tells the story of Sarah's solution to the problem. Having passed the age of child-bearing herself, Sarah adopted the custom of the people of the land and gave her servant to Abraham, saying that any child born would thus become her own. The handmaid conceived, and haughty competition was the fruit

in her heart. The son, Ishmael, was born and he grew up to mock the promised son that God did eventually give to Abraham and Sarah. Ishmael's descendants became the enemies of Isaac's descendants, an enmity which continues 3500 years later between Arabs and Israelites.

Sometimes even godly women waver in faith or grow impatient as they "wait on God." When we try to step in and do God's work for Him, we create many problems. How much wiser we would be to *"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord"* (Psalm 27:14)!

5. Hebrews 11 speaks of the faith of people of old. Abraham is named in the list, but so is Sarah. *"By faith Sarah also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised"* (Hebrews 11:11). This passage helps us to realize that *it was as vital for Sarah to have full faith in God as it was for Abraham.* A woman today is not saved or counted faithful because of the obedience of her husband. She must live and die by *her own faith* and relationship to God.

May we learn from Sarah's faithful example. †

**Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, Editor-in-Chief of *The Voice of Truth International*.**

# The Question of Christian Marriage

**Mark Hall**

When a Christian contemplates marriage, it must be from the point of view of wanting to please God. The first question to be answered is whether God sees that it is best for a given individual to be married or to remain single. His established plan is for *marriage and a home* (Matthew 19:4-6), but both Jesus and Paul said that there are exceptions: *there are those who remain single for the sake of their lives or their work in the kingdom* (Matthew 19:11,12; 1 Corinthians 7:7,8, 32-35).

But if it seems to be God's will for one to marry, several other things need to be considered:

## **What is the purpose of marriage?**

If we look at God's design, we see that from the beginning He meant for two people to become one flesh and to serve as helpers to each other (Genesis 2:20-24).

But even above the purpose of marriage, **what is our main priority as Christians?** The answer is obvious: first and foremost we need to be imitators of Christ, seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. *If these are our highest goals, should they not dictate concerning whom we should or should not marry?* Is there any justifiable reason for a Christian to marry someone who is not a follower of Christ? How can we be *one* with someone and have them be a *helper* to us, if their entire basis for motivation, and their world view, are so different from our own? This is not to say that a



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Christian is too “good” to marry a non-Christian, but merely that if Christ-likeness is our *first priority*, *everything* in our lives must exist *only* to serve that *first priority*.

In the law of Moses, God forbade the Israelites to marry people from the surrounding nations (Deuteronomy 7:3,4). He clearly stated that the reason for this was that **marriage outside of their faith brought with it the danger of being led away from God to worship idols**. This danger exists for Christians as well. By the very nature of our mission on this earth — teaching people about Christ — we must not separate ourselves from unbelievers; but to *become one with an unbeliever in marriage is a different matter*.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14,15, Paul commanded that we not be yoked together with unbelievers, and as part of his reasoning he asked, **“What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?”**

How many times do the Scriptures speak of **unity and its**

**paramount importance in the body of Christ?** In John 17 we read of Christ’s prayer for the disciples, that they should be one even as Jesus and the Father are one. He asked that they be brought to *complete unity* in order that the world might know that God sent Him, and that God loved the disciples even as He loved Jesus.

**What does this plea tell us?** It says that *unity is a natural expression of our lives in Christ* and a testimony to the world of God’s love for us. If we cannot be one with our spouse — *the most important earthly relationship we have* — we *forfeit the opportunity to be nurtured spiritually* by that person, *to be encouraged to strive to be more Christ-like* with each passing day, and *to allow God to manifest His love for us through that relationship*.

How can the Christian choose such losses for himself? †

**Mark Hall is a Christian pediatrician, working with Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, U. S. A.**

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“Somehow it’s such a part of loving you to stand encircled in each other’s arms and bow our heads and word aloud our thanks that He has given us this love.

“And when you are far away, my heart — reaching out to you — also reaches up to God to draw you near through Him . . . .”

— Sun and Shadows  
Betty Burton Choate

# The Older Son

Frank Chesser

He was born in the beauty of innocence. His birth undoubtedly brought great joy to his parents. Like Reuben of old, he was his father's *"firstborn, his might, the beginning of his strength, the excellency of dignity and power"* (Genesis 49:3). No doubt his years of infancy were a ceaseless source of delight to his parents. Surely they must have thrilled at his smile, his childlike laughter, his first word and step.

The birth of a second son multiplied their joy. Moreover, their firstborn would now know the happiness of brotherhood.

Maturity comes clothed in free-will, and the result is often disastrous. Weary of home and eager to taste of a more exciting life, the youngest son requested his portion of the family inheritance, *"took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living"* (Luke 15:13). Poverty and hunger quickly took the pleasure



from sin. Thoughts of parental love and of home entered his heart. Leaving the far country, he made the journey home with the steps of godly sorrow and penitence. His father met and embraced him with compassion and forgiveness. Sounds of feasting and merriment filled the air.

Having learned of his brother's return, the older son refused to join the festivity, rejected his father's tender pleading, and buried himself in self-pity. The beauty of innocence had been replaced by the ugliness of sin. Brotherly love had been replaced by contempt. Parental delight in his childhood had been replaced by sorrow and disappointment. The older son had robed himself in the black cloak of:

**Self-righteousness.** His compliments were for self, his condemnation for his brother. He viewed his performance with perfection, declaring, *"neither transgressed I at*



## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

*any time thy commandment*" (Luke 15:29). He failed to realize that life apart from grace is fantasy, not reality. Man's very existence is directly associated with grace. A portrait of every good thing on earth is a portrait of grace. Without ceasing, God exhibits His grace toward man by giving him *"rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness"* (Acts 13:17). The very nature of grace stamps man as an eternal debtor.

Tragically, the older son felt no need of grace. He based his life on the principle of human merit rather than divine grace. He regarded himself as self-sufficient, having no need of God or man. He was proud, boastful, and arrogant.

**Ingratitude.** His father had *"divided unto them his living"* (Luke 15:12). As the firstborn son, he received a double portion of the family inheritance. His father reminded him *that "all that I have is thine"* (Luke 15:31). However, he had no sense of appreciation for his father's love and benevolence. With his father's wealth at his disposal, his primary concern was with what he had failed to receive. *"Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends"* (Luke 15:29). Instead of "Thank you," it was "Why didn't you. . .?"

**Callousness.** No greater news could have come to the older son

than to learn of his brother's penitence and restoration to parental favor. Tears of joy should have stained his cheeks, and words of love and thanksgiving should have come from his lips. Instead, there were anger and bitterness (Luke 15:28-30).

Sin hardens. *"But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"* (Hebrews 3:13). Sin destroys natural feelings, sensitivity, and tenderness. The heart of the older son was deeply calloused by the destructive attack of sin.

The same parents, teaching, and training do not guarantee that all children in a family will have equal concern for God and spiritual matters. Israel was God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22). God was a perfect father. He taught and trained His son in divine principles of truth and righteousness. However, even flawless instruction and training could not insure an obedient and submissive son. Thus, God declared, *"I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me"* (Isaiah 1:2). Faithful parents must not be blamed for children who exercise their own will by choosing to travel the low road of sin and shame. †

**Frank Chesser preaches in Jacksonville, Florida, U. S. A.**

# DIVORCE — The Truth Comes Out!

Dayton Keesee

The advice of a growing number of psychologists and therapists has changed from two decades ago, when divorce was declared to be the answer for difficult times in marriage. A combination of laxity in morality plus the therapist's inviting advice to dissolve one's marriage saw the divorce rate double in recent years. The fruits of that folly are being so visibly and painfully reaped that common sense demands a new therapy for marital trouble.

In his research and writing on this subject, Bryce J. Christensen finds the following bad fruits fostered by divorces:

**1. Disastrous effects.** The process and aftermath of divorce generally proves a disaster to body, mind, and spirit. It has not proven to be a "path to personal growth and self-fulfillment," as had been formerly promised.

**2. Quality of life deteriorated.** Judith Wallerstein's

research (1980's) declared from a study after 10 years of divorce that in only one case out of 10 had the quality of life "demonstrably improved." In 20% of the cases both former partners were living in a "worsened situation." Anger and a sense of having been exploited and rejected dominated the thinking



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of 40% of the women and 30% of the men.

**3. Effect on children.** "Study after study has documented harmful effects — many of them long term — of parental divorce on children." These include poor academic performance, delinquency, a higher percentage of drug use, poor physical and mental health (for the adults and children), and a higher rate of suicide among adolescents.

From these sobering facts, Christensen wisely concluded that we must now "recognize that divorce is no open door to hope but more likely a trap door to despair." All Bible-loving people should have drawn that conclusion long ago, since God plainly said, "*I hate divorce*" (Malachi 2:16). However, let us remember that God has worked with divorced people, that Christ died for all, and His grace is sufficient to redeem anyone who will respect Him and work righteousness (Jeremiah 3:1-14; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Acts 10:34ff).

May we have His grand spirit as we reach out to all needy souls, and may every husband/wife save their marriages "till death do us part" (see Romans 7:2ff), rather than fall into the evils that divorce fosters! †

**Dayton Keesee preaches for the Eastside church in Midwest City, Oklahoma, U. S. A.**

### Analysis Of A Child's Future

What do I want for this child of mine?

Shall he see riches and fame combine

Into a life of renown, and wealth?

No, but God grant him peace and health.

What do I want for this child I hold?

Shall it be said he was wise and bold,

Able directing his "Master Mind"?

No, but let him be gentle and kind.

What do I want for this child I teach?

Shall he invent some machine to reach

Into earth's secret and unknown part?

No, let him have a humble heart.

What do I want for this child I keep?

Shall he go onward while others weep,

Pushing ahead though the helpless call?

No, but let him be loved by all.

What do I want for his future years?  
Shall I dare hope that he shed no tears?

No, but let laughter and tears combine

Into pure joy for this child of mine.

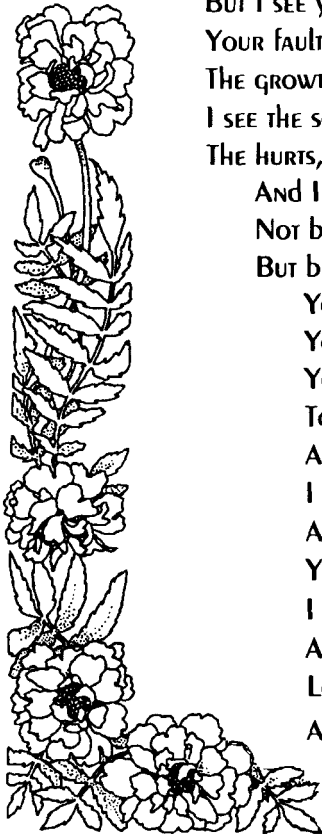
— Mary Oler

# Love's Acceptance

Betty Burton Choate

IN THE NAME OF LOVE,  
SOMETIMES,  
PERFECTION IS PROCLAIMED  
AND BLINDED HEARTS DECEIVE THEMSELVES,  
BUT BLINDNESS IS NOT LOVE . . . .

I LOVE YOU



BUT I SEE YOU AS YOU ARE,  
YOUR FAULTS, YOUR WEAKNESS,  
THE GROWTH YOU NEED TO MAKE;  
I SEE THE SCARS FROM BROKEN DREAMS,  
THE HURTS, FRUSTRATIONS, FEARS . . .  
AND I LOVE YOU,  
NOT BECAUSE I WILL NOT SEE OR CANNOT SEE,  
BUT BECAUSE I SEE THE WHOLE:  
YOUR REACHING UP TO BETTER THINGS,  
YOUR DREAMS,  
YOUR SEARCHING OF YOUR SOUL  
TO KNOW YOURSELF  
AND GROW;  
I SEE YOUR LOVE FOR OTHERS  
AND FOR GOD,  
YOUR SELFLESS LOVE FOR ME;  
I SEE YOU AS YOU ARE,  
ACCEPT YOU AS YOU ARE,  
LOVE YOU AS YOU ARE  
AND FOR ALL YOU LONG TO BE.

— FROM LOVE POEMS

# What Are We Going To Proclaim, And Why?

Ron Bryant

The child of God longs to tell others of his Father, and of Jesus his Lord. The joy of being a child of God is very real and satisfying, and the child of God not only lives in that joy, but longs to tell others of it.

The power of the Gospel rests upon two parts: What Jesus has **done** for us in the purchase of redemption, and what Jesus has **taught** us (the life He wants us to live). What He has done is to be communicated as of “first importance” (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). And, what He requires of us rests upon and is established as valid by the power of His death, burial, and resurrection. His teachings are designed to change our lives, and to secure for us life and immortality (2 Timothy 1:7-11; Hebrews 5:8-9). It is the intrinsic truth of the Gospel that sets the Christian faith apart from every other religious system.

The child of God has a message of hope to proclaim, not just a personal perspective to share. The joy of evangelism is involved with the message of hope, the Gospel of

Christ. The truth of the Gospel is what others need to hear, and is the message that the child of God must communicate. *The proclamation of the Gospel is a necessity, not an option, with the child of God.* The aim in life of God’s child is the fulfillment of a Divine Command — The Great Commission.

If we are children of God, our obedience to Christ is a manifestation of our love for Him. We go with the Gospel because we love Christ. We do not tell others of Jesus for their sake, nor even our own sakes, but for His sake. We tell others of Jesus and of His will for our lives because we are under the control of His love. We are His servants and we want to honor Him. We seek to set forth faithfully what He has done and what He has taught, that He might be honored as others obey Him. †

Ron Bryant preaches for the Camelback congregation in Phoenix, Arizona, U. S. A.

# You Can Be An Andrew!

C. Ellis McGaughey

Upon learning of Jesus, Andrew was not satisfied until he revealed his discovery to Simon Peter, his brother. He wanted to tell him that the Christ had come. Jesus had brought him such joy and happiness that he wanted his brother to share the good news.

His efforts were blessed. The visit paid dividends. A good and honest heart heard the message. So convincing was his story of Christ that a responsive chord was struck in Peter's heart. He offered no excuses. It was the word his soul longed for. He wanted to know Jesus. It was a great day in the lives of both of these men.

The New Testament records no sermons of Andrew. No accounts of his

He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus (John 1:41-42)

missionary journeys are given. We have no record of his writings. As far as history is concerned, his outstanding accomplishment was that he brought his brother to Jesus. He set an example of personal evangelism that warms the heart of all Bible students. His example should inspire us to go out in search of those whom God has placed in our reach. They may be brothers, friends, schoolmates, or business associates.

One of the greatest needs of the church today is more Andrews. There is someone waiting just for you to bring him unto Jesus. It is altogether possible that there are souls who will never be brought to Him unless they are brought by you. Have you done anything about it? †

Before his death, C. Ellis McGaughey had preached the Gospel for many years in the U. S. A.

# Silent Night

**Bob Plunket**

In 1818, in a small village in Austria, Franz Gruber composed a hymn called "Song of Heaven." He sang this hymn in the church service the following evening. A visitor from a nearby town heard the hymn and loved it. He memorized the words and the music. He later taught it to a traveling quartet.

Some thirty-six years later the piece had become so famous that they were searching for the unknown composer. Gruber was found and was told that his hymn was the most beloved "Christmas" hymn of all times under the name "Silent Night." But by now he was an old man and remained obscure and poor until his death in 1863.

Gruber might well have been dead and never even have known how many hearts he touched with his beautiful hymn. Another man picks it up, teaches it, and still others spread it from village to village. Is this not what Jesus had in mind? Jesus said it. Others wrote it down. Still others must spread it and take it to the whole world. The man who heard the beautiful hymn did not

teach it, nor spread it for money, nor duty, but rather because he was moved and inspired by it and wanted to share it with others. What does this say of the silent church? Have we ceased to see and feel the beauty of the glorious message of Jesus Christ? The early church could not help but speak and sing of those things they saw and heard.

And is it not true that we may never know the far-reaching good we may accomplish by what we say, do, write, or pray? The first verse of the hymn says, "Silent Night, Holy Night; all is calm, all is bright." The last verse says, "Silent Night, Holy Night, earth awake, silence break: high your anthems of melody raise."

It's a good thought. It's time to break our silence and lift our voices in word and song of the Jesus who came, who died, who rose and who promises to come again. Few if any of us will ever write a beautiful hymn as Gruber wrote, but don't be discouraged. A woman poured a small container of perfume on Jesus' head. Jesus said, "*Tell of this wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world*" (Matthew 26). "*And one who gives a cup of cold water to a little one,*" said Jesus, "*shall not lose his reward*" (Matthew 10:42). †

**Bob Plunket preaches for the Lord's church in Tuscumbia, Alabama, U.S.A.**

# SORROW IS BETTER THAN LAUGHTER

Gene Carrell

*It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4).*

The words seemed rather strange when I read them! Do we not all identify happiness with joy, fun, laughter, having a good time? Do we not all look upon our fondest memories and connect them with thoughts of pleasure and contentment? Who among us looks with anticipation for the angry little face of a hungry baby, or, contrariwise, fails to report to all concerned (and some who are not concerned) about that baby's first smile? Now comes the language of the sage of Old Testament days telling us that "*Sorrow is better than laughter.*"

Are these words of inspiration trying to suggest that we have it all wrong in life, that we somehow have been mistaken when it comes

to the living of a full, rich, contented life? I think not.

Rather, it seems that the wise man is simply saying that wiser, more enduring lessons can be learned in our hours of grief than can be learned in the empty and momentary excitement of fun and laughter. He had just said that "*It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting.*" I have been to both, and honesty would not allow me to say that I enjoyed the former more than the latter. Of course, I would rather be with friends, telling stories, reminiscing about the circumstances that have created our common memories, but when the night of "feasting" is over, can I indeed carry any-



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thing away from that experience beyond a feeling of euphoria and fun and happiness? Probably not!

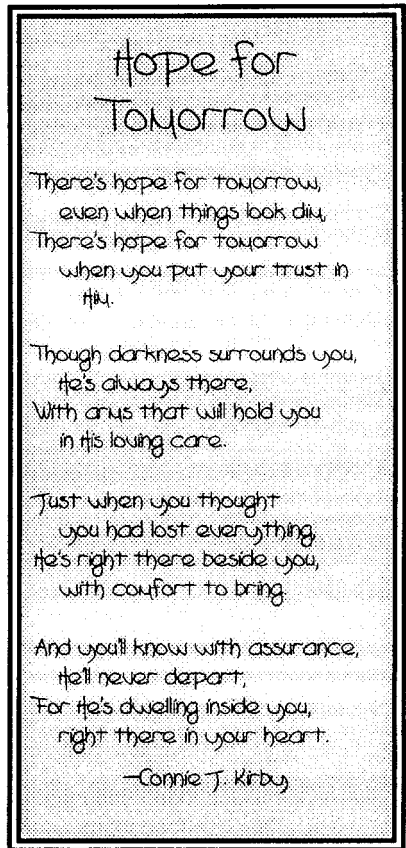
On the other hand, I have spent the night in many a hospital, praying, holding hands with friends who were waiting with loved ones in their last hours, sometimes not knowing what to say or how to say anything. I have watched them jump whenever a nurse or doctor passed by the room. I have gone home exhausted, caught a couple of hours of sleep, and started another day.

Did I carry from those experiences anything worthwhile? Indeed! I learned the deeper meanings of sympathy, seriousness, and the need for eternal preparation. I learned the value of friendship. I learned that life is fragile, fleeting, and fruitless if God is not a part of that life.

Does Solomon somehow contradict his own statement of earlier verses when he said, "*There is nothing better for a man to eat and drink and tell himself that this labor is good*"? Not at all! No condemnation is ever made of the enjoyment of life, even laughter, and, in fact, it is stated that "*a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.*" If Solomon intends any condemnation at all, it would be the condemnation of the reckless frivolity that surrounds so many occasions of laughter. He

seems to be saying that life has a higher purpose than that of reckless abandon, and that life's greater lessons come from the house of mourning. Did not our Lord once say, "*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*"? Lord, "*Teach us to number our days.*" †

**Gene Carrell works with the church in Columbus, Ohio, U. S. A.**



# CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM

Joe Rowe

*And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Mathew 18:2,3).*

Our Lord used very simple illustrations to teach profound lessons.

Jesus had told of His kingdom. His disciples did not understand the nature of this kingdom and were curious, wanting to know who would be greatest in it. He answered by calling a child to Him and said that citizens of His kingdom must have characteristics of the child:

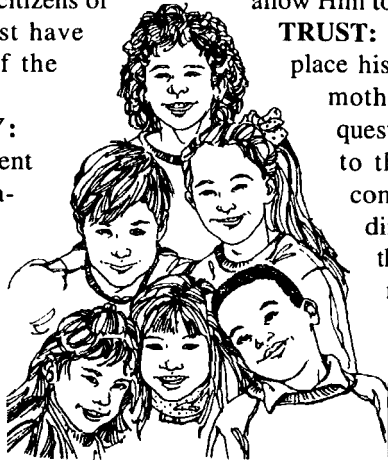
**HUMILITY:**

A child has inherent humility. His nature is that of total dependence and trust, an humble nature like those who would become citizens of His kingdom. In this simple illus-

tration Jesus teaches that we must change the prideful nature which is characteristic of adults, if we want to be admitted into His kingdom! We must put aside our own will, place complete trust in His promises, and become totally dependent on Him to lead us in all that we do. He is our Lord — only if we humbly allow Him to direct us.

**TRUST:** A child will quickly place his hand in the hand of mother or father without question or fear. He looks to them for protection, comfort, assurance, and direction. A citizen of the kingdom of Christ must have the same relationship with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

**SIMPLICITY:** A child doesn't



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possess a self-seeking ambition like that of an adult. He experiences joy and contentment in the simplest things. A child will often play with a box, rather than an expensive toy that came in it. A citizen of the kingdom will find joy in serving the needy, providing both the physical and the spiritual needs of his fellowman. He knows the peace of being content, no matter what his place, no matter what his position in life.

### ACCEPTS INSTRUCTION:

A child not only seeks but readily accepts instruction. He is eager to learn. Often his attention is focused on a single thing until it is mastered. Because he possesses this characteristic, he learns fast. In only three years a child can develop a working knowledge of the language of his parents. And yet adults often fail to develop a working knowledge of the rules of the Kingdom in a lifetime! A citizen of the kingdom must

develop the characteristics of a child.

**LOVE:** A child readily gives and receives love. He doesn't withhold his love from others, but readily gives all the love which the other is willing to receive. He does not consider the color of the skin or other characteristics that adults often allow to become a barrier in giving and receiving love — the greatest attribute of a child of the kingdom!

Jesus didn't have to explain the illustration He used in teaching His disciples. He called a child to Him and told them, "*Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*" They understood. Do we? †

Joe Rowe serves the Lord as an elder in the Nettleton congregation in Jonesboro, Arkansas, U. S. A.

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## Think On This!

"Could I climb to the highest place in Athens, I would lift my voice and proclaim, 'Fellow citizens, why do you turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth, and take so little care of your children, to whom one day you must relinquish it all?'"

— Socrates

**Times and people haven't changed much!**

# “FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

Kerry Holton

*“Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said . . . “Brethren, what shall we do?” . . . “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:36-38).*

Acts 2 is the historical record of the first Gospel sermon. The theme of that message delivered by Peter and the other apostles was: *“Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified”* (Acts 2:36).

Luke records the reaction of the audience: *“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said . . . ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’”* Honest Bible students understand that this question shows that those people wanted to know what they could do to be forgiven of their sin.

Then came God’s answer to their question: *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the for-*

*giveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).

Surely it was clear to those who heard Peter’s response that forgiveness would be the result of their repentance and baptism. Surely they understood that forgiveness would come **after** repentance and baptism, not **before**. To say it another way, Peter was plainly saying that “Repentance + Baptism = Forgiveness.” He was not saying “Repentance = Forgiveness + Baptism.”

And yet, there are some who do not believe Peter’s plain statement. They believe that baptism is not essential to salvation. They accept that repentance is necessary. But, they do not believe baptism is.

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They say the word “for” means “because of” in Acts 2:38. They say then that Peter is commanding baptism “because sins have been forgiven,” rather than “in order to forgive sins.” It is true that “for” can mean “because of,” as in the statement, “He went to prison for murder.” But, it can also mean “in order to.” For example, “He went to the store for milk and bread.” So which is the meaning of “for” in this passage: “because of” or “in order to”?

Sometimes referring to the original language of the New Testament, the Greek language, is beneficial. Sometimes it clarifies the meaning of a passage. Such is the case in Acts 2:38 where the Greek preposition which some of our versions translate “for” is “eis.” This Greek word means “unto” or “into.” The meaning then is that repentance and baptism are “unto, toward, or in order to” the forgiveness of sins. Other translations make this clear when they render the passage “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven*” (NIV, NRSV).

It is true that baptism will not save one who does not believe in Jesus. Nor will baptism save one who refuses to abandon sinful living. It is certainly true that baptism does not earn salvation. How could

anyone believe such a thing! We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5, 8). Nevertheless, baptism is essential to salvation, according to the plain statement of the apostle Peter, whose command was revealed to him by God. The pious unimmersed are not saved. A person on this side of Acts 2 must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins if he would have any hope of eternal life. †

**Kerry Holton preaches the Gospel of Christ in Yukon, Oklahoma, U. S. A.**

### **On Which Side of Baptism Are You Standing?**

- ✓ Baptism stands between the sinner and being saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
- ✓ Baptism stands between the sinner and having his sins forgiven (Acts 2:38).
- ✓ Baptism stands between the sinner and his being in Christ (Galatians 3:27).
- ✓ Baptism stands between the sinner and having his sins washed away (Acts 22:16).
- ✓ Baptism stands between the sinner and being made free from sin (Romans 6:3-7).
- ✓ Baptism stands between the sinner and being in the body (which is the church, Ephesians 1:22,23, and which is the saved, Ephesians 5:23; 1 Cor. 12:13).

# “IF THESE THINGS BE IN YOU AND ABOUND”

Robert L. Moss

*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us by glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:3,4).*

In 2 Peter 1:1-11 we read concerning what is often termed the Christian graces. In verses 3 and 4 the Scriptures reveal to us the great and wonderful things God has done for and offered to man. He has “*given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness*”; “*hath called us by glory and virtue*”; has “*given unto us exceeding great and precious promises*,” and has made it possible for us to “*be partakers of the divine nature*.” Following this, the inspired writer reveals to us man’s part, things that we are to add to our lives; “*Faith . . . Virtue . . . Knowledge . . . Temperance . . . Patience . . . Godliness . . . Brotherly Kindness . . . Love*.” Yet Peter is not finished with his inspired comments on this subject. He also notes that these must “*be in you and abound*” (verse 8). The idea here is to increase, be augmented.

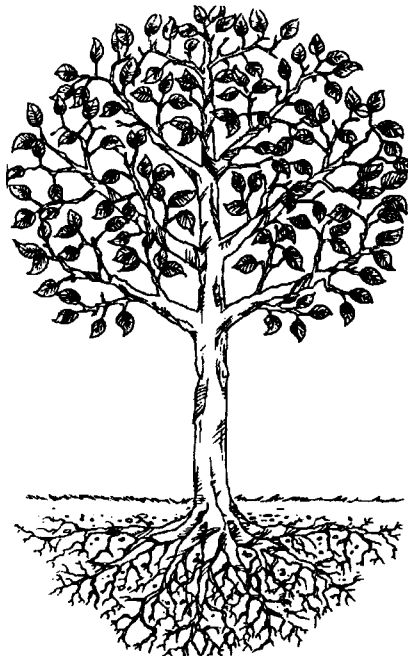
Someone may come along and wonder why God would set forth such stipulations, some of which are seemingly very difficult. In the next few verses we find the answer. First, we are to abound in these so we may “*neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (verse 8). The thought conveyed is against idleness. God calls for us to learn and be active in the works of righteousness. Secondly, we are to abound in these to make our “*calling and election sure*” (verse 10). The calling here is God’s invitation, and the election is our acceptance. As is taught here, man has his part to accomplish concerning salvation, and he can

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indeed fall from the position of obtaining the crown of life. Thirdly, we are to abound in these so that we “*shall never fall*” (verse 10). The Christian is encouraged that God has provided things necessary and sufficient to keep him/her from falling. Fourthly, we are to abound in these that we may receive an abundant entrance “*into the everlasting kingdom*” (verse 11). Here we have laid before us the hope of eternity in heaven with God. If nothing else, this should be encouragement enough to cause us to abound in these things.

Yes, God has His reasons for calling on us to grow in these things. Let each of us abound in them so that idleness may be discarded as we strive to make our calling and election sure; in so doing we will never fall, looking forward to our entrance into that everlasting kingdom. †

**Robert L. Moss preaches the Gospel in Branson, Missouri, U. S. A.**



*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and  
Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).*

# DIOTREPHES OR DEMETRIUS

Jack W. Carter

*Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true (3 John 12).*

I have always found the third epistle of John fascinating. It was written to a Christian named Gaius. Evidently he was a hospitable man and cared for the traveling preachers who came by his way. John commended him for this.

Then, he mentioned a man by the name of Diotrephes. This man was not commended. Evidently he wanted to run things in the local church. To make certain that his control was not threatened, he rejected even the apostles. John added that the man was “*gossiping maliciously*,” and that he not only refused to show hospitality to the itinerant evangelists, he put people out of the church who wanted to be hospitable to them.

On the other hand, in the same church, a good man was commended. His name was Demetrius. The commendations were, “*Demetrius is*

*well spoken of by everyone — and (note this) even by the truth itself*” (verse 12). John went on in the same verse, “*We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.*”

I think all of us have known our share of Christians like Diotrephes and Demetrius. The puzzle to me is the motive. Why choose power over respect? More people will follow a person they respect than a person who wants control.












I wonder — if Diotrephes had read this account of himself, would he have changed? In fact, he might have read it. John mentioned that he had written to the church before, but Diotrephes intercepted the letters! †

Jack W. Carter is Editor of *The Rocky Mountain Christian* and preaches in Castle Rock, Colorado, U. S. A.



# God's Chain of Salvation

*Which of These Links Is Non-Essential?*

-  **GOD OUR SAVIOUR** – 1 Tim. 4:10; Isa. 12:2; Rom. 6:23.
-  **JESUS CHRIST SAVES** – Matt. 1:21; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Tim. 1:15.
-  **HOLY SPIRIT SAVES** – 1 Cor. 6:11; Jno. 14:26; 16:7-13.
-  **SAVED BY GRACE** – Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 3:24.
-  **SAVED BY HIS BLOOD** – Rom. 5:8-9; Heb. 9:22; Eph. 1:7.
-  **SAVED BY HIS NAME** – Acts 4:12; 10:43; Jno. 20:30-31.
-  **SAVED BY GOSPEL** – 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 1:16; James 1:21.
-  **SAVED BY HEARING** – Rom. 10:14, 17; Prov. 28:9; Isa. 55:3.
-  **SAVED BY FAITH** – Heb. 11:6; Jno. 3:16; Acts 16:31.
-  **SAVED BY REPENTANCE** – Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 11:18.
-  **SAVED BY BAPTISM** – 1 Pet. 3:21; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.

*One Broken Link Ruins The Chain!*

*No Chain Is Stronger Than Its Weakest Link!*

Dillard Thurman

# Lord, Open Our Eyes

2 Kings 6:17

J. C. Choate

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Tell the story of how Elisha overcame the King of Syria.
2. In this story he prayed that his servant's eyes might be opened so he could see that God's hand was greater than that of the enemy.
3. Elisha explained, "*Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*"
4. Our eyes are often closed to God and His will.
5. We need to pray that our eyes may be opened that we may see.

## DISCUSSION:

- I. We Need Our Eyes Opened To God's Presence.
  - A. God is over us (Romans 9:5; Ephesians 4:6).
  - B. He holds us up with His everlasting hands (Psalm 37:24).
  - C. He is behind us (Psalm 139).
  - D. He goes before us (Hebrews 13:5; Psalm 142).
  - E. He takes us by His hand (Psalm 139:10).
  - F. He is in us (1 John 4:12).
  - G. He will go with us (Matthew 28:20).
  - H. He will be with us (Matthew 18:20).
- II. We Need Our Eyes Opened To God's Promises.
  - A. We have received many precious promises from the Lord (2 Peter 1:4).
  - B. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (2 Peter 3:9).
  - C. What He has promised, He is able to do (Romans 4:21).

## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- D. He is faithful that promised (Hebrews 10:23).
- E. We are partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel (Ephesians 3:6).
- F. What are some of the promises?
  - 1. That all things will be added to us (Matthew 6:33).
  - 2. That all things will work together for our good (Romans 8:28, 31, 35-39).
  - 3. All spiritual blessings given to us (Ephesians 1:3).
- III. We Need Our Eyes Opened To God's Blessings (Ephesians 1:3; 1 Timothy 6:6-12).
  - A. We often complain about all of our problems.
  - B. We are prone to worry.
    - 1. Start young.
    - 2. The tone of our voice is sad.
    - 3. We enumerate all of the bad things that have happened to us.
    - 4. We show this in our appearance and way of life.
  - C. To the contrary, we have many blessings and should rejoice to have them.
  - D. List your blessings.
    - 1. Life.
    - 2. Health.
    - 3. A family.
    - 4. A job.
    - 5. Freedom.
    - 6. The necessities of life.
    - 7. Salvation.
    - 8. All spiritual blessings.
    - 9. The hope of a better life.
  - E. If God has promised to be with us and to help us, then surely He knows our needs and will provide for them.

### CONCLUSION:

- 1. Have your eyes been opened?
- 2. Surely you can see things differently now.
- 3. It is amazing how different things look when our eyes are open.

**J. C. Choate is a veteran missionary and is Editor-in-Chief of *The Voice of Truth International*.**

# HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIANITY

Ken Tyler

**Purpose:** To show how Christianity is hindered by our allowing sinful qualities into our lives.

## I. **Pride.**

- A. When man is proud he exalts himself and displaces God —  
“Too high an opinion of oneself!” (Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary).
- B. Proverbs 6:16-19; Proverbs 21:4; Proverbs 16:18,19; 1 Peter 5:5,6.
  - 1. Pride will not allow a man to say, “I’m a sinner” and humbly submit to God.
  - 2. See Luke 18:9-14.

## II. **Selfishness.**

- A. The selfish person is too concerned with himself.
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 13:5; James 4:3; Philippians 2:29,30.
  - 2. The selfish person cannot be a servant because his emphasis is self.

## III. **Anger.**

- A. Anger causes us to get out of control.
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 13:5; James 1:19-21; Proverbs 15:18; Ecclesiastes 7:9.
  - 2. Out of control we act like the devil instead of Christ.

## IV. **Unbridled Tongue.**

- A. Our words build or destroy.
  - 1. Proverbs 18:8; Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 19:5, 9; Proverbs 21:23; Psalm 19:14; James 2:12; Matthew 12:36,37.
  - 2. We must realize that what we say is serious business.

## V. **Marital Friction.**

- A. Troubled families destroy society and, yes —  
Christianity.

## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

1. Billboard advertisement in Birmingham:  
“*Uncontested divorce \$125.00.*” What’s wrong with us?
2. Genesis 2:24 (cleave); 1 Peter 3:7 (dwell).

### VI. Sins not repented of.

- A. Christianity will never prosper as long as we are not willing to change.
  1. Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1,2; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30.
  2. The great sin of America — People will not repent!

**Conclusion:** God forbid that any of us should hinder Christianity. Why can’t we see that these sinful qualities in our lives will do just that? Christianity begins with me and you.

Ken Tyler is a gospel preacher in Arab, Alabama, U. S. A.



## The Bible Lives

**Generation follows generation – yet it lives.**  
**Nations rise and fall – yet it lives.**  
**Doubted, suspected, criticized – yet it lives.**  
**Condemned by atheists – yet it lives.**  
**Scuffed at by scorners – yet it lives.**  
**Betrayed by fanatics – yet it lives.**  
**Wrongfully accused, misquoted – yet it lives.**

**Yet it lives – as a lamp to our feet.**  
**Yet it lives – as a light to our path.**  
**Yet it lives – as the guide to heaven.**  
**Yet it lives – as a guide for our youth.**  
**Yet it lives – as a comfort to the aged.**  
**Yet it lives – as food to the hungry.**  
**Yet it lives – as drink to the thirsty.**  
**Yet it lives – as rest for the weary.**  
**Yet it lives – as a light for the ignorant.**  
**Yet it lives – as salvation for the sinner.**  
**Yet it lives – as grace for the believer.**

**To know it is to love it.**  
**To love it is to accept it.**  
**To accept it is eternal life.**

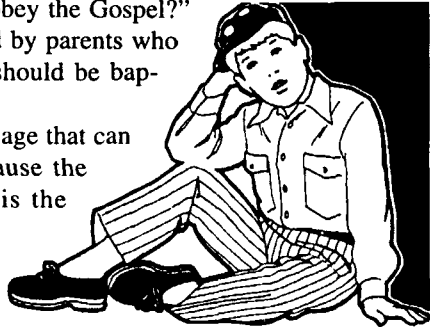
– via Cleveland, TN.

# When Is A Child Old Enough?

John Thiesen

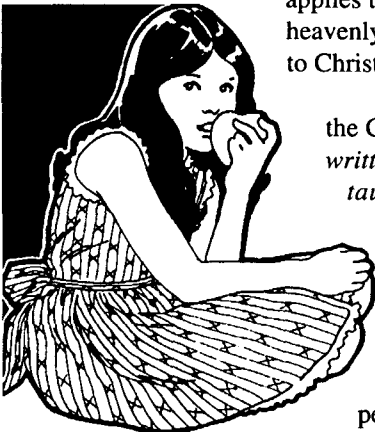
“At what age should my child obey the Gospel?” This is a question that is often asked by parents who want to know when their children should be baptized.

It is not possible to set a certain age that can apply to all children. This is because the process of becoming a Christian is the same as that of being saved. And God has chosen the persuasive power of the message of the Gospel to produce the faith in the child that will cause him to want to obey the Gospel for himself.



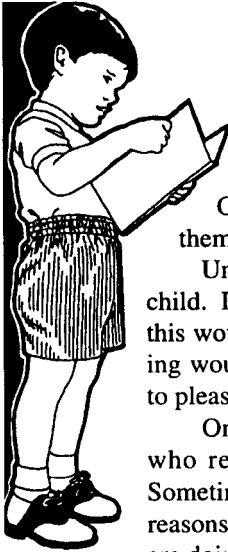
## God Draws Through Teaching

Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44). This applies to all, both adults and children. Unless the heavenly Father draws a person, he cannot come to Christ.



This drawing power is the teaching of the Gospel. Jesus went ahead to explain: “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (verse 45). Only those who have heard and learned of the Father can come to Him. This is what the prophets had predicted of the system God would use to draw and save people in our age.

## BIBLE QUESTIONS



### Child Must Decide For Himself

When the child can comprehend that he is a sinner and needs forgiveness through Christ, he is old enough, regardless of his years. Some children mature earlier than others and arrive sooner at an age when they can understand, believe, and be convicted.

Others take a while longer to realize why Christ died for them and what obedience to Him involves.

Unfortunately, parents cannot make this decision for the child. If out of anxiety the parents pressure him into obedience, this would not be the child doing it, but the parents. The drawing would not be of God, but the child would simply be trying to please his parents.

On the other hand, it is important to question the child who requests baptism to see if he properly understands. Sometimes younger children want to be baptized for the wrong reasons and do not really know the significance of what they are doing. In such cases, the baptism should be postponed until

the child is old enough to make a faith decision based on knowledge. †

**John Thiesen has been a missionary and now works with the Pleasant Valley church in Mobile, Alabama, U. S. A.**

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## A Home Is More Than Bricks

It's a place where your child gains his concept of God.

It's a place where your daughter learns how to be a wife and mother.

It's a place where your son learns how to be a husband and father.

It's a place where going the second mile can pay big dividends.

It's a place where the Christian graces can be added by practice.

It's a place where the reality of your Christianity is tested.

It's a place where television can rob you of important family time.

It's a place where spiritual health and growth can be neglected.

It's a place where happiness can exist if every family member is a committed Christian.

– Borrowed



# What Does The Bible Say About Laughter?

Leon Cole

Does the Bible ever say anything about the human behavior and reaction of laughter? If so, how does it deal with this thing that is so common among human beings? Let us just see what the Bible says about the matter of laughter.

In Luke 6 a sermon of our Lord is recorded in which twice He mentions laughter. At verse 21 He says, *"Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."* Verse 25 says, *"Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."*

Laughter, like speech, is something that distinguishes the human race from animals. Laughter ordinarily suggests joy and gladness. Professed Christians who act so holy they can't laugh warrant watching. It is doubtful there is much integrity in those who can't indulge in a good honest laugh.

There is a beautiful instance of laughter in the case of Sarah. When she heard that she and Abraham would have a son, she laughed (Genesis 18:12). At first it was

laughter of unbelief — it was too good to be true. In due time God fulfilled His promise. She named the boy "Laughter," for this is what Isaac means. He brought tremendous joy to Abraham and Sarah.

There is also the laughter of triumph. In Psalm 52 God promises deliverance to His people, and verse 6 talks of how the righteous will view the defeat of the wicked with laughter. In the classic book **Pilgrim's Progress**, Atheist is pictured as jeering and scoffing at those who believed in a Celestial City. But when faithful people reach Heaven's fair shore, I think they will feel like laughing as they lift up their hearts in songs of triumph.

There is also such a thing as foolish laughter. Some of us may get discouraged as we face the mocking laughter of those who sneer at Christianity. We would do well to remember they might laugh us into Hell, but they will never laugh us out of it.



## BIBLE QUESTIONS

The pronouncement of woe by Jesus also applies to those who find joy only in worldly pleasure. True, it has temporary delight; but when it is finished, nothing but tears and sorrow remain. One living only for worldly pleasure is a spiritual corpse (1 Timothy 5:6).

The Bible also speaks of the laughter of derision. Sometimes when one knows something is about to occur and others refuse to believe it, we express ourselves by laughter. In Proverbs 1 wisdom is personified and presented as laughing in derision at those who reject God. But those who know Christ will have joy and gladness for eternity.

In this connection Psalm 2:4 portrays God laughing in derision at the wicked. "*He who sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord scoffs at them.*" There is an old adage which says, "He who laughs last, laughs best." God will have the last laugh. Weak, wicked men may lift their little fists against Him, but God will deal with such and hold them in derision. This may explain why that Psalm closes with an exhortation. "*Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of earth . . . How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*" †

**Leon Cole preaches for the Pulaski Street church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, U. S. A.**

### Rules for Daily Life

Begin the day with God

Kneel down to Him in prayer

Lift up thy heart to His abode,

And seek His love to share.

Open the Book of God

And read a portion there;

That it may hallow all thy thoughts,

And sweeten all thy care.

Go through the day with God:

What'er thy work may be:

Where'er thou art — at home,

abroad,

He still is near to thee.

Converse in mind with God:

Thy spirit heavenward

raise;

Acknowledge every good

bestowed,

And offer grateful praise.

Conclude the day with God:

Thy sins to Him confess:

Trust in the Lord's atoning

blood,

And plead His righteous-

ness.

Lie down at night with God:

Who gives His servants

sleep:

And when thou tread'st the

vale of death;

He will guard and keep.

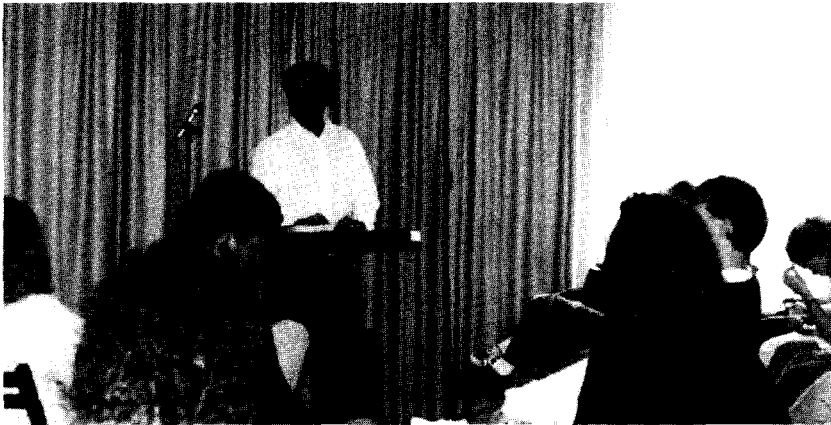
# The French Speaking World

Jerrell Rowden

The French Speaking World is composed of a highly diverse community of at least 40 countries and islands of widely varied ethnic makeup, cultures and geographical settings spanning the globe. Countries where French is either the principal language or a major language have a combined population of 275 million people. This vast community is tied together primarily by the colorful and expressive French language.

## French Europe

The first work I know of in this century among the French was in Paris, France in 1958. Congregations or evangelization efforts in continental France are to be found in Paris (Robert Limb and Roland Mosen), Lille (bros. Dubois and Petronelli), Nantes, Lyon (Arlin Hendrix and Charles White), Marseille (Craig Young, Garth Hutchison and Laurent Goodwin), Toulouse (Jim Griffith, Robert



*Arlin Hendrix, missionary in Lyon, France, speaks to the Harding University campaign group, giving instructions before they go out to do "letter boxing."*

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

McCredy and R. Albright), Montpelier (Yann Opsitch and Max Dauner), Reims and other places.

The work began in Belgium almost simultaneously with that in France. French speaking congregations exist now in Brussels (Ken Wilson), Liege, Verviers (J. M. Frerot), Mons (Ed Ritchie) and smaller groups meet elsewhere. Two congregations thrive in French Switzerland located in Lausanne (Brady Smith) and Geneva (Doyle Kee).

One of the most interesting initiatives in the history of the French work is a series of ads published in the 1960's in "Science et Vie" and "Selection Readers Digest", both French periodicals which enjoy international circulation. A rather

large number of requests for Bible correspondence courses were received from West Africa, Haiti and other places. These contacts opened the door for the first work among the French majority of the Cameroun as well as in Haiti.

### French Africa

To my knowledge congregations or evangelization efforts are to be found in the Cameroun, Ivory Coast (24 congregations) (Robert Prater); Togo (Paul Gbedemah), Benin (George Akpabli, Tod Vogt, Anthony Parker and Andrew Gordon), Zaire, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea and, before the civil war, in Rwanda. Scattered Christians and/or World Bible School students are known in Chad,



*The African French World is a study of contrasts. Pictured here is a rural scene in the small country of Togo, on the west coast.*

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Central African Republic, Congo, Mauritania, and Guinea-Bissau. A mission team is preparing to go into Togo where a campaign is in progress at this moment. All of these countries need workers.

### **French Canada**

French Canada was first touched by the Gospel in the mid 1950's when the English language work began in Montreal, Quebec. In the mid 1960's the first French language works were begun in Montreal and Quebec City. Presently French speaking congregations can be found in Montreal (3 congregations) (Jacques Marchal, Sylvio Caddeo, Roger Saumur, Ron Brown), Sherbrook (Luc Fortin), Rouyn-Noranda (Albert Charette) and Quebec City (Jerrel Rowden, Jean Grenier and Yvon Beaudoin), which has spawned three small works within 100 miles to the north (Chicoutimi), south (East Broughton) and west (Plessisville).

### **Caribbean & USA**

In the mid 50's the first follow-up trips were made to Haiti and the Church was established in Port-au-Prince. Since that time the growth has been phenomenal but not without problems and difficulty of evaluation. Today there are 200+ congregations with centers of activity in Port-au-Prince (Jeantyrand

Elmyra), Cap-Haitien (Joseph Albert) and Gonaives (Emanuel Alexander). Some works have grown in connection with private schools, others strictly evangelistic and still others, as St-Marc, have spread the truth through correspondence contacts. This work has spilled over into the U. S. and Canada where several congregations are made up of refugees.

### **Guadeloupe and French Guyana**

One congregation is active in Guadeloupe (Max Lanoix). A mission trip in 1990 resulted in the establishment of a congregation in Cayenne, French Guyana, which continues to grow. Workers are also needed in Martinique and other French speaking islands of the region.

### **South Pacific**

Randy English assures the preaching of the word in this vast region of countless islands, from Tahiti and French Polynesia to New Caledonia and Vanuatu. Several congregations have been established.

### **Indian Ocean**

Mauritius has had at least one active congregation since the 1970's. No full-time workers are now located in this region. A team is preparing to go to Madagascar.



*Mauritius is an island country in the Indian Ocean. Though half of the population is of Indian origin, French is the language most widely spoken. The small congregation in Rose Hill needs help in its evangelistic efforts.*

### **Southeast Asia**

The Lord's Church was planted and prospered in South Vietnam during the war of the 1960's. Since the evacuation of 1970 almost nothing has been known of the brethren left behind in that war torn communist ruled country. Maurice and Marie Hall have just returned from a visit there. They found five congregations meeting in Saigon and two were confirmed meeting in the mountains.

Typical of the persecutions these Christians suffered are several who faced the firing squad, another who spent 8 years in prison and still another who in 1989 tried to write a letter to the brethren in the States, was arrested and has not been heard from since. Another phenomenal story of the providence of God is

that of a girl of eleven, member of the congregation in Saigon at the moment of the evacuation, who is now a prominent citizen, of considerable means and influence and who may be able to help open new doors for the Gospel. Both Laos and Cambodia, former French colonies, have French speaking minorities.

### **Publishing of materials in French**

In 1967 Jerrel Rowden, seeing a dire need for printed materials in French, began a publishing work to remedy this problem. First in Reims, France and then since 1970 in Quebec City, Canada the *Quebec French-World Outreach* has published more than 300 tracts, Bible courses (including a complete curriculum of children's material) and books and made them available at



*A Buddhist stupa in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Millions died in this country during the struggle with the Khmer Rouge guerrillas.*

---

cost to workers and churches throughout the French speaking world.

Doyle Kee, in Geneva, Switzerland, is overseeing the translation and publication of the *Living Word Bible* commentary on the New Testament as well as other books and materials.

### **Preacher Training**

L'Ecole du Maitre is a two year preacher training curriculum prepared and administered by Doyle Kee and is available to workers

everywhere. This is the only organized initiative in preacher training in French. Most potential workers have to learn English and attend one of our English language schools. Two schools are in the planning for Haiti, one in Cap-Haitian and the other in Gonaive. Another training school is being developed in Benin.

### **World Bible School**

Directed by Jerry Davidson from Florence, Alabama, the French language WBC program, *Ecole Mondiale de la Bible*, is very active and thousands of students are currently enrolled in the courses. Barry Baggott will assist with this work.

### **Radio Work**

Jacques Marchal, a veteran of 24 years in the radio work in French, is now the speaker for programs broadcast in Zaire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guadeloupe and soon in Cayenne, French Guyana. He works from Montreal.

### **Medical Missions**

Medical missions are carried out regularly in Haiti, and others are planned for west Africa. †

**Jerrell Rowden works with the Lord's church in Quebec City, Canada and is deeply involved in the development of French literature.**

FROM THE HEART OF ...

# The Magical Year 2000

**George Akpabli**

The magical year 2000, only a very short time away, promises to be indeed a very busy year all over the world. From all indications, every single day of that year is already fully booked with one important activity or the other. Both in the political and religious realms, wonderful plans are being made in preparation for the year 2000. For example, in our developing nations of the world plans are for:

**Education for All by the Year 2000**

**Shelter for All by the Year 2000**

*Food for All by the Year 2000*

**Health for All by the Year 2000**

**Security for all by the year 2000**

There are even plans to provide water and electricity for all by the year 2000!

In the religious world, there are

plans for **world evangelism** by the year 2000, **Bibles in all homes** by the year 2000, **churches in every town and village** by the year 2000, **preachers and evangelists in every church** by the year 2000, and **many tracts and books** by the year 2000. The list goes on and on, prolonged by what plans man can conceive to be effected by the year 2000.

Personally, I believe that those who have based all their plans, aspirations, and hopes on the year 2000, especially in respect of their religious obligations, are like moon worshippers. Pitiably, the moon is too far away and far too weak to give anything, so in vain do these wait for the glorious year 2000 which would usher in all the wonderful things that we fail to do now. Is it not laziness when we attempt to push forward till tomorrow tasks that could easily be attained today? Pushing forward worthy projects that could be embarked upon now to the year 2000 is to me escapist.

The next century no doubt holds great expectations for all, but

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

whether we can meet those expectations with the arrival of the new century is another thing.

The year 2000 will be much like any other year. January 1 of that year is not going to be any different from all the New Years Days we live during the intervening years. The earlier we come to terms with the fact that there is nothing magical about the year 2000, the better for us. What if tomorrow never happens? What if the year 2000 does not come after all? How sad it will be if instead of initiating concrete actions now, we push them to the year 2000, expecting everything to suddenly be accomplished because it is the beginning of a new

century. Sadly, in most of these hypothetical cases, 2000 will only be another year and nothing spectacular will happen at all.

We had better begin to do whatever we can to propagate the Gospel by all the means we have available **today, now**, rather than hiding under a magical century that may in fact not come to meet us. The King's business must be done today, with all diligence (Proverbs 22:29; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ecclesiastes 9:10). *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Cor. 6:2). †

**George Akpabli is from Ghana and is doing mission work in the Republic of Benin, West Africa.**



*Varied types of traffic fill the busy streets of Cotonou, Benin, where brother George Akpabli has been working for the past three years in establishing and strengthening the Lord's church.*



## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

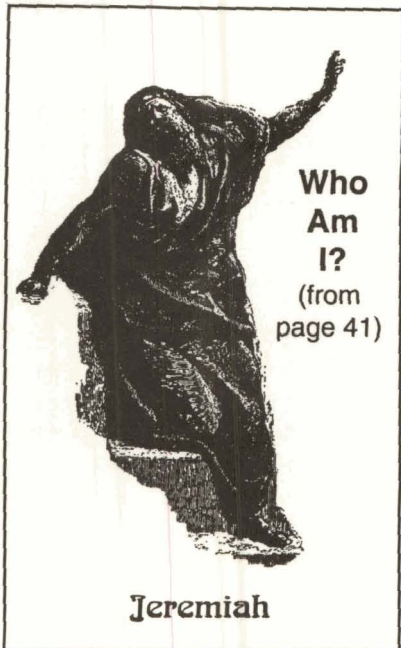
### The Book of Acts

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. X | 10. L | 19. F |
| 2. D | 11. C | 20. D |
| 3. G | 12. J | 21. K |
| 4. A | 13. Z | 22. S |
| 5. M | 14. Q | 23. U |
| 6. Y | 15. E | 24. B |
| 7. H | 16. R | 25. I |
| 8. N | 17. W | 26. T |
| 9. V | 18. P |       |

from page 52

### Verse Search - 5 (from page 73)

1. Rise, take up your bed and walk.
2. Immediately
3. It was done on the Sabbath day (the Jewish day of rest).
4. No; no
5. He had healed the man on the Sabbath day.
6. God; Father; equal with God.
7. The Son
8. No
9. Jesus'
10. The Father; life; has He given; the Son; life.

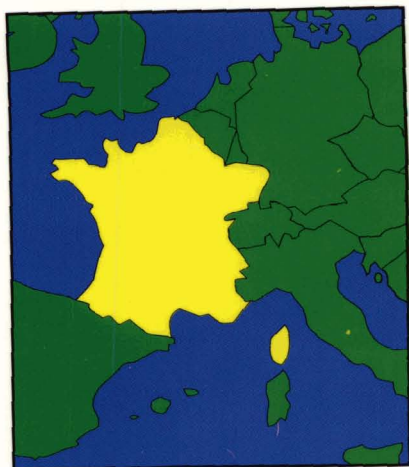


**Who  
Am  
I?**  
(from  
page 41)

**Jeremiah**

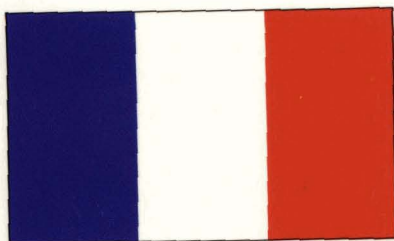
11. All; righteous to life; evil to condemnation.
12. John; the works He did; the Father.
13. Jesus Christ.
14. Willing; me; life.
15. In His Father's name.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**



## French Republic

1958



**Government:** REPUBLIC

**President:** FRANCOIS MITTERRAND

**Prime Minister:** EDOUARD BALLADUR

### Secular Facts:

**Location:** Western Europe.

**Land Mass:** 220,668 square miles.

**Population:** 57,287,000.

**Major Cities:**

**Paris** (also the capital); Marseille, Lyon, Toulouse, Nice, Strasbourg.

**Ethnic Groups:**

93% French, a mixture of various European and Mediterranean groups.

**Languages:**

French (Official); minorities speak Breton, Alsatian German, Flemish, Italian, Basque.

**Literacy:**

99%  
Compulsory education: 10 years.

**Religion:**

Predominantly Roman Catholic.

**Economy:**

A well-developed industrial nation, with steel, chemicals, textiles, wine, and perfume. Resources of minerals, crude oil reserves, and forests. Labor force: 9% agriculture, 45% industry, 46% services.

**Monetary Unit:**

French Franc.

### The Church:

**Congregations:** 20 churches in France; in the French world, congregations exist in Cameroun, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Zaire, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea, Rwanda, French Canada, Haiti, Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Tahiti, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Mauritius, and Viet Nam.

**History:** As was true of much of the mission work of the Church of Christ in this century, efforts to evangelize France began as the result of Christians serving there during World War II. The first meetings were begun by a military man, **Max Watson**, in Paris in 1945. In 1949, **Maurice and Marie Hall**, with **Melvin and Iva Anderson**, moved there as the first missionaries of the church.

**Modern History:** For the French **World Bible School**, **Jerry Davidson of International Bible School** in Florence, AL, serves as coordinator.

In Montpellier, France, **Yann Opstitch** has had surprising interest shown by priests of the Catholic Church. They have opened their church buildings and study centers to him, for the purpose of teaching the Bible!

**Roland Mohsen** serves in Dijon. **Robert Limb** works with the Moulin-Vert congregation in South Paris.