

GOSPEL GLEANER



3231

Volume 15

No. 1

“JESUS IS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOR”

Basil Overton

The Bible does not contain the words, “Jesus is your personal Savior.” However, this truth is taught in the Bible. The following are very important observations regarding this wonderful truth.

1. Jesus is a divine person or being who came to earth “and was made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7). He loves every human being; he is personally interested in every person. He died for every sinner (Hebrews 2:9).

2. Everyone who is saved by Jesus is saved by him personally. But, for one to be saved by Jesus, that one must put his trust in Jesus believing he is the Son of God (John 8:21-24). However, Jesus will not save one who will not repent of his sins. To repent of his sins, one must turn from them. God commands all everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). When one repents he must confess Christ as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ where he can be saved personally by Christ (Romans 10:9; Acts 8:36-37; Romans 6:3).

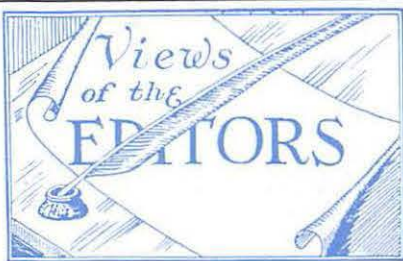
3. If one means by “Christ is my personal Savior” that Christ saves him personally without his being in the church for which Christ gave himself (Ephesians 5:25), he is wrong, because Christ is the Savior of his body which is his church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). The church in the New Testament means the saved. That is why those baptized were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). Yes, Christ personally saves, but he saves personally those who are in him. In the New Testament, being in Christ is

the same as being in his body which is his church. This is the undenominational concept of the church which is taught in the Bible. The reason Jesus said “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16) is because in being baptized one is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). What a beautiful and joyful truth!

We plead with those out of Christ to be baptized into him before it is too late. God loves you, and we love you, and we very earnestly want you to know your wonderful Savior Jesus Christ! If you need help on this very vital matter, please contact the church of Christ. If you cannot do that, contact me, at P. O. Box 2279, Florence, AL 35630, and I will assist you personally, or I will do my best to get someone to help you.

Sinner friend, for the sake of your eternal precious soul, do not neglect being baptized into Christ. This is your most urgent business! We very much want you to enjoy the salvation which is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10).

If you will be baptized into Christ, God will forgive all your sins (Acts 2:38), and he will not remember those sins against you again, not even at the final judgment (Hebrews 8:12). If one sins after he is baptized into Christ, his Father in heaven will forgive him if he confesses his sin and asks his Father’s forgiveness (1 John 1:7-10). God’s forgiveness is man’s greatest blessing!



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Editorial

HOW TO MEASURE A SERMON

Bill Dillon

How do you measure a sermon? A common complaint is that a message is "too long." Sometimes that's a reflection upon the orator; sometimes upon the audience. Some preachers today believe that longer lessons are required because additional time is needed to explain and elaborate if the message is to get across. It seems that modern audiences are less knowledgeable than in the past, thus more time is needed to teach.

There is definitely something to this. However, if a speaker is long-winded due to his own pleasure, he would do well to practice a little self denial. It is something of a cruelty to have nothing more to say, and then insist on saying it.

Some sermons are judged as being "too short" as if the preacher has somehow cheated the audience with less effort and labor. There is also something to this. It is wrong that a sermon be too short, if it is due to the laziness of the speaker.

On the other hand it may be that some messages are shorter than others because a good speaker can condense and compress and put a lot in a little. In such a case, a sermon's strength is not necessarily its length, C. H. Spurgeon pointed out:

Sermons ought never to be measured by the yardstick of the clock; but they ought to be measured by this one simple rule, "Have done when you have done." Don't be particular about how you came to a close, but be a great deal more concerned not to keep till your discourse dies like a candle which cannot give another flicker.

All in all, genuine gospel sermons are best measured not by "how long" or "how short" but by "how well" they are incorporated into one's life. —612 E. Fourth Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653

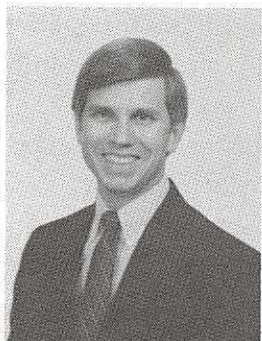


"Raccoon" John Smith once heard Alexander Campbell preach for what he thought was thirty minutes. When informed that it was two and a half-hours, he said, "Two hours of my time are gone and I know not how, though wide awake." It is often said that if a preacher cannot strike oil in twenty minutes he should stop boring. Sometimes, however, the better reserves lie deeper.

The length of a sermon is a purely subjective matter. The greatness of a sermon is not measured by the clock, either the long or short of it. There is no comparison in length between the parables of the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45-46), and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). Truth is in the words and not in the number thereof.—Dennis Gullledge, Co-Editor.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

Dennis Gullledge



The transfiguration was an amazing event in the life of Jesus Christ, and a memorable occasion for three disciples. Jesus, at this time, is in the closing months of his life on earth prior to his crucifixion. The account of this remarkable event may be found in

Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-9 and Luke 9:28-36. Our study will be taken from Matthew's account (NKJV), which reads:

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

THE TRANSFIGURATION ITSELF

1. *The time.* The transfiguration occurred "after six days" (Verse 1) from the events

of chapter sixteen. Luke tells us that it was "about eight days" after these things (Luke 9:28). The reason for the difference is that Luke counted parts of two days that Matthew did not. Six whole days intervened.

In order to grasp the full significance of Jesus' transfiguration we must remember what precedes it in chapter sixteen of Matthew. The transfiguration closely follows Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 16:13-20), and Jesus' prediction of his own death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21-23). This means that the Lord gave the disciples about a week to contemplate his prediction of death and his bold retort when Peter tried to redirect him.

2. *Those present.* Peter, James and John were the three privileged apostles who witnessed the transfiguration of Christ (Verse 1). Why did Jesus select just these three to witness this event? His reasons may have included these two: First, to secure the desired secrecy (Verse 9) he chose three and no more. Second, the Law of Moses required "two or three witnesses" in order to establish the truthfulness of any fact in court (Deuteronomy 19:15).

Above all, these three, as leaders of the apostles, would need the encouragement that they would receive in view of their attitude toward the coming crucifixion of Christ. The reason for their presence goes back to an event six days earlier. Jesus had shown his disciples that his death at wicked hands was necessary (Matthew 16:21; Acts 2:23). The apostles had refused to accept Jesus' prediction and Peter in particular had become a hindrance to the Lord in his plans for the coming Kingdom (Matthew 16:22-23).

3. *The place.* It was "on a high mountain by themselves" (Verse 1). Luke informs us that Jesus went up the mountain to pray (Luke 9:28). The design was obviously for privacy, because as a city set on a hill cannot be hid, three
(Continued on page 4)

disciples and the Lord on a hill can hardly be found.

4. *The manner.* The word *transfigured* provokes our interest. It comes from the Greek word *metamorphoo*, meaning, “to be transformed,” and the description shows to what extent (Verse 2). Mark said that “His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them” (9:3). In the midst of this change the Lord’s identity was not lost, but his form was changed so that his deity shined through his humanity.

MOSES AND ELIJAH

How instructive are these words: “And behold Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him” (Verse 3). In Jewish history these two men represented the sum and substance of the Jewish economy. Moses was the great lawgiver and deliverer, who served as an Old Testament type of Christ (John 1:17; Acts 3:22). Elijah was one of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets (Matthew 16:14).

What do these matters have to do with the reason for their appearance, that being that they “spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31)? These visitors from the hades realm conversed with Jesus about his death, which showed their continued interest in God’s plan of redemption. This encouragement was important to Jesus as the cross edged closer into view. Whereas the disciples did not believe that the crucifixion of Christ would be consistent with the Old Testament picture of the Messiah, Moses and Elijah discuss his death as being in perfect harmony with all that they taught. The transfiguration of Christ would open the eyes of the disciples to one grand truth—that everything written about him in the Law and the prophets must be fulfilled (Luke 24:44). If the teaching of a crucified Savior was consistent with the Law and the prophets, why should the disciples continue to balk?

1. *The transfiguration confirms the divinity of Christ.* Light and language have done such. This is first suggested by the descriptions of Jesus’ countenance and clothes (Verse 2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29). His face and raiment shined because he was God (John 1:1), and God is light (John 1:5).

Then, as the Father in heaven had done at the baptism of Jesus, so does he here, and declares, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased...” (Verse 5; Matthew 3:17). This was the glory of God (*shekinah*) appearing to give honor and glory to his Son. The cloud and the voice coming from it suggest the *Shekinah*, that is, the visual representation of God’s presence (Exodus 13:21-22; 40:34). One purpose, therefore, of the transfiguration of Christ was to declare his divinity before credible witnesses.

2. *The transfiguration confirms the authority of Christ.* There are two primary elements in this event that are strongly suggestive of the supremacy of Christ. First, the appearance of Moses and Elijah confirmed the Lord’s authority. These two Old Testament figures represent twin strongholds of the Jewish economy—the Law and the prophets. They, as it were, yielded their positions to Christ. In addition, their appearance was the signal for Jesus to continue with his *exodus* (death) at Jerusalem and Calvary.

Second, the voice of the Father in commanding the disciples to “Hear Him!” confirms the authority of Christ (Verse 5). The authority, which at that time resided in Moses and the prophets, was about to be shifted to Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). When Peter offered to build three tabernacles, the voice from the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Verse 5; Luke 9:35). The command for the disciples to hear Jesus appears to be a solemn endorsement of all that Jesus had taught concerning his suffering, eventual death and resurrection. The father from heaven gave his sanction to Jesus’ course as being in harmony with the divine plan to redeem man.

The presence of Moses and Elijah suggests

another aspect of Jesus' authority. While there certainly was a time when Moses and the prophets were to be heard in religion (Luke 16:29; Acts 15:21), that would end with the death of Christ upon the cross (Ephesians 2:13-22; Colossians 2:13-14). All religious authority now resides in Christ (Matthew 28:18), and shall until the end of time (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). The principle of "hear Him" applies to us today as we must hear Christ, not the pretensions of popery, the delusions of denominationalism or any tradition of man. The word of Christ is the final word in religion today (Hebrews 1:1-2).

3. *The transfiguration confirms the return of Christ.* Peter, an eyewitness, in his second epistle, supplies this point, though lacking in the gospel accounts. The apostle introduces the thought of the return of Christ by saying, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). Then, to establish the truthfulness of such, Peter reminds his readers of the transfiguration by saying, "For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Verse 17). He then adds that he "...heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain" (Vs 18).

We might ask how the facts here stated demonstrate that Christ will return in power? The answer is that Peter's great aim in this letter was to recall Christians to faith in the second coming of Christ (2 Peter 1:13). This fundamental tenet of Christianity was denied by some of those to whom Peter wrote, and it was vital to state the grounds upon which it was to be accepted. The apostle's point is that Christ will return in the glory of which he was seen on the mountain of the transfiguration (Cf. 2 Peter 3).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the transfiguration was to strengthen the hearts of the disciples whose concept of the crucifixion of Christ was one of

denial. It was vital that they not stand in the way of Christ's fulfilling heaven's plan to redeem man. Jesus finished his journey *to* the cross in order that we might finish our journey *with* a cross (Luke 9:22-23).—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

FREE COMPUTER BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

Dennis Tindall

Do you love to surf the web? Do you enjoy downloading information to explore? Do you get excited being on-line with your computer? Well, for all you readers who are computer buffs we have a computer Bible study we want to share with you. The computer Bible study is designed to be an independent study program you do at home on your computer. It has four lessons which include some detailed topical explanations, pop up windows for the answers and some nice graphics. The lesson titles are: "The Son of God," "The Great Salvation," "The Body of Christ," and "Upon the Rock." The computer Bible study requires that the computer used have at least Windows 3.1 and a mouse. If you would like a copy of the computer Bible study on a computer disk we would be happy to send it to you free of charge! Simply contact the Mountain Home Church of Christ. If you enjoy the program please pass it along to a friend, neighbor, or loved one. It is not copyrighted and can be freely copied to give to anyone you like. We hope this will help you start your journey to become a daily Bible student.

HOW TO BE SAVED FROM SIN

1. Understand the desperate need of salvation from our sin! (Romans 3:23; 6:23).
2. Hear the gospel message (Romans 10:17).
3. Respond to this message (1 Corinthians 15:2).
4. Believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Mark 16:16).
5. Turn from all sin; Repent! (Luke 13:3-5).
6. Confess your faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10).
7. Be baptized for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38).
8. Be faithful to Jesus until death! (1 Corinthians 15:58).

WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN? #3

Ivie Powell



Daily we are bombarded with news reports of children being abused sexually, mentally and physically. Such horrendous crimes have resulted in many needed laws to protect children. While we abhor the abuse of children, we can't help but wonder about the spiritual abuse that untold thousands undergo daily! Indeed, children are a precious heritage! "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). As pointed out in previous articles, parents are given the responsibility of bringing their children "...up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Parents shall pay a heavy penalty for neglecting the spiritual training of their children! In order that the "...generation to come might know..." (Psalm 78:6) the truth they must be properly taught! Parents, have your children been so taught that they not only know the truth, but will remain: "...steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." (1 Corinthians 15:58)? Consider the following:

SPORTS & THE LORD'S CAUSE

It seems the world has gone sports and pleasure crazy, and who can successfully deny that this has greatly affected the Lord's church. Everything, so it seems, is centered around sports and pleasure. As brother Bill Dillon so profoundly wrote in his church bulletin: "Players are making obscene salaries while school teachers, police, fire fighters, farmers, construction workers, secretaries, garbage collectors, those who actually contribute something to society are barely getting by. While players and coaches make 2,000 times more than leading scientists or physicians—something is rotten in Denmark!"

Friends, this lack of values has greatly

affected our young people. Far too many are looking at life with one major objective in mind—making lots of money. Brother Jack Gray, a great evangelist, on one occasion said: "The old shoe cobbler was asked what his business was. To which he replied: 'Christianity is my business I only work to pay the bills!!!'" Oh how we need to echo this great lesson to the entire brotherhood! When our young people see that the Lord's cause is that important in our lives such will go a long way in their training. Now when it comes to sports and the pleasures of this world, we must teach our children that the Lord's cause comes before everything. So many think nothing of missing services or a gospel meeting to attend a ball game, and many parents even encourage their children to miss. When young people read Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" and are encouraged to put sports and pleasures of this life ahead of the cause of Christ they quickly see the hypocrisy! How thankful we are for those young people throughout the world who are really making a difference in this world by putting the kingdom first. Pray for them and do everything in your power to encourage them!

LANGUAGE

That the world has affected or infected the language of God's people is without question. We need to once again be reminded to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17). Regarding our speech, Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6). Again we

are told, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:37).

By-words have become common place among God's people. Such is the evidence that we have become very lax in instructing our children. It is even surprising to many to learn that words such as gee whiz, gosh, gad, egad, golly, etc. actually amount to profanity! Trying to hide behind, "I don't mean anything," "Let's not become a fanatic" is avoiding the issue! God's name must never be used in an irreverent and blasphemous manner! For an enlightening study of this subject, please read brother Guy N. Woods', *Commentary On James* as well as *Questions & Answers #1*.—1272 Bonham Street, Paris, TX 75460

RELIGION IS DANGEROUS

Tom Holland

A philosopher once observed that great crimes had been committed in the name of liberty. The same thing could be said relative to religion. We seem to be frequently reminded of the deadly nature of false religion.

A few years ago, the sad story revealed a mass suicide of over 900 followers of a cultic leader. Then on April 19, 1993 another sad death for many people including several innocent and helpless children whose earthly lives were terminated in a burning inferno of a religious compound.

These are the more sensational newsworthy deaths. But, what about all of the people who suffer from the delusion of false religion? What about the scores of people bilked out of their money by religious charlatans?

Then, consider the churches of Christ now being divided by those who clamor for change. Not a change to be distinctive, but a change to adapt to the religious traditions of denominationalism and a change so there can be catering to the whims of an entertainment-oriented mentality. Not only are churches being divided, friends are being alienated and families are being split. This is

being done by people who seem to think they have mastered the art of Christian love!

Pluralism is very appealing to an age that doesn't seem to appreciate genuine conviction and lasting commitment. The "any religion is all right," or "one church is as good as another" syndrome may appeal to people guided by convenience rather than conviction based on God's Word. However, down the road of this approach to religion is danger and potential death.

No wonder the Lord declared, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). If it doesn't really matter what one believes in religion, there is no such thing as a false prophet. In view of the dangerous nature of religion, no wonder the Holy Spirit would inspire the apostle John (the so-called apostle of love) to write, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

Pure religion (James 1:27) of God is based on the Word of God, edifies the soul, solidifies families, unifies congregations, and brings hope for eternal life with God.

The time has come for people who take religion seriously to get serious about religion.
—P. O. Box 611, Brentwood, TN 37024

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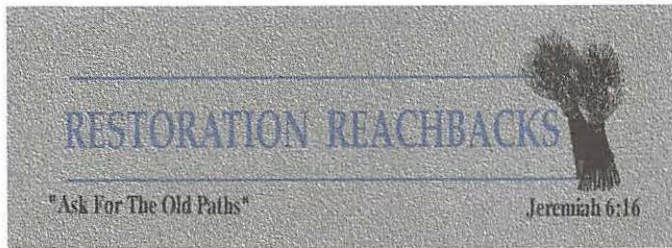
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Bill Dillon, Evangelist



FAITH PLUS ACTION

George W. DeHoff (1913-1993)

"Ye see how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (James 2:24). God has never blessed any man on account of that man's faith until after that faith has expressed itself in some bodily action. Faith is a mental action but it is not enough to believe in our hearts that Christ is Lord and that God has raised Him from the dead—we must put that faith into action to obtain the blessing.

Abel was justified by faith after he had offered the animal sacrifice (Hebrews 11:4). Faith plus action brought the blessing.

Noah was justified by faith after he had "moved with fear" preparing the ark to save his household (Hebrews 11:7). It took faith plus action to save Noah.

Abraham is God's definition of faith. He was justified by faith but not until he had traveled into a new country and sojourned there (Hebrews 11:8-10). "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (James 2:21).

The Israelites in Egypt were saved by the blood of the lamb on that memorable passover night in the long ago but not until they had killed the lamb, applied the blood to the doorposts, gone into the house and stayed in the house (Exodus 11, 12, 13). It took faith plus action to save Israel from Egypt.

When the Israelites were bitten by fiery serpents, God told Moses to make a brass snake, put it upon a pole and tell the people to look upon it and be healed. They believed, they looked, they were healed (Numbers 21:7-9). It took faith plus action.

Naaman, the great deliverer of Syria, was afflicted with the dread disease of leprosy, which is a type of sin. God had the prophet Elisha tell him to dip seven times in the Jordan river that he might be healed. He believed, he dipped in the Jordan, he was healed. The command was, "Go—Wash—Be healed." The healing was after the obedience (2 Kings 5:1-14).

A poor blind man met Jesus. Our Master spat upon the ground and rubbed the mud into the blind eyes. "Go wash in the pool of Siloam," Jesus commanded. The blind man went, he washed in the pool, his eyes were opened. Those who trust and obey always receive the blessing. There is no blessing without obedience (John 9:1-11).

The walls of Jericho fell down by faith after they were encompassed about for seven days (Hebrews 11:30).

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). This shows faith being put into action in order to receive the blessing.

After the sinners on Pentecost day believed, Peter commanded 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 Spirit" (Acts 2:38). They put their faith into action in order to obtain the remission of sins.

The Ethiopian nobleman believed in Christ. He went down into the water and was buried in the likeness of our Lord's death. His faith moved him to act. He came up out of the water and went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:25-39). Faith plus obedience had brought the blessing.

The jailer was told, "Believe on the Lord and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). His faith did not save him, however, until he had washed the stripes of Paul and Silas (showing his repentance), and was baptized the same hour of the night (Acts 16:30-34).

Saul of Tarsus believed on Christ on the Damascus highway. Jesus told him, "Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Saul arose and was led into the city. Ananias, a gospel preacher, came and told Saul, "And now why tarriest thou, arise and be

baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul's faith saved him after he had done what the Lord said he must do.

There are two kinds of works which cannot save sinners—the works of the Old Testament law and the works of men. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Romans 3:20). Christ has fulfilled the law. The Old Testament law has been taken away (Hebrews 10:9). It has been nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). If one could be saved by the Old Law it would have been unnecessary for Christ to die and give us a new covenant. The inventions of man do not merit salvation. Paul said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). If man could save himself by his own inventions and works, he would have something to boast about but this is impossible.

The works which can save are the works of God—the things God has commanded. Faith must exercise the man and man must exercise his faith. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Only a deep trusting faith that takes God at His word—believing and obeying—can avail anything.

Faith is a work—it is a work of God. Believing is something man does but God commands it, hence it is a work of God (John 6:29).

Repenting is an act of faith—an act of man but a command of God, hence a work of God (Luke 13:3).

Confessing Christ is something which man does but God commands it. It is, therefore, a work of God (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32).

Being baptized is not a work of the one being baptized since he is passive—another does the work, but being baptized is a work of God. He commanded it (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:47). In John 4:1-2 it is stated that Jesus made and baptized disciples. Jesus did not do the actual baptizing but when another did it at His command it was Jesus baptizing. Today, when one is baptized according to the command of Almighty God, he is really

baptized by God himself just as much as if God were doing the actual administering. God is working through His agent, his servant on earth.

Sinners are saved by faith plus works. Faith in Jesus Christ plus whatever works God has commanded. God never did in any age of the world, either in the Old Testament or the New Testament, give any person any kind of blessing—either spiritual or temporal—on account of the person's own faith until after that faith had expressed itself in some bodily action. God has never had any plan of saving men except faith plus action—faith plus obedience. Today, there is no way for sinners to be saved except to believe in Christ and obey Him.

*"When we walk with the Lord,
In the light of His word,
What a glory He sheds on our way.
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey,
For there's no other way,
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey."*

—*The Christian Magazine* (October-December, 1948)

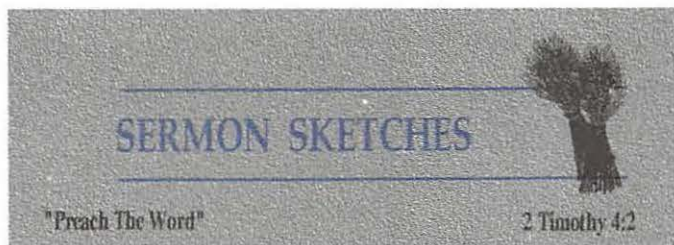
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Dennis Gullledge, Evangelist



FOLLOWING IN JESUS' FOOTSTEPS

(1 Peter 2:21-25)

M. W. Kiser



1. We are experiencing more of what it means to be a Christian in a heathen environment.
2. In the not so distant future we will identify more with the sufferings of the saints of old.
3. Our very existence as Christians involves the idea of suffering, "hereunto...called." (see: John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:4).
4. Two well known hymns speak of our subject: "Sweetly Lord Have We Heard Thee Calling," and "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow."
5. A most serious admonition (1 Corinthians 14:15). It is wrong to lie, even when told to music!

I. WE ARE CALLED TO BE HIS FOLLOWERS.

- A. It is a volunteer service (Matthew 11:28-30; 16:24-26).
- B. Jesus has experienced everything He asks us to do (Text has two main ideas).
 1. The "headline" of a copy book that we are to imitate.
 2. The "footprints" of a leader upon which we are to plant our own.
- C. One could not go wrong in following

the sinless Son of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

II. WHERE DID JESUS GO WHILE UPON THIS EARTH?

- A. Through the waters of Baptism (Matthew 3:15).
 1. Exception to rule (Matthew 3:6; Luke 3:3).
 2. Supported John (Psalm 119:172).
 3. Today (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-6).
- B. Through the wilderness of temptation (Matthew 4:1-11; see: Psalm 119:11; James 4:7).
 1. Followed immediately after baptism.
 2. Defeated Satan with the scriptures.
 3. We must be active in resisting too (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 2:18).
- C. Into the house of worship (Luke 4:16).
 1. Boyhood habit was His manhood habit!
 2. Our attitude (Psalm 122:1; Hebrews 10:25).
 3. His promised presence (Matthew 18:20).
- D. Into the fields of service (Acts 10:32).
 1. To serve, not to be served (Luke 22:27).
 2. We are to follow (Matthew 25:31-46).
- E. Into the mountain of prayer.
 1. Before every major event we find Him in prayer (Luke 6:12; Mark 1:35).
 2. He is concerned with our prayer life (Matthew 6:9; 7:7).
 3. A regular part of life (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- F. Into the garden of despair (Matthew 26:38-40).
 1. He knew of Judas' treachery and the inevitability of the cross.

2. We are called to endure hardship and suffering (1 Peter 4:12-16).
- G. Upon the cross of suffering (Hebrews 5:8).
 1. His grandest example to be followed.
 2. God will never forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

III. FOLLOWING JESUS LEADS TO HEAVEN.

- A. The only way to the Father (John 14:6).
- B. Jesus has promised to meet us in death.
 1. The "keys" belong to Him (Revelation 1:18).
 2. An ancient promise (Psalm 23:4).
- C. Jesus is now at the throne of God (Acts 2:33; 1 Peter 3:22) and we are on the way.
 1. Heaven is promised us (John 14:1-3).
 2. There we will dwell (Revelation 3:21).
1. There is power in your example in following the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).
2. Dying men have been known to express their regrets that they were atheists, infidels, agnostics, skeptics and reprobates. But no man ever said on his death bed, "I am sorry that I am a Christian." Indeed thought provoking!
3. It might be just as sensible for you to say, "I will become a Christian 'yesterday'" as to say, "I will become a Christian tomorrow." You have no more promise of one than you do the other!
4. We are now calling you to follow Christ.

THANK YOU!

We appreciate so much the kind words, prayers and financial support of so many. We share a mutual love for our Savior and his gospel. We are heartened by the love of so many for the truth and for their generous contributions.—The Editors

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A MAN WITH A "WAIT" PROBLEM

Allen Webster



We do not know what Paul saw when he looked at Governor Felix (Acts 24:24). We're not sure if he was tall and thin, short and thick, or medium and average. But before their conversation was finished, Paul knew that Felix had a "wait" problem. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (24:25). He put off becoming a Christian. He obviously believed what Paul had said for he "trembled." He should have gotten rid of his sins immediately, but he didn't. Why did Felix wait? Let's explore the possibilities.

Felix may have just been indecisive. Like many of us, he may have been unable to bring himself to a definite decision. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). Double minded (*dipsuchos*, found only twice in the NT, cf. James 4:8) means "wavering, uncertain, doubting; divided in interest" (Genesis 49:4; Malachi 3:6; Matthew 6:24). Unstable (*akatastatos*, "inconstant, restless," found only here) means "to stagger like a drunk." When God sees one who cannot stay with a decision and remain faithful, He sees a spiritual drunk staggering back and forth between right and wrong.

Lot is a good example of indecision causing procrastination (Genesis 19:15-22). Angels hastened (*uwts*, "to press, make haste, urge") Lot to leave, but he could not make up his mind. So he "lingered." People linger today in the "house of Sodom" (cf. Revelation 18:4-5) for all sinners live in a world that's on God's "fire and brimstone" list (2 Peter 3:10). Yet they linger, trying to decide if they want to be baptized or not. As Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28).

Are you "almost persuaded"? Your soul

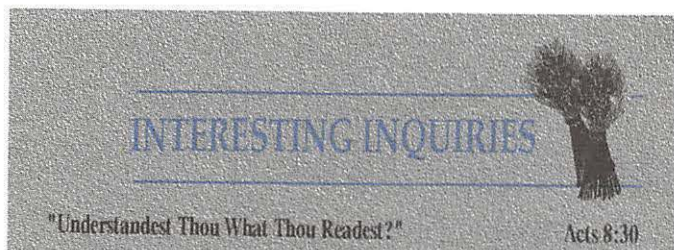
rides on your decision (Mark 16:16). One of these days, Jesus is going to return and then it will be too late (Luke 13:24-25). The Psalmist wrote, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments" (119:60; cf. Galatians 1:16). "Today" is the only day on God's calendar (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:12-13).

Felix may have been a perfectionist. He may have thought, "I'll fall back into my bad habits. I just know I'll never be able to stick with it." Solomon spoke of perfectionism. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap" (Ecclesiastes 11:4; cf. Proverbs 20:4). If you must have perfect working conditions you'll never accomplish much. Many decide to wait until college before obeying God, but when they get there they decide to wait until they get a job and settle down. Then they say they will wait until they have a house, a wife, and children, and then...finally, they die without Christ. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Perfectionists may look for a church composed of perfect people and refuse obedience when it is not found. All are against hypocrisy, but to allow somebody's hypocrisy to keep me from God is senseless. (Usually this is only an excuse.) If I do what God expects of me, maybe my good example will help them to come around.

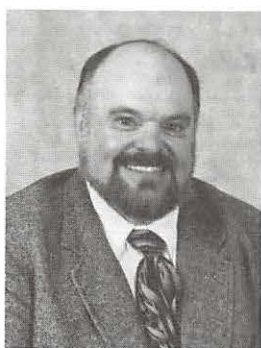
Felix may have been afraid. Have you ever postponed a visit to the dentist? What about surgery or marriage counseling? Much procrastination is based upon the misconception that it is easier to avoid problems till later than to face them now. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25; cf. 16:20; 18:10; 30:5; Psalm 118:8; Daniel 3:28; 6:23). Interestingly, the word safe (*sagab*) means "to be inaccessibly high; to be

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THE YEAR 2000 AND "THE RAPTURE"

John T. Polk, II



"What time of the year 2000 will the Rapture occur, and when does Jesus set up His Kingdom?"

Nothing in Scripture says Jesus is yet to set up His Kingdom, that there is a "rapture," or indicates anything special about the year 2000. The "millennial madness" of the religious world is based upon fabrication, fiction, and falsehood, not faith. Since faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17), millennialism is not of faith. Peter said to "beware" of "untaught and unstable" people who "twist" Scriptures to their own destruction and cause Christians to "fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 3:14-17). Millennialism begins with the preconceived doctrine that we are in the last days before Jesus sets up a Jewish kingdom in Jerusalem, the antichrist comes, saints will be raptured off the earth and tribulation occurs. It then removes phrases and prophecies out of their natural contexts and original meanings to form a doctrinal "collage" which violates the heart and spirit of the Bible!

1. New Testament Preachers Did Not Teach It. John the Baptist preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). He did not say, "but if you Jews reject Jesus, He will leave behind a second rate church until he comes in 2000 A.D. to rule over you in

Jerusalem." Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, taught, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44-45). He did not say, "preach some useless gospel and I'll be back in 2000 A.D. to reinstate Moses Law, the Levitical Priesthood, and animal sacrifices and then I'll have fulfilled the Old Testament Prophecies." Peter said "God had sworn with an oath to him [David] that of the fruit of his [David's] body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ" (Acts 2:30-31). He did not say, "Jesus is in a meaningless position now in heaven but will one day sit on David's actual, physical throne in Jerusalem and tyrannically rule with a rod of iron over Jews and the wicked." Paul claimed Jesus must now "reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). He did not say, "Jesus is Savior now but He'll be Lord for 1000 years when every sinner will be given another chance to obey Him." Millennialists now teach what inspired men did not say!

2. There is No Prophecy Of It. God promised Abraham land and descendants until "the seed" would come to offer salvation to mankind (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:13-21; 22:18).

The "Promised Land" was not given to Abraham (Hebrews 11:8-10) but to his descendants upon the condition that they remain faithful to God (Deuteronomy 30:15-20). Moses led the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, but Joshua led them in the conquest of it. "So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it...Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass" (Joshua 21:43, 45). Many years later, and after much prophetic warning, their persistent disobedience caused God to remove them until seventy years had passed (2 Kings 17:20-23; 23:26-27; Jeremiah 25:12; Daniel

(Continued on page 19)

THIRD ANNUAL GOSPEL GLEANER LECTURESHIP

**“Are We Nearing
The End Of Time”**

March 27 & 28, 1999

**College and North
Church of Christ**

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10:00 - 11:00

“Modern Day False Prophets”

Bob Bauer, Port Charlotte, FL

11:00 - 12:00

“What Are The Signs Of The Times”

Stephen Rook, Trenton, TN

LUNCH

12:00 - 1:00

1:00 - 2:00

“The Real Millennium”

**Ronnie Whittemore,
Indianapolis, IN**

2:00 - 3:00

“The Real Armageddon”

John T. Polk II, Dover, TN

3:00 - 4:00

“The Mark Of The Beast”

Tim Wilkes, Hernando, MS

SATURDAY, MARCH 27

7:00 - 8:00

**Gospel Gleaner Breakfast
Everyone Welcome**

8:00 - 9:00

**“The Second Coming Of Christ”
Guy Hester, Jasper AL**

9:00 - 10:00

**“The New Heaven & The New Earth”
Dennis Gullledge, Mabelvale, AR**

SUNDAY, MARCH 28

9:30 A.M.

“False Prophets Of The Past”

Ivie Powell, Paris, TX

10:30 A.M.

“The Real Rapture”

Mike Kiser, Sylacauga, AL

6:00 P.M.

“Are We Nearing The End Of Time?”

**Allen Webster,
Jacksonville, AL**

WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING

J. A. McNutt

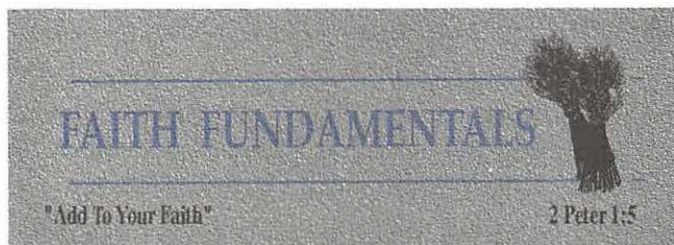
It is strange indeed that King Belshazzar had not learned from the folly of his father, Nebuchadnezzar, the first monarch of Babylon. It was his father who had become so filled with pride and vanity that he said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30). Although Nebuchadnezzar had been warned that unless he repented of his sins and iniquities that he would be rejected, shamed and humiliated, forced to dwell with the beasts of the field and eat grass like an ox. In spite of Daniel's warning he persisted in his course until he learned the hard way, that God rules in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will. Surely, Belshazzar must have known the fate of his father, when he had refused to honor the God of heaven and earth (Daniel 4:17, 25). He must have known that his father had repented, was restored to power and lived to extol and honor God (Daniel 4:37). You would think that the son would have profited by the experience of the father, yet such was not the case.

BABYLONIAN AND PERSIAN FEASTS. The feasts promoted by the eastern monarchs in Daniel's day were lavish and magnificent occasions devoted to idolatry and ended in drunkenness. We are told that "wine was imported from abroad and luxuries of every kind loaded the table. Perfumes filled the hall, vocalists and instrumental performers entertained the assembled guests." It was not unusual for several thousand guests to be invited to these oriental banquets. Alexander the Great once invited 10,000 to a wedding feast. It was usually at the close of the banquet that the drinking began and both men and women participated. Passions were inflamed and lust and drunkenness prevailed. The situation is best described by the apostle Peter in 1 Peter 4:3-4: "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine,

revelings, banqueting and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." You will note that in Belshazzar's feast that after he began drinking he became boastful and fool-hardy and profaned the vessels of the temple in Jerusalem by using them in his drunken feast. One who is not overly intelligent when sober, can become a real fool as a drunk. This is just as true today as it was in ages past.

THE RESULTS OF A DRUNKEN FEAST. God has warned against the sin of drunkenness and warned of the eternal destination of a drunkard who fails to repent (Revelation 21:8). There is a special warning to kings and rulers who drink and there is valid reasons why rulers should abstain. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Proverbs 31:4-5). A woe is pronounced upon those who drink wine, justify the wicked and deprive the righteous in Isaiah 5:22:23. This is an evil that causes rulers to err in vision and stumble in judgment (Isaiah 28:7). It is a sin that is prominent in the highest levels of government and has corrupted men and nations. Belshazzar's feast is an example of the debauchery, sacrilege and idolatry which is prompted by drunken feasts in his day, as well as the evils that exist in such affairs in modern society. It may be judged acceptable by the liquor industry, but those who indulge in such will have no inheritance in the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

It was a great feast by the king and by thousands of his lords, his wives and his concubines. At least in their eyes it was great, the most important social event of the year, designed to honor the king and celebrate his majesty and power. None of the thousands of his princes could afford to be absent on such an occasion. The celebration really came alive after the king began
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"BEHOLD I THOUGHT"

Guy F. Hester



There is one Old Testament story that almost every one is familiar with recorded in 2 Kings 5:1-14, the account of Naaman who was a leper. For the sake of brevity we shall allow the reader to turn to this text and read for himself.

Naaman was a great and honorable man who was captain of the Syrian Army, "but he was a leper" (Vs. 1). There are many great and honorable men and women today who occupy important positions, but they are sinners. Only God could cure the dreaded disease of leprosy and only Christ, "the Great Physician," can cure the dreaded disease of sin. The sinner is sick (Isaiah 1:5-6). Only Christ can save from sin and spiritual death (Matthew 13:15; James 5:16; Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 5:29-32).

Naaman made a lot of mistakes but the greatest of all his mistakes was his thinking in this matter. In verse eleven he said, "behold I thought." While this statement applies directly to what he thought the prophet of God in Israel should have done when Naaman finally went to him, it is evident that he was guilty of faulty thinking from the start. The Bible says in Proverbs 16:25, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

"THOUGHT" THAT HE SHOULD GO TO KING. Naaman **THOUGHT** that he should go to the king of Israel instead of the prophet in Israel as the Jewish maid had directed. She had told her mistress that there was "prophet" in Israel who could

heal Naaman of his leprosy. But at the suggestion of the king of Syria, Naaman went to the king of Israel, the wrong party. Just so, many today are going to the wrong party to try to get forgiveness of their sins. Many **THINK** they should go to the "priest" to be absolved from the guilt of sins. No man has the power to forgive sin and Christ is our only mediator (Matthew 9:1-10; 1 Timothy 2:5-6). Many **THINK** they should go to the Old Testament to find the way to be saved. But we are not under the old covenant in the Christian age (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:14-16; Romans 6:14; 7:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6). Christ is now the author of our salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9; 12:1-3). Many **THINK** that they can ignore the preaching of the apostles and go back to the thief on the cross to learn how to be saved today. The conversation of the thief with Christ took place before the New Testament went in force (Hebrews 9:15-17). People seeking salvation today need to be instructed to come as the three thousand on the day of Pentecost who were instructed to "Repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

"THOUGHT" HE COULD BUY BLESSING.

Another mistake made by Naaman was **THINKING** he could pay for his cleansing (2 Kings 5:5). He "took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment." The blessings of God cannot be bought with money. No man can pay God for a single blessing. Salvation is a matter of grace and favor. There is no merit in obeying the gospel to be saved. The terms of salvation are only appropriate in their nature. It does God no good for the sinner to believe, repent, confess Christ and be baptized trusting God for forgiveness of sins. Yet these things are conditions of salvation without which no one will be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). While Naaman could not buy his cure he could dip himself seven times in the Jordan river to be cured of God. He was not cured as a result of his high morals nor his good deeds, but by obeying the command of God to dip himself in the Jordan. This was a test of his faith. Baptism is now a test of faith (Mark 16:16).

NAAMAN "THOUGHT" HE KNEW WHAT

THE PROPHET SHOULD DO. He had a fixed opinion of how he should be healed. He said, "Behold I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper" (2 Kings 5:11). He was prejudiced! He had it all figured out. Many today **THINK** that they should be saved in answer to prayer (John 9:31). They **THINK** that God will save them apart from obedience to the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 1:16; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16).

"THOUGHT" DIPPING TOO SIMPLE. Naaman **THOUGHT** that dipping in the muddy Jordan was just too simple to receive such an important blessing. If he had been told to "do some great thing" he would have done it without question. Many **THINK** the gospel plan to be baptized into Christ to be saved is too simple. They **THINK** that there must be a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the sinner to bring him to salvation. Just to believe, repent, confess Christ and be baptized in obedience to Christ is just too simple.

"THOUGHT." POWER WAS IN WATER. Naaman **THOUGHT** the man of God was saying there was power in the waters of the Jordan to cleanse him. Hence he wanted to know if the waters of the Abana and Pharpar rivers back home were not better than all the waters of Israel (2 Kings 5:12). The saving power was God and not the water. But the fact remains that God would not cure him until he complied with the command exactly as it was given by the prophet. He **THOUGHT** he could substitute for what God had commanded and wash in one of the rivers in his home land. Many today **THINK** that they can substitute for God's way of salvation and be saved by the waters of false doctrine in their home land of error. -1113 11th Street N. E., Jasper, AL 35504

A MINISTER'S APOLOGIA

If I had the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses, the strength of Samson, the obedience of Abraham, the

compassion of Joseph, the poetic genius of David, the prophetic voice of Elijah, the courage of Daniel, the greatness of John the Baptist, the endurance and love of Paul—I still would not receive the praise of all men.

I learned this early in my ministry and for some time it brought grief to my heart. I sincerely wanted to do my best; and when I did and received unjust criticism—this was a bitter pill to swallow. But I learned! I learned what all men who would serve in the ministry must learn. I learned that true success came only in being God's man—and that God's man is expendable. And if I receive all the praise of men, and in so doing, fail in serving the Lord, I am a real failure. But if I please the Lord by doing my best to serve Him, even though I do not gain the praise of men, I am a real success.

So I have become accustomed to the fact that when I stand for the right, all will not stand with me. When I stand for revealed truth, all who hear will not agree. I expect to be loved by some—and hated by others. Sinners, happy in their sin, will not like my stand for righteousness. Unbelievers will question my faith. False brethren, moved by envy or other base motives, will treacherously seek to weaken or ruin my ministry. I must sometimes stand alone.

At times I will have to deal with unreasonable men ("For all men have not faith") whose motivation is like that of him who did not "like" Dr. Fell:

*"I do not like thee, Dr. Fell—
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this I know and know full well,
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell!"*

But praise be to God. I serve a risen Savior who stands with me as long as I stand for Him. And thus, my oftentimes faltering spirit is braced for steadfast and "patient continuance in well doing." For I am confident if I do my best to do His will, weak as I may be, He will bless my effort. If I honestly err in judgment, He patiently leads me to the right path. My talent, whatever it may be, He will develop as I use it. My will is overcome by His will.

It is not easy to be a minister—but it is a blessing to the soul.—*An Older Preacher*

A MAN WITH A "WAIT" PROBLEM

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too high for capture" (cf. Psalm 69:29; 91:14). God lifts us up to "heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3) and Jesus gives peace in the place of fear (John 14:27; 2 Timothy 4:16-17). Go ahead, face your fears and overcome your procrastination. Mark Twain said, "Courage is not the absence of fear, it's moving ahead in spite of fear." The only way to avoid fear is to face it (Philippians 4:13).

Felix may have been rebellious (Proverbs 18:9). Parents tell kids to clean their rooms or take out the garbage, and if they don't want to, then they take all day. They "passively" resist authority by procrastinating. Sometimes an employee dislikes a supervisor and procrastinates carrying out a request, or a church member, upset with the elders or shepherds, takes too long to do what he has been asked to do (James 1:20). It may occur when one sees he needs to be baptized but refuses because it would be "giving in" and admitting someone was right (cf. "oppose themselves," (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Felix may have been lazy (Proverbs 6:6; 10:4; 13:4; 20:13; Ecclesiastes 10:18; Matthew 25:24-28; 2 Peter 1:5-11). "Easy" is a very popular word. If it's not easy, then we don't like it. Can you imagine a best-selling book entitled, "Ten Difficult Steps to Change Your Life"? or "Fifteen Difficult Ways to Get in Shape"? God has not promised that the Christian life will be easy. In fact, He said it is "strait (difficult) and narrow" (Matthew 7:13-14). But He said it would be worth it.

What needs changing in your life? Do you need to be baptized or restored to faithful attendance and work? Do you have bad habits or sins that need forsaking? What will it take to get you in gear? God wants to help, but you must let Him. Almost everybody plans to get right someday, but as the saying goes, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." If you had a medical condition and knew you would die if you didn't have surgery, would you have it? If your child needed medical attention to save its life,

would you call a doctor? If you had faulty brakes, would you have them repaired or take a chance?

If these answers are obvious, why hesitate about your soul? You can do something about it. Why wait? How sad to lose your soul simply because you waited until "tomorrow" (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8). Remember the "convenient" time never came for Felix.

Weight Watchers, Slimfast, and celery sticks can't help you with a "wait" problem. You've got to make up your mind.—P.O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING

Continued from page 15

drinking wine which inflamed his passion to something unusual to please the audience. His father, Nebuchadnezzar, had preserved and kept the vessels of the temple at Jerusalem out of respect for the Jews. The king, desiring to show his contempt for the Jewish religion, ordered the golden vessels brought into the banquet hall and drank wine out of the sacred vessels. In addition to this act of sacrilege, they began praising the heathen gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone, which were devoid of life or power. They openly refused God who "Giveth life, breath, and all things;" "the God that made the world, and all things therein," was openly rejected by these drunken and foolish men (Acts 17:24-25; Psalm 14:1).

THE HAND WRITING ON THE WALL. Sinful men had gone too far. God had suffered enough of their foolish ignorance and rebellion. A hand appeared and wrote on the wall of the king's palace God's sentence against a wicked king and his reign. The riotous mirth ended, the wine lost its flavor and the king trembled in fear. His heart was stricken by the brief words inscribed on the wall. The words marked the termination of the kingdom the night Belshazzar was slain and Darius, the Median occupied his throne. Daniel had correctly interpreted the fatal message that had appeared before the king and his princes. God had numbered and determined the end of his Godless reign. The time was up, Belshazzar had been

weighed, found wanting and his kingdom was divided and given to his enemies. Daniel decoded the message word by word. "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." "MENE; God has numbered thy kingdom and finished it. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:25-28). "The king's countenance changed, he was troubled and his knees smote one against another" (Daniel 5:6). He wasn't prepared to die that night, but he did. GOD will not always strive with man.

One day he will write the sentence of godless men and nations (1 Peter 4:17-18). Sin has its pay day. God stopped the drunken feasts in the days of Noah and blasted the sinful pleasures of wicked men. When our Lord returns will we be numbered with sinners and found wanting. Christ is our Savior now who pleads with us to come in trusting obedient faith to enjoy salvation and forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27). One day he will judge the world in righteousness. Will we be ready on that great day?

*There's a great day coming,
a great day coming,*

*There's a great day coming by and by,
When the saints and the sinners shall be parted,
right and left,
Are you ready for that day to come?*

—2426 Lacosta Drive, Bartlett, TN 38134

THE YEAR 2000 AND "THE RAPTURE"

Continued from page 13

9:1-2). Their return, also prophesied, is recorded in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

There they remained until the New Testament records the giving of "the seed" who is Christ (Galatians 3:16, 24-29; 4:4-7). All the promises of God to save men are fulfilled in Christ and His church (Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44; Acts 3:24-26; Romans 1:16-17; 2:28-29; 6:3-4;

Ephesians 2:14-22).

3. There Is No Passage For It. In the "last days": (1) God promised to "pour out of my Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28), but this was done in Acts 2:1-4, 16-21. If the "last days" were not until now, there is no inspired New Testament to teach us of Jesus Christ. (2) There would be the sins listed in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. If the "last days" were not until now, these sins have not yet been committed. (3) God would speak through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). If the "last days" were not until now, God has not yet spoken through His Son and the first century Jesus was an impostor. (4) Scoffers would argue against miracles and fulfilled prophecies because nature was inviolable (2 Peter 3:1-5). If the "last days" were not until now, no antisupernaturalists have uttered a syllable. (5) Antichrists would come (1 John 2:18, 21-23; 4:1-3; 2 John 7). If the "last days" were not until now, how could John say "many have gone out into the world" and were "now already in the world"? Antichrist is not a person, but doctrine which denies the fact in the New Testament. Jesus was born of a virgin to be given "the throne of His Father David" (Luke 1:26-35). If Jesus is not now on David's throne, he has not been born of a virgin! Jesus appeared "once at the end of the ages...to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26). If Jesus must re-instate animal sacrifices, his death on the cross is without meaning! Jesus was raised from the dead "to sit" on David's throne (Acts 2:30-31). If Jesus is not now on David's throne, he has not been resurrected! Millennialism is "antichrist" doctrine in its consequences, though many well-meaning but misguided people have accepted it.

Jesus will come "a second time" (Hebrews 9:28), "taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Forgiveness of sins through His blood puts one into His Kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14). Won't you "arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16) before 2000 A.D.?—125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

READERS' RESPONSE

"How Readest Thou?"

Luke 10:26

ENJOYS GG

I enjoy and appreciate *Gospel Gleaner*. I was also delighted to find in your last issue that *Gospel Gazette* is on the internet. Do you know of any other good publications that are available on the internet? Johnny Hester, J.Hester@excite.com.

FOUND GG AT LOCAL PHARMACY

Love your material. I picked up a copy of the *Gospel Gleaner* at our local pharmacy in Dover. I read it and was really impressed at the material in it and the way it was presented. I would appreciate it if you would put me on your mailing list. Phillip Gillespie, Dover, TN.

SHARES GG WITH OTHERS

I get the *Gospel Gleaner* and enjoy it a lot. I've moved and share it with others that live here. Myrtle Mallard, Trenton, TN.

LEARNS FROM FAITHFUL PAPERS

As an evangelist in the Lord's church, I learn a great deal from faithful publications. I enjoy your publication very much. Please add me to your mailing list. Dennis (Skip) Francis, Bonne Terre, MO.

APPRECIATES MATERIAL

I have read a couple of issues of your *Gospel Gleaner* and have been favorably impressed as to the soundness and kind way in which the material is presented. If you would please place my name on your mailing list, I would deeply appreciate it. Gary L. Seagraves, Springfield, OH.

A WELCOME ADDITION

The *Gospel Gleaner* is a welcome addition to my reading material. Thank you for mailing it to me. Mike Sinapiades, Jacksonville, AR.

GG RECOMMENDED

In May of this year I began my first full time work with the church in Miami, Oklahoma. Being new to preaching I have a great need for sound resources which might aid me in this work. Your publication has been recommended as just such a resource. I would greatly appreciate being added to your mailing list. Please send me any information as to your subscription policy, as I would be more than happy to pay for this privilege. Thank you, and God bless you in this work you have undertaken. James Love, Miami, OK.

PASSES IT ON WITH CONFIDENCE

Enclosed is a check to help with the publication of *Gospel Gleaner*. I look forward to each issue. I find this publication to be truthful and I can pass it on to others with confidence. Glessie Cox, Flippin, AR.

GOOD FOR THE CHURCH WORLDWIDE

I had come across your magazine or bulletin called *Gospel Gleaner*. That is the Volume 13. It was given to me by a friend to read. Read it and indeed it remind me of some things I taught and preach about sometime ago. *Gospel Gleaner* is very informative. It is good for leaders in the Lord's church worldwide as well as mature member to read and in turn teach others. I would be very happy if you supply me with one each release. Pierre C. Mendy, Benjul-The Gambia, West Africa.

SPREADING THE GOSPEL

Thank you so very much for your excellent paper and all your other efforts to spread the true Gospel. This small check is to help a bit with expenses. Lucille Krantz, Ashland City, TN.

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GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 15

No. 2

SHOULD YOU “JOIN THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE?”

Garland M. Robinson

Contrary to what many believe, God does not allow men to “join the church of their choice.” It’s incredible that denominational preachers teach people to do so.

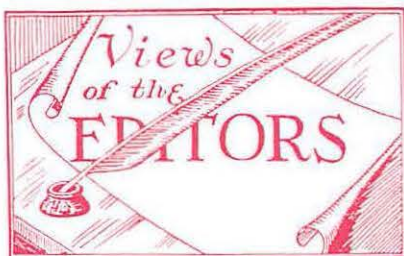
God has never given man a choice when it comes to the manner or mode by which he is to be worshipped. Notice the example of Cain and Abel. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...” (Hebrews 11:4). Both Cain and Abel engaged in worship. Abel’s worship was acceptable and Cain’s was not. The difference was that Abel worshipped “by faith” and Cain did not. To worship “by faith” is to worship according to “the faith”—God’s instructions. Men must worship the way God has directed. We know this because Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Abel worshipped according to the directions or instructions of God (by faith). Cain did not worship according to the directions of God (not by faith). Therefore, Abel was accepted and Cain rejected!

One’s intention can be right while his worship is wrong. Cain worshipped, but that which he did as worship was not what God wanted. This principle is stated in John 4:24,

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” To worship “in spirit” is to worship with the proper motive and heart. To worship “in truth” is to worship according to the truth, the directions/instructions regarding worship (John 12:48)

Notice the example of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2). These two priests offered “strange fire” in their worship and were put to death as a result. They offered God the “fire of their choice” just as men today offer God the “church of their choice.” They did not worship “in faith”—“in truth.” They worshipped God as they wanted and expected God to accept it. Man does not have a choice! It’s either God’s way or else.

Denominational churches today worship God as they want, teaching as their doctrines “the commandments of men” which renders their worship in vain (Matthew 15:9). Hardly any act in which they engage can be upheld by the scriptures! There’s no “thus saith the Lord” for what they say and do. You have no choice when it comes to religion. You either worship God’s way or Satan’s way.—1801 Cruise Street, Corinth, MS 38834-5108



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The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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Editorial

LECTURESHIP SUCCESS

Bill Dillon

Outstanding preaching was heard at the *Third Annual Gospel Gleaner Lectureship*. An average crowd of just under 200 heard excellent messages all day Saturday on the theme "Are We Nearing The End Of Time?"

On Sunday morning 614 were in attendance for worship and 370 were present Sunday night. Every speaker did his part. All who came and listened were privileged to hear sound and solid Bible lessons. The *Gospel Gleaner Lectureship* continues to grow with each passing year as Christians from near and far gather at the College and North church of Christ building.

Some of the highlights of the lectureship were:

1. **Guy Hester** telling of the How? Why? And when? of the second coming of Christ. Our attitude toward the prospect of the Lord's return should be one of "joyous anticipation" as no man knows the day nor hour.
2. **Dennis Gullede** explaining that "the new heavens and the new earth" was a metaphorical expression of heaven itself.
3. **Bob Bauer** stating that the Y2K hysteria is "materialism stressed to the uttermost."
4. **Steve Rook** giving a detailed analysis of Matthew 24 emphasizing that there were signs portending the destruction of Jerusalem, but there are no signs indicating the end of the world.
5. **Ronnie Whittemore** giving a detailed explanation of Revelation 20 describing the "Real Millennium."
6. **Ivie Powell** stating that preparation is the key in regard to the Lord's return. The question is, "If Jesus had returned yesterday where would you be spending eternity today?"
7. **John T. Polk, II** stating he much preferred the Bible's truths on the subject of "Armageddon" over and against Hollywood's lies.
8. **Tim Wilkes**, with characteristic good humor and state of the art computerized visual aids, giving a scriptural and sensible explanation of "The Mark Of The Beast."
9. **M. W. Kiser** telling everyone he was not worrying about the year 2000 but he was merely hoping to survive 1999!
10. **Allen Webster**, topping off the final lecture by stressing three points regarding the end of the world: (a) the end is coming (b) we do not know when and (c) everyone should be ready. The end of time will usher in the Judgment Day.



(Continued next page)

SCENES FROM THE THIRD ANNUAL GOSPEL GLEANER LECTURESHIP



The Lectureship Breakfast



Tim Martin, a deacon at College & North, leading singing



M. W. Kiser speaking on "The Real Rapture"



Dennis Gulsledge addressing "The New Heavens And The New Earth"



John T. Polk, II preaching on "The Real Armageddon"



Ronnie Whittemore discussing "The Real Millennium"

"What does the Bible say?" was the consistent emphasis of every speaker. This is the right emphasis. Let it ever be so! The *Fourth Annual Gospel Gleaner Lectureship* will be held in April, 2000. Thanks to everyone who worked, helped and prayed to make the lectureship an exciting and edifying experience.

—612 E. Fourth Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653

NIMROD

Dennis Gulledge



The Bible is rich in biographies and biographies are rich in instruction. There are approximately three thousand men and women mentioned within its pages. Some of these have but scant material given about them. Such is the case with the subject of our study,

Nimrod. Even from a little much can be gleaned.

Nimrod was one of the most prominent personalities during the four centuries between the flood and Abraham. The story of Nimrod falls within that section of Scripture regarded by some as myth and legend (Genesis 1-11). It should be noted, however, that the language of these chapters describes persons and events. The mention of lands, families, languages and national groupings constitutes definite points for historic reference.

Nimrod was a very enterprising man. Our text reads, "Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord.'" And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city)" (Genesis 10:8-11, NKJV). The tenth chapter of Genesis gives us the history of the spread and development of three great families since the days of Noah, being Japheth, Ham and Shem. Nimrod was a grandson of Ham listed in "the genealogy of the sons of Noah" and a son of Cush, born soon after the global flood (Genesis 10:1). Nimrod is represented as a great man of his day. From the brief record of his life we will notice:

1. *Nimrod the tyrant.* Nimrod "began to be a mighty one on the earth" (Vs. 8). Whereas,

those who went before him were content to bear rule in their own house (Patriarchs), Nimrod sought, not only to rise above the level of his neighbors, but also to wield authority over them. The reputation of Nimrod is that he was a prototype of violent despotism such as the world has seen in only a few historic figures like Alexander the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte, among others. This suggestion is encouraged by the fact that the Hebrew verb form of his name *nimrodh* means "let us revolt" (Leupold, 1963, p. 366).

It is said that Nimrod was "a mighty hunter before the Lord" (Vs. 9). The question is in what sense was he a "mighty hunter"? Even though most expositors will admit that the language is indefinite, the suggestion is strong that Nimrod was a wicked character. Some think that Nimrod did well with his hunting by ridding the country of wild beasts. Henry H. Halley says, "His fame as a 'mighty hunter' (10:9), meant that he was protector of the people at a time when wild animals were a continual menace" (Halley, 1972, p. 82). Others believe that under pretense of hunting animals he became a violent invader of his neighbor's rights in order to bring men into subjection. Adam Clarke remarks that "The word *tsayid*, which we render *hunter*, signifies *prey*, and is applied in the Scriptures to the *hunting of men* by persecution, oppression, and tyranny" (Clarke, n.d., p. 86). This may be enough for us to recognize Nimrod as the first tyrant upon the earth to develop war as an agency of subjecting men to his own interests. The fame of Nimrod as a hunter was proverbial: "therefore it was said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord'" (Vs. 9). The idea of verse nine is that whenever a man did something on a heroic scale he was said to be "like Nimrod."

If Nimrod was a rebel, as his name suggests, you can be sure that he had many imitators. Since Nimrod was the founder of Babel

this may help to explain the motivation of the builders of the tower of Babel in desiring to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11:1-9). It is reasonable to believe that these men were simply exhibiting the rebel spirit of their mighty founder.

The spirit of Nimrod has been seen through the ages in the smaller, but no less important, spheres of the nation, society, family and the church. There are still Nimrods in the world that are bent on self-exaltation as they live by the iron rule of "might makes right." Nimrods corrupt societies. Nimrods destroy nations (Proverbs 14:34). Nimrods break up marriages and homes (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29). Nimrods divide churches. Diotrephes exhibited the spirit of Nimrod (3 John 9-10).

2. *Nimrod the Empire-Builder*. Even if the character of Nimrod is shrouded in uncertainty, it can hardly be denied that he was an empire-builder. C. C. Crawford noted, of Nimrod, that "He impressed his name upon subsequent generations to such an extent that the empire which he established was still, in the time of Micah the prophet, 'the land of Nimrod' (Micah 5:6)" (Crawford, 1979, p. 612).

Nimrod is the founder of the kingdom of Babylon, the history of which is presented in Scripture as morally, religiously and governmentally corrupt (Jeremiah 24:1). We will examine the empire building of Nimrod from the standpoint of his two greatest ventures. His first great venture was in beginning the kingdom of Babylon. Our text tells us "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (Vs. 10).

The name *Babylon* is the Greek rendition of the name that in Hebrew is *Babel*. Its first occurrence in Scripture pertains to the titanic social revolt surrounding the tower of Babel, at which time people in "the land of Shinar" attempted to throw off the rule of God and forge their own government. They said, "come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). It is quite reasonable to believe that Nimrod may have been the inspiration

for their scheme. Men are often great imitators of evil. If a man is known as a great leader, if he is famous, flamboyant and gains a following, he will have many that will seek to be like him. Genesis 10:8-10 portrays the character in which earthly imperial power first appears on the stage of human history. As Leupold stated, "These early kingdoms or empires are, therefore, not to be regarded as useful institutions, guaranteeing law and order in a troubled world, but rather as the achievements of a lawless fellow who taught men to revolt against duly constituted authority" (Leupold, 1963, p. 368).

Aside from the famed Babel, Nimrod is the founder of the following Babylonian cities: *Erech*, which is located about one hundred miles southeast of Babylon. *Accad* (Akkad) lies in northern Babylon. It is believed to be near modern Baghdad. *Calneh* is also believed to be near modern Baghdad, although no archaeological discoveries to date have revealed its location. That small fact, however, is hardly sufficient reason to doubt the credibility of the Bible in citing its existence.

Nimrod's second great venture in empire building was to set out for Assyria, and build, "Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principle city)" (Genesis 10:11-12). The city of Nineveh is familiar to us from reading the book of Jonah. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire which destroyed Israel in 721 BC. Assyria was itself destroyed in 612 BC by the combined forces of the Babylonians and Medes (Nahum 2:6-8; 3:7). The sister-cities of Nineveh are *Rehoboth Ir*, possibly a suburb of Nineveh, *Calah*, eighteen miles south of Nineveh, and *Resen*, between Calah and Nineveh. Of the concluding remark "that is the principle city," it is well to note that these four places composed "the great city." These, and other cities, were included under the name Nineveh (much like the complex of cities making up New York City).

3. *Lessons*: What lessons might we learn in this survey of the life of Nimrod? We have observed in Nimrod the disposition of worldly

(Continued on page 15)

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Ye Are The Salt Of The Earth"

Matthew 5:13



CHARLES ALLEN SEWELL

March 15, 1933 – December 20, 1998

Ronnie Whittemore

"...To the Saving of His House"



For many years this writer has enjoyed the opportunity of writing in the *Gospel Gleaner* about the virtues of "Christian Character." Repeatedly, emphasis has been placed upon the sterling qualities of the faithful men and women of

the Bible. The faith of Abraham and Sarah, the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses and the courage of Daniel are samples of the kind of character that we have discussed. However, it is rare to have an opportunity to address the great character of faithful people of this generation. It is not because such people are difficult to find, but it is unusual to find one that stands head and shoulders above others. This writer wants to take this opportunity to describe the golden character of an outstanding Christian gentleman.

Charles Allen Sewell was born on March 15, 1933 and ended his earthly journey on December 20, 1998. Charles Sewell dedicated his life to his family and the local church. For more than forty years, he labored with the White Oak Church of Christ in Macon County, Tennessee. Like the apostle Paul who made tents with his hands, brother Charles worked for American General Insurance as an agent. At one time, he served as staff manager for the company, but resigned the position because the demands of travel took time away from his family and the church. His forty-six years of loyalty to his wife,

Vinola Bell, was so refreshing in an age of marital betrayal. His loving devotion and obvious influence in the lives of his daughters and their families were so apparent from the moving tribute paid to his memory at his funeral service. His



widespread influence was apparent by the attendance at his funeral, the many comments made by people of the community and the thousands of dollars donated in his memory to a mission fund. If you want to know how important one man is, and what he meant to people, just count the number of tear-filled eyes among the men at a funeral. At brother Charles' funeral, there were many men whose eyes swelled with tears at the knowledge of losing a close friend, a good neighbor and a compassionate minister. Brother Charles is survived by his wife, Vinola Bell (Woodcock) Sewell, two daughters, Nancy Kirby and Susan Rogers, a sister Erchie Sisco, a brother, Edward Sewell, and four grandsons, Andy Kirby, John Kirby, Jeremy Kirby and Nathan Rogers. We extend our deepest condolences to this godly family and our prayers are with them.

The funeral service for brother Charles was conducted at the White Oak church building by members of his immediate family. His two sons-in-law, Wally Kirby and Mike Rogers, delivered very touching eulogies; his grandson, Andy Kirby, wrote and read a heartfelt letter which he placed in the coffin; his grandson, John Kirby, read poems and a third grandson, Nathan Rogers, led congregational singing. His brother, Edward Sewell, also spoke about the various "gifts" which brother Charles left with each person with whom he came into contact. Affectionately known as "Pa" by the family and simply "brother Charles" by the church, honor was given to a man who had given so much to his family and the Lord.

Friends, we live our lives on this earth through a series of brief encounters. Other than immediate family, it is rare to stay in close contact with people for a lifetime. Instead our lives consist of momentary opportunities of influence. Consider

your own relationships with other people. They can be divided into family, friends, acquaintances, brethren in the local church, brethren across the brotherhood, etc. But how many real opportunities are there for lasting influence? How much do we actually touch the lives of the people around us? How long does our influence last? Please indulge this writer in making a few personal comments about brother Charles and his influence in this preacher's life.

Brother Charles was my mother's first cousin; therefore, there were some extra opportunities for influence because of family visits. However, most of my contacts with brother Charles came through the church.

1. As a teenager, I sat in brother Charles' Bible classes and he explained so clearly the teachings of the Bible. He made such common sense applications of the great lessons of Christ. I remember sitting in the little room off to the side of the auditorium and listening to the calm, gentle way in which brother Charles taught his class. All gospel preachers owe a great debt to their Bible class teachers, and I consider brother Charles as a contributor to my Bible education.

2. As a young evangelist, I was given opportunities to preach by brother Charles at the White Oak church. When I vacationed, it was customary for brother Charles to offer the pulpit to me. He was a great encouragement to me at a very vital stage in my life.

3. As a listener from the pew, I began to notice more and more, the vast amount of Bible knowledge and wisdom in brother Charles. His sermons were filled with explanations of the scriptures and their practical applications. I loved to hear brother Charles preach one of Jesus' parables. He could bring meanings of those parables to one's personal life. He followed the simple pattern of Christ. Luke summarized the life of Christ in this way: "...all that Jesus began both to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). That was the life of brother Charles. He would teach the great and simple message of the gospel by explanation and application, then he would live it.

4. As an observer at his funeral, I was awed by the sincere tribute given by his family and

the descriptions of how brother Charles taught each member of the family by precept and example. He was honored for teaching spiritual values. He was honored for showing them "the heavenly Father" through his teaching and life. He was honored for teaching the value of the soul and the importance of life and death. He was honored for teaching his sons-in-law how to love their wives and care for their families. He was honored for teaching his daughters about obedience and respect for their parents and their husbands. He was honored as a "grandpa" for the miles driven and sacrifices made to attend his grandsons activities and for their knowledge in the way of the Lord. He was honored for his work in the church and how he was true to the Book. He was honored for his endurance and faithfulness to Christ. And as one person stated at the funeral, brother Charles spent his life trying to fill the church building at White Oak, and on December 22, 1998 he did it as every pew was filled with men and women who honored the man who had influenced so many lives for more than 65 years.

For several weeks, this writer has searched for the Biblical counterpart to brother Charles and there are so many similarities among his life and the lives of faithful Bible characters. But then it struck me, brother Charles was like Noah! Noah was more than an obedient servant of the Lord. He was a preacher and a family man. He was tireless in his work. He was persistent. He prepared an ark, taught his family and tried to influence as many as he could to follow the Lord. Though mocked and ridiculed for his devotion to the truth of God, Noah's faith and work never wavered. In the end, he could only save his family, but he saved them and in turn, saved the world (Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20-21; 2 Peter 2:5). That was the life of brother Charles. He worked with his hands to support his family. He labored with the local church. He taught many people through preaching, persuasion, warning and instruction. He endured the morally bankrupt and spiritually depleted society around him and despite all efforts of Satan to sidetrack a good work, brother Charles prevailed "to the saving of his own house."

(Continued on page 8)

WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN? #4

Ivie Powell



Throughout life one is faced with many challenges, but none can compare to the training of children. Book store shelves are filled with self-help material on helping parents train children. There are many excellent books to help

parents in the training of children, but one must never forget that the greatest manual on the home is the Bible! Peter informs us: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." (2 Peter 1:3).

It is the fervent prayer of every Christian that their children obey the gospel and remain faithful to the Lord. John expresses the heart's desire of parents in 3 John 3-4, "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." If children aren't properly trained in the Lord's way they will be: "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).

The most precious commodity you can give your children is your time! There is a song that swells the heart with fond days of years gone by — *Precious Memories*. Mom, dad, burn into the hearts of your children evenings spent in praying and studying God's word. Such precious memories will remain with them throughout life. Without question, as a child of God, you want to see every precious soul obey the gospel of Christ — especially those of your own household!!! So take the time to teach your children the truth about:

BIBLICAL LANGUAGE

There are several factors which have contributed to the break down of our Biblical

language: (1) Lack of teaching in the home, perhaps even pulpits and classrooms, (2) close association with denominational friends and relatives, (3) Many cross over and attend denominational services on a regular basis, (4) watching denominational programs on television, (5) reading denominational books, and (6) a failure to properly study the Bible.

Not only must one "Take heed therefore how ye hear..." (Luke 8:18), but also "take heed what ye hear..." (Mark 4:24)! It is very common to hear members of the church use denominational language. I do not know the author of the chart on the next page, but it clearly sets forth the truth about what we should and should not say.

An interesting exercise would be to take the chart on the next page and ask your children questions. This will give you a good place to start teaching them "sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13)! Remember, the difference between the Lord's church and denominationalism really does make the difference. The difference between being saved and being lost!—1272 Bonham Street, Paris, TX 75460

CHARLES ALLEN SEWELL

Continued from page 7

Friends, that is quite an accomplishment. But brother Charles did not do it alone. He had a good helpmeet. His wife, Bell, served the Lord by his side for nearly fifty years. They were a true couple. They were partners in the truth as well as in life. May their tribe increase!

Again, our deepest sympathy is extended to the Sewell family and the White Oak church who lost more than a good preacher. They lost a close friend in brother Charles.—1001 E. Albany Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203

SOUND DOCTRINE

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1).
 “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).
 “Hold fast the form of sound words...” (2 Timothy 1:13).

Give book, chapter and verse. Do Bible things in Bible ways. Call Bible things by Bible names.

WE SHOULD NOT SAY:	WE SHOULD SAY:
1. “Church of Christ people”	“Christians, God’s children” (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16)
2. “Church of Christ doctrine”	“Bible doctrine, truth” (2 John 9-11; John 8:32)
3. “the Church of Christ teaches”	“the Bible teaches” (Galatians 1:6-9)
4. “the authority of the Church”	“the authority of Christ” (Matthew 28:18-20)
5. “he is a Church of Christ”	“he is a Christian—a member of the body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:13)
6. “he is a Church of Christer”	“he is a Christian”
7. “I am teaching him our position”	“We are studying God’s Word: what the Lord teaches”
8. “The Church of Christ is right in all points of doctrine and practice.”	“The Bible is right and we are making an effort to conform to its teaching.”
9. “giving to the Church”	“Giving to the Lord”
10. “quitting the church”	“quitting the Lord”
11. “join the church to be saved”	“Obey the gospel: be added to the church” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Acts 2:47)
12. “Our church; My church”	“the Lord’s church” (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16)
13. “Church of Christ church”	“church of Christ: the Lord’s church”
14. “vote him into the church”	“The Lord added him to the church” (Acts 2:47)
15. “Reverend So-N-So”	“Christ warns against exalting titles” (Matthew 23:4-12; cf. Psalm 111:9)
16. “Father So-N-So”	“And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Matthew 23:9)



WHAT ABOUT CHURCH ATTENDANCE?

(Hebrews 10:25)

M. W. Kiser



We shall see that the word speaks often about the assemblies. We misunderstand the subject as seen by the way it is approached. Some use gimmicks to get folks to come. There is no end to what carnality can attract. Others speak of being "provisionally hindered" as if to say God arranged their life so they could not come. I would rather think I am here because of His providence. We want to dwell now upon some positive thoughts about the assemblies of the church.

I. WHERE SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (The place of the assembly).

- A. The church assembled in various places in New Testament times.
 1. Private homes (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2).
 2. The Jewish temple (Acts 2:46).
 3. In those rented upper rooms (Acts 20:7).
 4. In school houses (Acts 19:9-10)
- B. The command to assemble necessitates a place. The kind of place is not so

important (John 4:23). We have used several kinds of places.

- C. The church building is not the church (Acts 17:24; 1 Peter 2:5). Our craze for elaborate buildings makes me think we want an earthly kingdom!

II. WHEN SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (The time of the assembly).

- A. Upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- B. This was not their only time! (Acts 2:46; 14:27; 19:9-10).
- C. We need to apply the "extra mile" principle to the assembly (Matthew 5:41).
 1. Some think in terms of how "few" they are required to attend.
 2. Some think in terms of how "many" they will get to attend.

III. WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (The reason for assemblies).

- A. To worship God (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 2:12; Colossians 4:16).
- B. To discipline the unruly (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5) [Incidental].
- C. To report on missionary activities (Acts 14:27) [Not just the elders].
- D. To exhort one another (Hebrews 10:24) [The one we are not to forsake!].
- E. To transact church business (Acts 6:1-4) [The "anti" contention!].

IV. HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (This involves attitude).

- A. They are an obligation (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 16:1; 11:23).
 1. This is a direct negative command...like a "thou shalt not..."
 2. The motive for obedience (John 14:15; Revelation 22:14).
- B. They are beneficial (2 Peter 3:18).
 1. Spiritual development is not

optional (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:3).

2. Our purpose for coming together is spiritual (1 Corinthians 11:22).
- C. They are exclusive (Matthew 18:20; Revelation 1:13; Matthew 26:29).
 1. You must believe He is here,...not there!
 2. If one can stay away and have fellowship with Him, all can!
- D. They are desirable (Psalm 122:1).
 1. So much that Paul would tarry several days to be present (Acts 20).
 2. Are they a good work? If not, then quit it! (Titus 3:1).
- E. They are revealing (Matthew 5:13).
 1. No man attends, or forsakes to himself.
 2. Are you satisfied with the influence of your attendance on others?

God has declared His mind on this subject. Excuses are never exceptions to a divine rule. "I'm sick," but I went to work! "I don't like the preacher," but worship God! "My clothes are not good enough," but it is not a parade. "Company came," so bring them; if they won't come then you are keeping the wrong company. —P.O. Box 2597, Sylacauga, AL 35150

DON'T LET YOURSELF...

WORRY – when you are doing your best.

HURRY – when success depends on your accuracy.

THINK EVIL – of a friend until you have the facts.

BELIEVE – a thing impossible without trying.

TRUST – an elastic conscience.

WASTE – time on peevish and peevish matters.

IMAGINE – that good intentions are a satisfying excuse.

HARBOR – bitterness in your heart toward God or man.

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Dennis Gulledge, Evangelist

THE ADVANTAGE OF... DISADVANTAGE

Allen Webster



Booker T. Washington knew something of disadvantage.

Born into slavery on April 5, 1856, he worked as a house-boy, in salt works, and coal mines. After years of hard labor, he moved to Tuskegee, Alabama in 1881

to start a school in a small shanty. He quickly gained fame and remained well known until his death on November 17, 1915. He became the single most influential spokesman for American blacks. He never complained of his circumstances. He even insisted that his situation—though unfair—had given him insights he would not have had otherwise. He coined the phrase, “the advantage of disadvantage.”

Washington, however, was not the only person ever to suffer hardship. All of us sometimes look at the world through tear dimmed eyes. Sobs break night’s silence in every bedroom. Troubles rob all stomachs of food and all eyes of rest. The most confident step sometimes falters; the least fragile heart sometimes breaks; the strongest back sometimes bends. Are you dealing with difficulties, harassed with heartache, or struggling with suffering? If so, maybe it would help to look for the advantage in disadvantage.

DISADVANTAGES BECOME ADVANTAGES WHEN THEY CAUSE US TO DEPEND MORE UPON GOD. Hardship can help us learn that we need God in our lives. He is a “very present help in time of trouble” (Psalm 46:1; cf. 18:1-2). When Job’s days were darkest, he made his greatest confession of faith (19:25-27; cf. Isaiah 29:25). Trials make us realize how unqualified we are to direct our steps (Jeremiah 10:23) and how unstable we become by leaning on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). Since God is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”

(Ephesians 3:20), it is comforting to have him as our Friend.

Disadvantages help humble us, which we all need occasionally (Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:3-5). It’s hard to look up when looking down our noses, but easy when lying flat of our backs. Since “whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased...” (Luke 14:11), and a proud man can never enter heaven (Proverbs 16:18), losses that lead to humility are profitable. Those who humble themselves in the sight of the Lord, He will lift up (James 4:10).

Disadvantages often improve our prayer lives. Abe Lincoln is credited with saying, “I have often been driven to my knees by the sincere conviction that there was nowhere else to go.” Paul’s thorn in the flesh caused him to beg God three times for its removal, but God taught him to count his pain as gain. “...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...I rather glory in...infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:8-10). We pray much more fervently and frequently when we are at the end of our ropes than when we are on top of our worlds (cf. Luke 22:44). When starving in the pigpen, we are more likely to think of the Father’s table (Luke 15:16-20). As we see financial setbacks, we are more likely to seek the riches in Christ (Colossians 1:27). When our emotions are bruised and bleeding, we’ll probably seek the balm of Gilead (Jeremiah 8:22; Psalm 34:18). When we suffer family trouble, we more strongly desire our Father’s face (Psalm 55:22). Problems often lead us to prayer, suffering to supplications, perplexity to petitions, and reverses to requests. Disadvantages are advantages when they cause us

to spend more time on our knees.

DISADVANTAGES BECOME ADVANTAGES WHEN THEY MAKE US MORE COMPASSIONATE TOWARD OTHERS. God wants us tenderhearted (Ephesians 4:32) and compassionate (Colossians 3:12-14), but it is usually only after our hearts are broken that they are open to pour out sympathy for others. Paul wrote, "Blessed be God...the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). We might try to sympathize before trials, but we are unable to empathize. But after walking barefooted down a rocky road, we have more compassion on a neighbor who has to pass the same way (cf. Luke 10:33). If we have always enjoyed good health, our hearts will not be as soft to the news of another's heart-attack or cancer. If we've never lost a close loved one, we may not understand the grief of one who has. If we have never stumbled into sin, we might be harsh on others who have (John 8:1-11; Galatians 6:1-2). Disadvantages are advantages if they give us a greater capacity to feel sympathy for others.

DISADVANTAGES BECOME ADVANTAGES WHEN THEY CAUSE US TO DESIRE MORE STRONGLY FOR HEAVEN. It is easy to fall in love with this world when picking roses, but we long for heaven when pulling thorns. Paul suffered tremendously (2 Corinthians 11:23-28) and longed to trade his tattered robe of flesh for a robe of righteousness (Philippians 1:21-23). Bearing life's burdens in the heat of the day makes us, too, look forward to heaven's shade. When our world is shaking, we "look for a city which hath foundations" (Hebrews 11:10) and when we are feeling low it is easier to set our "affections on things above" (Colossians 3:1-2).

The Bible gives us this encouragement: "For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which

are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1). We are able to look farthest into heaven through our tears. Remember we are pilgrims pitching our tents one day closer to heaven with each nightfall.

Booker T. Washington left the world a great legacy. The next time you feel discouraged, take time to thank God for the advantage of disadvantage.—P. O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

BEGGED, BORROWED AND BEGOTTEN

- ◆ "The clearer sight we have of the sovereignty and power of heaven, the less shall we fear the calamities of this earth."—Matthew Henry
- ◆ "We should be always wearing the garment of praise, not just waving a palm-branch now and then."—Andrew Bonar
- ◆ "I have read of a woman who went to a psychiatrist wearing a strip of bacon over each ear and a fried egg on top of her head. She said to him... 'I've come to see you about my brother.' I have heard people pray who were conscious of other people's faults but not of their own."—Vance Havner
- ◆ "The worst thing we can bring to a religious controversy is anger."—Matthew Henry
- ◆ "An open mind is like an open window, you have to put in screens to keep the bugs out."
- ◆ "All television is educational television. The only question is, what is it teaching."—Nicholas Johnson

BEING GOD-FEARING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ECONOMY

Basil Overton

The apostle John wrote to Christians, "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:17-18).

I have heard this passage misused by some who have said that John taught here that if a Christian loves God enough he will have no fear of God.

Some say there is fear about so many things that they do not want to have fear in religion too. They say we have fear about the weather, the economy, disease, the possibility of nuclear war, divorce, automobile wrecks, etc., and they say they do not want fear in religion too, so they reject the idea of fearing God.

What these are overlooking, that is so vital, is the fact that if they feared God as the Bible teaches us to, they would have no need to fear any of those other things!

Indeed, for all in our nation to be God-fearing is much more important than a booming economy!

WHAT FEAR DOES PERFECT LOVE CAST OUT? Common sense should teach us that perfect love does not cast out fear of God, because there are many passages in the Bible which clearly teach the benefit and necessity of fearing God in the sense of being aware of the awesomeness and majesty of God. Without this kind of God-consciousness no one could serve God faithfully. This respect for the almighty, a Creator who gives us all life and breath and all things, is absolutely necessary to being spiritual! It is the kind of fear and reverential consciousness which generates in longing, loving hearts the great urge to never do anything that would displease the

God who made us and blesses us.

Therefore, we need to look closely at brother John's statement about perfect love casting out fear and learn the fear about which he wrote. The context shows clearly that he meant fear that "involves torment" (verse 18), and he obviously meant that such fear would keep us from having "boldness in the day of judgment" (verse 17).

When one feels afraid about appearing before God in judgment, it means his love has not been perfected or matured enough! "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). As we grow in keeping God's commandments, our love for God gets more mature. The more mature that kind of love for God becomes, the less fear of the day of judgment we have!

What Solomon wrote about three thousand years ago is still just as powerful and pertinent as it was when he wrote it. He wrote: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). There is no word in the original Hebrew of this text for the word "duty." That is why it is called an interpolated word, and is in italics in the King James Version.

The text obviously means that fearing God and doing what he tells us to do is the whole of man. It is the summation of what it means to be a whole human being. It is what life is truly all about. When you come to the door of death all that will really matter will be whether or not you lived your life fearing God and keeping his commandments!

THE BIBLE PLACES A PREMIUM ON FEARING THE LORD. In the great Bible Book of Proverbs great emphasis is placed on the fear of the Lord. It is the beginning of knowledge

(1:7). It causes people to depart from evil (3:7). It causes people to hate evil (8:13). It is the beginning of wisdom (9:10). It causes one to live longer (10:27). It gives those who have it strong confidence (14:26). It is a fountain of life (14:27).

Lack of fear of the Lord causes people to commit all sorts of crimes (Romans 3:10-18). Fear of the Lord moves Christians to perfect their holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1). It also motivates Christians to be subject to one another or to submit to one another in service to each other (Ephesians 5:21). Fear of the Lord rids our hearts of arrogance and pride and leads us to be humble and helpful in every way we can when others are in need.

From all this it should be very easy for anyone to see the practical value of fearing God Almighty and keeping his commandments even for the benefits in this life, and especially for the eternal benefits in the life to come. It should be easy for all to conclude that being God-fearing is far more important than a thriving economy!

CONCLUSION. If you are not a Christian which means being a member of the body of Christ which is his church (Colossians 3:15; 1:18), your becoming a Christian should be much more important to you than having a booming economy! You can become a Christian by putting your trust in Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, by turning from your sins, by confessing the faith you have in your heart in Jesus Christ, and by being baptized into Christ (Read: Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4).—P.O. Box 2279, Florence, AL 35630

NIMROD

Continued from page 5

ambition. Now, let us observe the nature of ambition. First, ambition is hungry. Nimrod hungered for power and dominance over his neighbors. Second, ambition is restless. Nimrod, with four cities under his command, could not be content until he had four more. Third, ambition is daring and will stop at nothing. Ambition itself is not wrong. If misdirected, ambition becomes human pride in action. Jesus at times found such a disposition among his disciples and denounced it

(Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46). The Christian's ambition is given by Paul when he said, "that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (1 Thessalonians 4:11).

CONCLUSION

The name Nimrod means *rebellion*. If he did abuse his power to the oppression of his neighbors, it teaches us that those who are tyrants to men are in rebellion to God, and that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (1 Samuel 15:23).—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

INTERESTING INQUIRIES

"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"

Acts 8:30

BY WHAT STANDARD SHOULD WE JUDGE?

John T. Polk, II



*"Since everyone sins,
how can one person
condemn anyone else?"*

If all judging is wrong, as the world seems to think: There would have been no judgment at Nuremberg. The popular press today says that anyone

who condemns sin is: narrow-minded, unforgiving, unloving, bigoted, hypocritical, intolerant of "alternate lifestyles." Yet they don't hesitate to condemn: capitalism, Joseph McCarthy's anti-communism, Exxon/Valdez oil spill, KKK or Black Muslim racism, "right-wing militias," slavery, private gun ownership, violence in cartoons and movies, or abortion clinic murders. Realistically, everyone is judgmental, having learned some value system. The discussion is not whether to be judgmental, but by what standard should one judge!

If there is no God, and evolution is true, then no human has a right to form a law or judgmental opinion about anything, or to be elevated above animals. No one would even have the "right" to declare that "the majority is right," for everyone would do what was right in his own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

If, however, there is a God, there must be a

law, principle, or moral urge to which all lives should submit. Law exists because God exists. God gives each person a "conscience," which is an awareness, "consciousness" of how close to one's own morals one is living (Romans 2:12-16). One can choose to ignore that conscience and become "jaded, faded, and degraded" (1 Timothy 4:1-3). Moral law is designed to bring people back to its standard of behavior (1 Timothy 1:5-11).

The existence of the heavens and the earth, and all life on it, necessitates a Spirit of Force who could bring these into existence from nothing (Genesis 1:1-2:2; Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 33:6-9; John 4:24). Because God (Hebrew *Elohim*, "Power") created us, only His law should be superior to all human decisions (James 4:10-12). God asked, "Would you condemn me that you may be justified?" (Job 40:8). God's word is the only right standard by which to judge, for it is "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12; cf., Jeremiah 51:10). God's word is the only pure source of right-doing [a.k.a. "righteousness"] (Psalm 119:172; 106:3) for it comes from the "God of my righteousness" (Psalm 4:1), and thus, like Job, one must not let go of "my righteousness" (Job 27:6). God's integrity is unquestioned from the Bible's first book to the last. Abraham asked, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25) and Heaven's voice said, "True and righteous are his judgments" (Revelation 19:2).

Jesus Christ came to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15), and now the Gospel of Christ is the righteousness of those who practice righteousness (Romans 1:16-17; 1 John 3:7; Philippians 3:9) because they have conformed to Jesus' death and resurrection by baptism (Romans 6:3-7). God will judge everyone by his standard of righteousness—Jesus Christ (Acts 17:30-31; 1 Peter 2:23; John 12:48).

Everyone must thus confront and conform to God's moral judgments, and the Bible presents these in unequivocal terms, (i.e. Matthew 7:13-27; 15:16-20; Galatians 5:19-23; Proverbs 6:16-19; et.

al. Jesus Christ commanded right judging (John 7:24), which means not the current way we are looking ("appearance"), but always the way God has instructed. Thus we should not be hypocritically inconsistent by only applying to others rules we will not accept for ourselves (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 2:1-4, 17-24). Jews should not have stoned an adulterous woman by Moses Law (Leviticus 20:10-12) because they also had violated Moses Law by not bringing the adulterous man (John 8:2-9). God's law is unheeded by those who love the sin and ignorance of darkness (John 3:18-21; Ephesians 4:17-19), don't want to obey (Romans 1:18-32), are willfully carnal (Romans 8:5-8), who don't love the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12), and therefore they will be damned (Mark 16:15-16). Christians are sinners who have seen and made the moral choice to follow God's way through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:1-10). Christians must put off the old man of sin, put on the new man, imitate God as his children, walk in love, and no longer partake in the worldly ways they have left (Ephesians 4:20-5:21). They must keep clear the line God has drawn (James 4:4), while sowing the seed of the kingdom to help others be saved who will see the light (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6). There is no justification in the Bible for Christians to believe they make the final decision upon the world, nor to stoop to worldly ways to stop the world's ways! Christians are not to make final judgment upon others, but must preach God's final judgment to others that they also may be saved (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

"And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).—125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

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PRAYER

Grover C. Beard

GOD GIVE US!

God give us eyes, that we may see the needs of others about us.

God give us ears, that we can hear a new born baby cry.

God give us lips, that we can sing thy praise, honor and glory.

God give us a mouth, with courage, to speak thy truths even when it hurts.

God give us compassionate hands, that we can reach out to a brother, sister, or friend.

God give us a compassionate heart, so we can feel the pain of a brother who is hurting, or rejoice when he is happy.

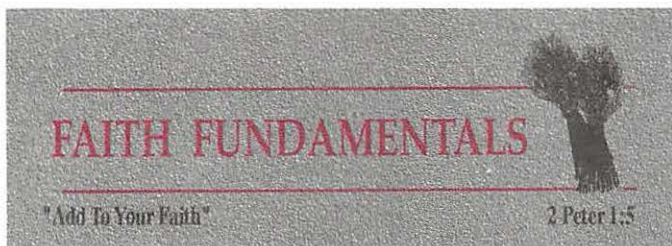
God give us knees, that won't wear out in prayer, thanking Thee for blessings.

God give us feet with iron shoes that will help us spread the gospel to the world.

God give us time, to stop and smell the roses, and listen to a mocking bird sing his sweetest songs.

Finally Father, we thank thee for Jesus; the greatest gift of all, and that he died on calvary for our sins. Amen.—767 County Road 297, Bryant, AL 35958

"The process of growing old is a question of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter!"



WHAT IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME?

Guy F. Hester



We read in John 3:16, "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." This is the verse that is commonly referred to as the golden text of the Bible.

Although the Bible itself does not so refer to it, yet, I believe this to be a good and proper designation because it, in just a few words, points out to us what the Bible is all about.

One way to more fully appreciate what the coming of Christ into the world means to us is to try to realize or imagine just what conditions would have prevailed in this old world had God not given his son.

IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME, WE WOULD NOT KNOW WHAT GOD IS LIKE. Christ came to reveal the Father unto us. He came to show us what God is like. He said in John 14:9; "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." To see the mercy, meekness, gentleness, goodness and forgiving spirit of Christ is to see the Father because he is the exact image of the Father (Hebrews 1:3). Therefore, if Christ had not come, we would know very little about the kind of being God really is.

IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME, ALL THE PROPHECIES WOULD HAVE FAILED. The prophecies foretold of his coming. Even the

time of his coming was foretold. And he did come when "The fullness of time was come" (Galatians 4:4).

IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME, WE WOULD BE WITHOUT AN ACCEPTABLE ATONEMENT FOR SIN. Animal blood offered under the Old Testament did not bring eternal forgiveness of sins. The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." Then again in Hebrews 10:1-4, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." While the blood of animals did not and could not take away sins, Christ came in a body of flesh to die for our sins and to shed his precious blood for the remission of our sins.

IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME, THERE WOULD BE NO SAVIOR. The purpose of his coming was to be the Savior of the world. We read in 1 John 4:14, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." If Christ had not come to be the Savior of the world there would be no Christianity, no gospel, no New Testament, no church of Christ. He had to come in a body of flesh to purchase the church with his blood (Acts 20:28).

IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME, THERE WOULD BE NO RESURRECTION. Jesus said in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life." In a word, we would be without God and without hope (Colossians 1:27).

CONCLUSION. Thanks be to God that Christ did come. But his coming is of no avail to you if you have not rendered obedience unto him and are faithfully living the Christian life.—1113 11th Street N. E., Jasper, AL 35504

IS IT A MARK OF MEDIOCRITY TO READ THE BIBLE?

IN SOME CIRCLES of so-called higher learning it is considered a mark of inferior ability and attainments to read the Bible. Yet among the readers of the Bible, in all ages, have been some of the ablest leaders and most brilliant minds. Witness the following:

GEORGE WASHINGTON: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible...He is worse than an infidel who does not read the Bible and acknowledge his obligation to God."

JOHN ADAMS: "The Bible is the best Book in the world."

THOMAS JEFFERSON: "I have always said and always will say that the studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better farmers, better husbands...The Bible makes the best people in the world."

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS: "My custom is to read four or five chapters of the Bible every morning immediately after rising...It seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day...It is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book upon reason that you can, and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT: "To every man who faces life with real desire to do his part in everything, I appeal for a study of the Bible."

WOODROW WILSON: "I have a very simple thing to ask of you. I ask every man and woman in this audience that from this day on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of this great Book."

JOHN WESLEY: "O give me that Book! At any price, give me that Book of God. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one Book."

SIR ISAAC NEWTON: "I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatever."

WILLIAM PENN: "The Scripture's a declaration of the mind and will of God...They ought also to be read, believed and fulfilled in our day. We accept them as the Words of God Himself."

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE: "Let no religious book take its place. People do not read the Bible enough."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: "Cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures. This is your certain interest."

DANIEL WEBSTER: "From the time that, at my mother's feet or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp the verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation."

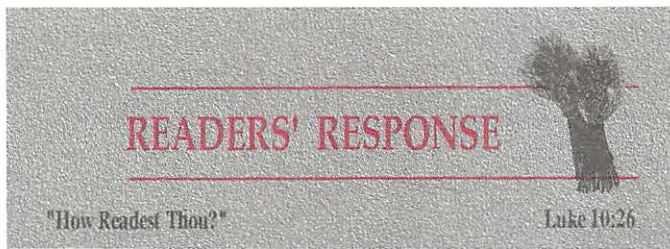
WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE: "I have known ninety-five great men of the world in my time, and of these, eighty-seven were all followers of the Bible."

JOHN WANAMAKER: "I cannot too greatly emphasize the importance and value of Bible study—more important than ever before in these days of uncertainties, when men and women are apt to decide questions from the standpoint of expediency rather than upon the eternal principles laid down by God Himself."

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR: "Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed."

PREACHER'S POINT

Whether you believe or disbelieve the facts of the Bible, those facts are not changed. But a belief of those facts can change your life.



PLEASED TO FIND A SOUND PUBLICATION

Please add us to your mailing list. We are members of the church and worship with the Malvern congregation. We are always pleased to find a sound publication such as yours. We have also attended the area wide singing at the Mabelvale congregation several times and enjoy it very much. Thank you in advance. Joel & Lisa Harris, Malvern, AR.

TELLING OTHERS

Could you please add to your mailing list our friends Tom and Lila. We have told them about how the *Gospel Gleaner* speaks the truth. May God bless you for your good works. Mrs. Jack Murray, Jr., Taylor MI.

LOOKS FORWARD TO EVERY ISSUE

Thanks for sending the *Gospel Gleaner* to me. I look forward to every issue, I enjoy it so much. May God richly bless you, and each writer. Man is drifting farther away from God each day. Keep up the great work you are doing. Jim Brinkley, Saint Albans, WV.

FOUND GG AT MSOP LECTURESHIP

I recently picked up a copy of your excellent paper *Gospel Gleaner* at the Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship. It is a most impressive publication and I would be pleased to be added to your mailing list. I understand it is free for the asking. However, if it should prove to meet our needs, I shall be more than happy to send a generous donation

toward your expenses. May God bless you in your efforts. Martin Bedford, Tucson, AZ.

HELPING TO COMBAT ERROR

Greetings from Ghana. I am Kenneth Dadzie. I preach for Kweikuma church of Christ. The congregation is a young one with 100 members. I have been receiving your publication, *Gospel Gleaner*, since 1996 and I know you teach, uphold and stand for the truth. In order to help me defend New Testament Christianity and combat false teachings amongst brethren with the help of *Gospel Gleaner*, I usually pass on the paper to other preachers and church leaders but sometimes, the paper gets lost in the system. Therefore, I would like to appeal to you to consider if you could arrange to come to Ghana to help us in our lectureship programmes. I believe this will benefit many preachers and church leaders in Ghana especially in my area. I shall be willing to furnish you with any information you may need concerning this work. Thanks and hope to hear from you. Kenneth Dadzie, Takoradi-W/R, Ghana-W/Africa.

LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING GG

Recently, while visiting my mother in Indiana, I had the opportunity to read your newsletter/bulletin *Gospel Gleaner* that she receives from you. I enjoyed the reading and was wondering if I may have my name placed on your mailing list. I will look forward to receiving and reading the articles that are presented. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Glen E. Skiver, Holland, MI.

PLEASE CANCEL

Please immediately cancel our subscription to the *Gospel Gleaner*. We do not wish to receive any more issues. Thank you for your attention to this matter. North Ridge Church of Christ, Mount Pleasant, TX.

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