

GOSPEL GLEANER

Volume 17

No. 1

WHAT IS DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM?

Dennis Gulledge

Many theories are based upon the millennium. The word *millennium* is derived from two Latin words: *mille*, meaning “a thousand” and *annus*, meaning “year.” Therefore, millennium means a thousand years. Its English equivalent, “a thousand years” is found six times in Revelation 20:1-7. If you will open your Bible and read that passage you will know all there is to know about the millennium.

There are many questions that make this a controversial subject. The effort on the part of men to answer these questions is what accounts for the controversy surrounding this subject. People have different interpretations of Revelation 20:1-7, hence different ideas about the millennium have arisen. With our entrance into a new century and millennium such theories are on many people’s minds. In this article I wish to take a look at one of the most popular of those theories.

Some Pertinent Definitions

Millennialism is a general term denoting belief in the millennium. Papias (c. 60-130) of Hierapolis in Asia Minor advanced millennial views, believing that there would be a period of a thousand years after the resurrection of Christ

during which the kingdom of Christ would be set up in a material fashion. When the millennium did not occur with Jesus’ resurrection some began to rethink the event that would initiate its beginning. It was decided that perhaps the return of Christ would be that event.

Amillennialism denotes the view that there will be no millennium. An amillennialist may be one who does not believe the Bible—period. He may be a modernist who does not believe in the return of Christ. Or, he may be the Bible believer who feels that the book of Revelation is largely symbolic and that Revelation 20:1-7 is a figurative representation of something that happened under the Roman Empire.

Postmillennialism teaches that Jesus Christ will return after the millennium. This theory holds that Christ will conquer Satan through the spread of the gospel by which the world will be converted. There will then be a thousand-year period of peace and righteousness on the earth. Afterward, Christ is to return and time will be no more. There were many disciples of this doctrine among religious thinkers in the nineteenth century (See *Restoration Reachbacks*).

Premillennialism is the view that Jesus
(Continued on page 23)



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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

IRS

Bill Dillon

Ignorance, reason and salvation are three related concepts well worth the investigation of modern minds. Ignorance is a great evil, reason is a great hope and salvation is a great result.

Ignorance

Ignorance of God's word is as harmful to man as it is odious to God. Being an eclipse of knowledge, ignorance is likened to darkness in numerous Bible passages:

Isaiah 9:2 is a prophecy of "people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." This was fulfilled in Matthew 4 when Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom in the "land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali."

In Acts 26:18 Saul of Tarsus was told he would be sent to the Gentiles to shed the light of the gospel "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Later, Paul the apostle admonished the Roman brethren to "cast off the works of darkness" (Romans 13:12).

Likewise Ephesians 5:11 commands those who know and believe the gospel to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Of all Old Testament times, it was the days of the Judges that stand closest to being a parallel to our own day. In the "Dark Ages" of the Judges "there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Today, there is no recognized single source of authority in religion and every man is a law unto himself, doing that which is right in his own eyes. However, that which is right in man's eyes is not necessarily right in God's eyes. Ignorance has caused the Bible to take a back seat to the whims, desires and personal tastes of would-be worshippers.

A way some have of describing a religious man is to term him "a man of the cloth" but wouldn't it be better to be "a man of the Book?" Can any people or nation remain in ignorance of Divine Truth and still expect spiritual blessings to fall like a gentle rain? "Darkest Africa" was a phrase once coined to describe a faraway continent, but it is "Darkest America" that needs to be lamented for its lack of knowledge.

Reason

Man's ability to reason is man's hope. The darkness of ignorance can be banished like the morning dew before the hot sun, if man will



“reason” (prove, decide) on God’s terms of pardon (Isaiah 1:18). It is not an emotional experience that scatters the dark but an acknowledgment of man’s inability to save himself and his desire to know “the good way, and walk therein” (Jeremiah 10:23; 6:16). Man is challenged by God to produce any revelations like the Lord’s (Isaiah 41:21-22, 43:9). This challenge remains unmet.

Thus, in place of the void and emptiness of ignorance man must fill his heart with the saving knowledge of heaven-originated truth, so that he is able to “give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

Salvation

Finally, salvation results as man submits himself to the righteousness of God (the way God has of making man righteous). The “unknown God” becomes known as the God who loves man and sent His son to die for man’s redemption (1 John 4:9). Man’s faith, based on God’s proven Word, enables him to run from the sickness of sin (Acts 17:30-31); to openly acknowledge the deity and sonship of Christ (Acts 8:37), and to submit his body to be immersed in water for the remission of sins. This act of baptism typifies the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:1-4). Man is thus freed from sin to live a new life of obedience until death.

Man will never be ready for the journey into “the great unknown” until the God who is unknown becomes known. Let men everywhere dispel the darkness of ignorance by reasoning upon and proving God’s will and then be blessed with salvation in eternity.—704 Arkansas Avenue, Mountain Home, AR 72653

THINK ABOUT IT

Real friends are those who, when you make a fool of yourself, do not necessarily think that you have done a permanent job.

MOUNTAIN HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST
COLLEGE & NORTH STREETS
P. O. BOX 880
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72654-0880

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Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

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Office Fax (870) 425-8118
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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

IDEAS FOR HELPING YOUNG TEENS

- Be a friend. If you can get them to open up and talk, you can learn what they need discussed in future classes.
- Show trust in areas where you safely can; always remember to compliment them for doing something right, being dependable, and showing spirituality.
- Start a Sunday night in-home devotional. Let the young men lead songs, prayers, and make talks.
- Attend area Gospel meetings, youth days as a group.
- Don’t ignore the subjects of dating and sexuality. Be careful not to say too much, but read the relevant Scriptures and explain what they mean. They are often getting the wrong information from friends and media.
- Be aware of the danger of sexually suggestive TV programs, movies, and literature. As parents, be especially pro-active in this area. They will resist; be firm.
- Encourage them to begin to find ways to participate in the church program of work. Write a missionary; rake leaves for a widow; sing, give, take notes.

“...be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

WILL YOU BE “LEFT BEHIND”?

(What About The “Rapture”?)

Dennis Gullledge



The latest premillennial sensation to hit the religious scene is the *Left Behind* series of best selling books written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. The initial volume *Left Behind* has spawned other premillennial themes, such as *Tribulation Force*,

Nicolae, *Soul Harvest*, *Apollyon*, *Assassins*, *The Indwelling* and *The Mark*. Each new book has avid readers anxiously awaiting the next one in the series. There is also *Left Behind: The Kids* so that children ages 10-14 might be thoroughly indoctrinated in premillennial sensationalism. The *Left Behind* movie came out in October 1999.

The *Left Behind* book and movie cover the basic Rapture doctrine. It is the fictional story of Rayford Steele, his daughter Chloe, Buck Williams and Bruce Barnes as they try to make sense of the strange disappearance of thousands of people around the world. The rest of the Rapture story is that while these select souls are taken to be with the Lord during the Rapture period, there will be a seven-year tribulation on earth unlike anything ever seen before. The seven-year tribulation is to be consummated by the horrific battle of Armageddon. Then, Jesus Christ is to set up his kingdom on earth for one thousand years. The entire Rapture scenario is as fictional as anything you will read in novels, but those who believe it claim that it is taught in the Bible. As we shall see, such is far from being the case.

The Rapture is a very popular aspect of what is called *Dispensational Premillennialism*. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), a former Anglican priest, brought this brand of millennial thinking to the United States. C. I. Scofield

(1843-1921) popularized the Rapture dogma in his *Scofield's Reference Bible* (first published in 1909 with extensive notes and cross-references. Other editions were published in 1917 and 1967). Hal Lindsey brought the Rapture to the attention of the modern reader in his blockbuster work, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970). Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins have now introduced the Rapture error to an entirely new generation of readers in *Left Behind*.

The second appearance of Jesus Christ is a fundamental part of the Christian's faith and hope, and for good reason (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Hebrews 9:28). It seems, however, that the Bible's simple teaching on last things lacks excitement for many people. They prefer something more sensational, such as the Rapture notion provides. Would it be safe for us to assume that the Rapture is true because it is popular, sensational and exciting? Or, would it be better to see if it is taught in the Bible? (Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1). If it is not taught in the Bible it should have no part in our thinking!

What is the Rapture?

The word “Rapture” comes from the Latin word *rapere*, which means “to seize, snatch out, take away.” It is believed that this doctrine is taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. Yet, a reading of the passage will show, first, that there is no mention of a “Rapture” either in word or thought. The claim is made that the idea of the Rapture is found in the expression “caught up” (Vs. 17). This, however, is rendered from the Greek word *harpagesometha*, not the Latin word *rapere*. Even if one argues, “The word *Rapture* is in the Latin Bible,” it is still true that the Rapture concept is not taught in any reliable Bible.

Second, there is nothing silent or secret in this passage. There is a lot of audible phenomena in verse 16: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a *shout*, with the *voice* of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (Emphasis mine, DG). Someone has dubbed this the "noisiest" verse in the Bible!

Third, there is nothing in this passage about a secret appearance of Jesus Christ. The appearance of Christ will be obvious to all (Vs. 16; Matthew 25:31-32; Revelation 1:7). Jesus was visible in his first appearing on earth (2 Timothy 1:10). He will be visible when he appears the second time (1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13).

Fourth, the saved will "ever" be with the Lord (Vs. 17). Not for a mere seven years!

Too Many Appearances

The fanciful, false and fanatical Rapture theory has too many appearances of Jesus to be consistent with the New Testament. The Bible teaches that Christ will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:27-28). As men die but once and will be only once judged, so Jesus Christ died but once for our sins and will appear but once more, the second time. The Rapture has at least three appearances of Christ. First, it has Jesus coming *for* his saints at the beginning of the Rapture. Second, it has Jesus coming *with* his saints at the end of the Rapture. Third, it has Jesus returning to judge the wicked at the conclusion of his so-called millennial reign.

The Rapture Theory Contradicts Key "End Time" Passages

It is an easy thing to show how the Rapture contradicts the New Testament. Never has there ever been a system of thought devised by man that is more blatantly false and obviously inconsistent with plain Bible teaching.

First, the Rapture theory contradicts John 5:28-29, which teaches that there will be a single resurrection with the just and the unjust coming

forth from their graves in the same hour. The idea that only the righteous dead will be resurrected at the Rapture is wrong.

Second, the Rapture theory contradicts the "Last Day" passages of John 6:39-40; 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48). The last day will mark the end of time. The resurrection of the dead will be at the last day. The judgment will be at the last day. None of this leaves room for a seven-year tribulation, or a millennium!

Third, the Rapture theory contradicts 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10. In this passage the reader will find two groups mentioned: persecutors and persecuted, and two compensations promised: punishment and rest. It is clear that both the just and unjust will be rewarded at the time of Christ's return (Matthew 25:31ff).

Fourth, the Rapture theory contradicts 2 Peter 3:10-12. The erroneous Rapture dogma says that the earth will continue to exist after the Lord comes to rapture his saints and for another one thousand and seven years thereafter. The Bible, however, says that the earth will be burned up when Jesus returns.

Conclusion

The *Left Behind* series of books are called "Christian fiction." *Fiction* they are, as something made up and not based in fact. They may weave an interesting story, but they carry a theology that is blatantly wrong! *Christian* they are not, because they espouse a system of belief that makes Jesus Christ a liar (Cf., Matthew 4:17; John 5:28-29). Everything that Christ and the inspired writers taught relative to the end times proves these books to be false.—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103.

Marriage is not made in Heaven. It comes in a kit and has to be put together.



Faith Fundamentals

"Add To Your Faith"

2 Peter 1:5

SOME NEW THINGS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE (Part 3)

Guy F. Hester



In the first two installments of our three part series about some of the new things mentioned in the Bible, we talked about the New Covenant, New Birth, New Creature, New Food and the New Name. In this concluding article we call

attention to yet a few other new things.

New Work. We read in the Bible about the New Work in which the Christian is to engage. This new creature, wearing new clothing, eating new food and wearing a new name is now ready for new employment or new work. He is now really ready to work in his Master's vineyard. Such a one must work out his or her eternal salvation in the world to come (Philippians 2:12). We cannot afford to forget this, for again, Paul said "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). A Christian, or a new creature must work to be Christlike for you remember that He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Yes, there is so much to be done, and much that we as Christians must do if we are to be true followers of our Lord. As we look about us on

every hand we see those who are in destitute need of things that are necessary to sustain life. Then there are the sick to be visited, and in almost every community there are those who know the truth and should obey it and with proper encouragement would do so. Such work is enjoined upon Christians.

New Heaven And New Earth. Then, finally, there is something else new mentioned in the Bible, a New Heaven and a New Earth. Faithful Christians, with great anticipation, "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). When Jesus comes again in the brightness of his glory this old earth will pass away. John wrote, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1-2).

May God help all of us to so live that we may enjoy that New Jerusalem and be permitted to join in with the singing of the New Song. We read in Revelation 14:3, "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne." He went on to say that none could learn the new song but those who are "redeemed from the earth." Then he said, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3).

These are a few of the New Things Mentioned In The Bible. Just think how wonderful it is to be the beneficiary of the New Covenant which has been sealed with the precious blood of the Son of God. Being "born again" of the New Birth, a New Creature; In Christ feasting upon the New Food for the soul, the word of God. Wearing the New Name, Christian; engaged in the New Work which God has ordained for his children; and in the end enjoy the bliss of that New Heaven which God has prepared for those who love Him and do his will. God has made all of this possible for you at a great sacrifice.—1925 County Highway 59, Haleyville, AL 35565

FIFTH ANNUAL GOSPEL GLEANER LECTURESHIP

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FRIDAY, APRIL 20

7:00 p.m.

"Victory Over Materialism"

Men: Ted Wheeler—Venice, FL

"Victory Over Depression"

**Women: Jane Maynard—Mountain
Home, AR**

8:00 p.m.

"Victory Over Loneliness"

Men: Bill Dillon—Mountain Home, AR

"Victory Over Anxiety"

Women: Renee Wheeler—Venice, FL

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast

9:00 a.m.

"Victory Over Anger"

Dennis Gullledge—Mabelvale, AR

10:00 a.m.

"Victory Over Youth Problems"

**Devin Swindle—Mountain Home,
AR**

11:00 a.m.

"Victory Over Disbelief"

(Evidence for the Deity of Christ)

David Gibson—Salem, AR

LUNCH

12:00 - 1:00

1:00 p.m.

"Victory Over Immorality"

Allen Webster—Jacksonville, AL

2:00 a.m.

"Victory Over The Grave"

Guy Hester—Haleyville, AL

3:00 p.m.

"Victory Over Hate"

Tim Wilkes—Hernando, MS

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

9:30 A.M.

"Victory Over Pride"

Max Miller—Burlison, TN

10:30 A.M.

"Victory Over Discouragement"

Mike Kiser—Sylacauga, AL

6:00 P.M.

"The Power Of Victory"

John T. Polk II—Dover, TN

SPECIAL SERIES (Fifth of Five)

THE FIVE ANCIENT EMPIRES, OF THE WORLD: ROME AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Max R. Miller



Romulus and Remus, thrown in infancy into the Tiber River, saved and suckled by a she-wolf and a woodpecker, both sacred in Roman myth, until they were found and reared by the herdsman Faustulus. They became men of renown and founders of the city of Rome

seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Virgil's *Aeneid* names one Aeneas, a Trojan warrior of sword and shield, as founder of the city. Whether Rome's founding is according to romantic myth, or to the reality of historical events, traditionally it is accepted that Rome was founded in 753 B.C. The small Latin settlements in the Tiber Valley established a common meeting place, the Forum, around which the city of Rome grew. There is the history of Rome, and entwined therein is the history of the Roman Empire. The Empire, properly so called, extends over a period of rather more than five hundred years, viz., from the battle of Actium, B.C. 31, when Caesar Augustus became the ruler of the Roman world, to the abdication of Augustulus, A.D. 476. The empire, however, in the sense of the dominion of Rome over a large number of conquered nation, was in full force and had reached wide limits some time before the monarchy of Augustus was established.

The history of Rome extends from the time of its founding, through the period of the republic in 509 B.C., then the establishment of the empire in 31 B.C., to the final eclipse of the Empire in the West. We assume not the role of giving an account of the history of Rome and the Empire, but merely to set forth a few of the more essential facts, more in particular to the relation Rome had to the Bible and God's people.

Rome and the empire were for a

millennium. In less than four hundred years (509 B.C.—133 B.C.) Rome became the dominant power in the Mediterranean world. Its boundaries would extend control over all of Italy and eventually created an empire that stretched from England to North Africa and from the Atlantic Ocean to Arabia, and as far as the Euphrates. Before New Testament times the power of Rome had spread over most of the ancient world.

Although Rome itself may have been founded some seven centuries before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, little of that ancient nation relates to the Bible. The first reference to Rome in Hebrew Scripture is 1 Maccabees 1:10 (*Apocrypha*). The Old Testament makes no reference to Rome other than in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and Daniel's prophecies of the nations that would arise and fall from the time of Babylon and to the establishing the everlasting kingdom of God. God's eternal kingdom was to be in "the days of these kings" (Daniel 2:44). "These kings" that Daniel spoke of were the Caesar's of the Roman Empire.

The Roman Republic was established in 509 B.C. Political equality, guarding of the fundamental human rights, sharing of political power, complex bodies of laws were written down and finally codified in the sixth century (*Code of Justinian*). The Republic was strong, but problems would arise that would weaken and cause its death. The rich gained control of the lands, small farmers, landless and idle, migrated to the cities, corruption in government, unrest and dissatisfaction of aging army veterans, wars of conquest and high taxes were some of the problems that weakened the republic. The masses: slaves, sullen and disgruntled war veterans, the unemployed, the poor, rebellions on the frontiers and myriads of other problems were too great for

the republic to deal with successfully. An evil and contentious spirit pervaded the land. There were to be changes.

With the advent of civil war there came period of Rome's history that is more familiar with Bible readers. Two men of soldiery fame come to the fore in Rome's history: Julius Caesar and Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, or Pompey the Great. These two forged the nation into a dominating world power for the next three hundred years. Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.) lead military expeditions that controlled all of Northern Italy and Southern France. Pompey (106-48 B.C.) spread his armies through Italy and the Mediterranean world. However, our interest is not so much in Julius Caesar, historically the better known of the two, and from whom the later rulers of the Empire took their titles as The Caesars. It was Pompey who had a day with Israel and the Jews.

In the year 66 B.C. Pompey arrived in the East to take command of the Roman armies. At this time there was a state of conflict in the nation of Israel. Two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, challenged each other for the power to rule the Hebrew nation. Neither could command an advantage. Each of the brothers sought alliances with other nations to tip the balance of power to himself. Pompey was ready to enter into their affairs. Yet, rather than Pompey aligning himself with either brother, his interest was in expanding the borders and powers of Rome. Rome would be master of all its domains. Siege and conquest followed. The walls of Jerusalem came down, Roman legionaries streamed through the city. Massacres followed. This was the year 63 B.C. when Jerusalem lost its national independence and became a Roman province. Israel was to be a subject nation for the next two thousand years. In A.D. 1948 the United Nations, as a major consequence of millennial heresies and the Nazi *Holocaust*, took the land from the Arabs and a new nation of Israel was established.

With the opening of the New Testament, it is obvious to the careful reader that Rome was in the land of Israel. Jesus was born in the reign of Caesar Augustus (27 B.C.-14 A.D.; Luke 2:1-8). It was in the reign of Tiberius Caesar (A.D. 14-37)

that Daniel's prophecy of the establishment of Christ's eternal kingdom would occur (Daniel 2:44; Acts 2). It was also Tiberius who appointed Pontius Pilate as procurator of Judea and who consented to the death of Jesus Christ. In the reign of Claudius Caesar (A.D. 41-54) a great famine spread over the world and Christian brethren sent aid to hungry souls in Judea (Acts 11:27-30). In the reign of Claudius all Jews were banished from Rome (Acts 18:1). The epistles of Paul frequently speak of Rome and its power. The entire New Testament period was under the repressive reign of Rome.

There was much unrest in the troubled land of Israel. Conflict between Christianity and the Empire was inevitable. Christianity challenged almost everything for which Rome stood. The Romans looked upon the deification of the emperor as necessary to the existence of the state. The Christian looked only to God the Father and God the Son as divine. As Jewish resentment and opposition mounted, so also grew persecutions against them. Zealous Jews, *Zealots* of the New Testament, clamored and schemed to restore liberty and independence of the Jewish nation. Theudas in A.D. 44 (Acts 5:36) and "the Egyptian" in A.D. 53 (Acts 21:38) had led unsuccessful revolts in guerrilla warfare against the occupation forces of Rome. Restoration of their independence was not to be.

Nero Caesar, one of the most wicked of the Caesars, ruled the empire (A.D. 54-68). He began his rule well, under the guidance of the philosopher Seneca. However, in spirit Nero was an actor and wished to play the monarch in a grand manner. This he did. In his bloody reign, in the year A.D. 66, there was an uprising in Caesarea. Jewish zealots mobilized armies against Roman rule and consequently 20,000 of them were slaughtered in other places. Nero Caesar ordered Vespasian to quell the rebellion (A.D. 67). He lay siege to Jerusalem in A.D. 69. For a while Jerusalem successfully resisted his forces. Vespasian was recalled to Rome as emperor and trusted the siege to his son Titus who was destined to be numbered with the Caesars. Titus breached the walls of the city, completely enslaving the

Jews. Jerusalem fell on 7 September 70. The Temple was destroyed, as Jesus had prophesied, with not one stone left upon another (Matthew 24). Titus celebrated a triumph in 71, which is commemorated on the surviving *Arch of Titus* at Rome.

The second great persecution of the Christians was by Caesar Domitian (A.D. 81-96). He is remembered as the persecutor, ranking along with Nero. His persecution burned itself ineradicably into the memory of history. This intense persecution brought forth the Apostle John's letters to the seven churches of Asia, urging them to faithfulness in times of fierce persecutions (Revelation 2 & 3).

A surprising change was effected in the fourth century in the dubious conversion of Flavius Valerius Constantinus I, Constantine the Great (A.D. 306-337). He was the first Roman emperor to profess Christianity. His alleged conversion initiated the evolution of the empire into a Christian state. Constantine established religious toleration for Christianity in the Roman Empire. The *Edict of Milan* in 313 granted all persons freedom to worship whatever deity they pleased, assured Christians of legal rights (including the right to organize churches), and directed the prompt return to Christians of confiscated property. Rather than this decrees advancing the cause of Christ's kingdom, many untaught and unconverted pagans were "pressed into the church," bringing superstitions and false doctrines with them which became a part of the apostatizing church. From this time the persecuted church became the persecuting when it became yoked with the state.

Rome reached its peak of prosperity and good government during the second century. Even then, there were signals of distress flashing through the empire. Political unrest, economic hardship, expensive wars, high taxes, multitudes of unemployed living off the tax payers, there to enjoy tax supported bread and games. These matters ate at the heart of the empire. Unrestrained, irresponsible legions pillaged the countryside, stripping and carrying off or destroying vast amounts of wealth. People on the

frontiers were carving out separate states for themselves. There was the threat of the hungry barbarians standing at her borders. Invasions, incursions, pillage, and Rome was unable to deal with them as she had in earlier days.

In 372 the Huns crossed the Volga and marched toward Rome. In 406 Alaric crossed the Rhine and Roman defenses fell. He sacked Rome in 410. The Huns under Attila ravaged the empire. He brought his people from the East into Gaul and invaded Italy in 452. The years 455-472 saw a succession of weak puppet rulers mismanaging the affairs of the once proud empire. The Vandals captured Rome in June 455. For a fortnight they occupied the city and systematically plundered, carrying off many valuable works of art. Their name has remained a synonym for willful desecration or destruction. On 4 September 476, another Germanic chieftain, Odovacar (Odoacer), deposed the last emperor, Romulus Augustulus, and set himself up as the first barbarian king of Italy. The Eastern, or Byzantine Empire, survived until the Middle Ages.—10726 Hwy. 59 W., Burlison, TN 38015

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

We hope that you have enjoyed and benefited from this special series of articles on the five ancient empires from Babylon to Rome, by Max R. Miller. We wish to thank brother Miller for the very thorough and scholarly treatment he has given each article in this series. It is our goal to one day bring these five articles together and publish them in booklet form. We will want to give a copy to each person on our mailing list.

Also, we have asked brother Miller to join *Gospel Gleaner* as a staff writer. He has consented to do so. We have asked him to write in the area of church history and will assign him the new column "Highlights From Church History." We feel that this will bring an important dimension to our paper. Please look for the new column in our next issue.—Dennis Gullledge, Co-editor.



Interesting Inquiries
"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?" Acts 8:30

WHAT ABOUT READING LEFT BEHIND?

John T. Polk, II



Is there anything wrong with reading the Left Behind Series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins?

The question should be better phrased "Is there anything scripturally beneficial in reading those books?" Then the answer is clearly:

"NO"! The *Left Behind* Series for adults is 8 volumes (a 9th planned for release in Fall 2001. There are a dozen smaller books for children with a 13th planned for release in the Spring 2001). Each 400 page book dramatizes Premillennial fantasy adventure for one Captain Rayford Steele, an airline pilot. After the rapture of saints from off of the earth, he forms the *Tribulation Force* to fight evil during the seven year Tribulation, only to discover their governmental leader, Nicolae Carpathia, is the Antichrist who is assassinated at the end of book six but resurrected by book eight. With vivid detail, these volumes depict earth's struggles from the Rapture to the Millennial Kingdom.

There are clearly three things that have been "Left Behind" by that eight book serial: (1) True Bible Teaching; (2) Bible Faith and (3) Their customers.

(1) True Bible teaching has clearly been *Left Behind* for the entire story line is based on the totally anti-Christ doctrine of "Premillennialism." According to the *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible* (copyright 2000 by AMG Publishers) [Hereafter referred to by the initials TLPSI] in

order for Premillennialism to occur, it will involve: one land promise to Israel, which God will force them to accept, two judgments of Christ, four Jewish temples, five resurrections, five crowns to be awarded, six covenants with Israel, seven Bible dispensations and "20 Major Prophetic Events Yet To Be Fulfilled." LaHaye and his contributors have the audacity to claim the Bible teaches this confusion, but "God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33). The Bible must be rightly divided (2 Timothy 2:15), not minced! While God's Bible prophecies are like "smart bombs" directly on target in Christ and His Church, Premillennialists with their charts and diagrams make God's plan look more like a "pinball" bouncing every which way, mostly missing the mark, and occasionally scoring.

LaHaye and Jenkins have said one can identify false teachers by their teaching about Jesus Christ. "Most false teachers have a faulty view of Jesus. Some are blatantly false: the more dangerous ones will accept Him as a god but not God in human flesh. Never trust any teacher who does not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, His sinless life, sacrificial death, bodily resurrection, and His promise to come again physically to this earth. Always ask, Does the message or teaching glorify Jesus?" (LaHaye & Jenkins, page 36, *Are We Living In the End Times?* Tyndale House publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, copyright 1999 [Hereafter referred to by the initials AWLITET]. It is dedicated "to the millions of readers of the *Left Behind* series..."). Truly one has but to contrast Premillennialism with Holy Spirit inspired statements in the New Testament to determine that Premillennialists are false teachers who teach "antichrist" doctrines (contradicting Jesus and His apostles)!

- Jesus is not coming back to this earth, for the same resurrection sending the righteous to "meet the Lord in the air" and "always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) brings forth the evil doers to their condemnation (John 5:28-29). **Premillennialists preach an earthly kingdom for Jesus Christ—the very thing Jesus said He did not have (John**

18:36), and without which *Left Behind* would be “left behind!”

- The sacrifices and temple of the Law of Moses will not be resumed on earth, for then Jesus could not be on His throne. He must “sit and rule” and “be a priest on His throne” (Zechariah 6:12-13), but He cannot be priest if God is honoring the Mosaic priesthood and sacrifices (Hebrews 8:1-6). **By renewing Moses’s sacrifices, Premillennialists deny the atoning power of Jesus Christ’s bloody death, although in *Left Behind* some “lip service” is given to it!**
- There is no future millennial kingdom unless one denies that Jesus has His kingdom now. Jesus told the Jews in His day, “the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it” (Matthew 21:43) and told His apostles when He began the Lord’s Supper, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29). Premillennialism teaches the kingdom is future and therefore there cannot be a Lord’s Supper now! But in their millennial kingdom, Moses’ sacrifices will be rekindled. **Premillennialists deny Jesus Christ the Supper that is His memorial of His death for our sin (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), and *Left Behind* ignores the importance of this remembrance!**
- Jesus will not sit on David’s throne at a future time, for that denies His resurrection from the dead! Peter and the apostles preached that David predicted (in Psalm 16:8-11) that God’s oath was to “raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ” (Acts 2:30-31). **All Premillennialists who take David’s throne from Jesus Christ today are denying Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, and in *Left Behind* Jesus has yet to be King!**
- Premillennial time charts completely render the “church age” (the Gospel era, from the cross of Jesus Christ till the “End Times”) to be of no benefit, for the ungodly and sinners

will be given another chance to convert during the “End Times.” The “church age” is diagrammed as a burp, for which God apologizes, between the prophetic 69 weeks of Daniel 9 and the 1 week remaining (chart, page 911, TLPSB). Jesus Christ called it His church (Matthew 16:18); Paul said it is “purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28); Jesus has no “body” without it (Colossians 1:18, 24); and baptism as the likeness of Christ’s death that puts one into His body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 6:3-7) has been robbed of its purpose. Jesus said His believers were to convince the world that God had sent Him (John 17:20-21). **Premillennialists steal away the spiritual body of Christ, without which there can be no saved (Acts 2:38, 41, 47), for *Left Behind* is written for those who need a second chance to be saved!**

- Premillennialism teaches the conflict with evil hasn’t yet been resolved and the outcome requires worldwide conflict. But such denies that Jesus came to the earth the first time, for He “was born...[that He] should bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37), He lived “that He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). **Premillennialists act as though Jesus Christ had never come to the earth the first time, for *Left Behind* writes about the battle between good and evil without any assistance from Jesus Christ!** If that is not “antichrist” then what would someone have to teach to be “antichrist”?
- They make 100% of Bible prophecies apply to the “End Times.” Jesus Christ said, however, that 100% of Old Testament prophecies discussing Him were fulfilled by the events of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (Luke 24:44). Peter said that 100% of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Lord’s kingdom had been fulfilled by the events from Acts through Revelation (Acts 3:24-26). Paul said that 100% of Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel had been fulfilled by the end of his missions and writings (Acts 13:16-42, 46-49; 26:4-23). **Premillennialists pretend**

Jesus never said the prophets “testify of Me” (John 5:38-40; 6:44-45), for *Left Behind* makes Jesus have to come back to the earth to accomplish His goals.

- They claim more will be saved because of their doctrine than Jesus Christ claimed His doctrine would save! Jesus said, “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). But LaHaye/Jenkins said, “In fact, we believe that because of the Millennium, there may be more people in heaven than in hell” (p. 240, AWLITET?). **Premillennialists offer more hope of salvation than Jesus Christ, thereby limiting Jesus’ work into insignificance, and *Left Behind* reflects this falsity.**

(2) Faith is surely *Left Behind* for the LaHaye/Jenkins “serial” has killed the desire of millions to learn what the Bible actually says, and robs them of “faith” (Romans 10:17) without which no one is pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6). Repentance must come on the basis of “godly sorrow” (2 Corinthians 7:10) not fright. Though past destruction of the earth by flood waters and future destruction of the earth by fire sandwich a command to “Repent” (2 Peter 3:1-13) it hastens the decision to change, but should not be a substitute for it. People who simply react out of fear of destruction and not with sorrow for sin still have not obeyed God.

(3) The *Left Behind* are they who still buy their books, for if their teaching is true, then either the 2000 or 2001 must have figured prominently into their conceptions, and yet adult book #9 and children’s book #13 are scheduled for release in 2001. Did anyone else notice that throughout 1999 most of the public pronouncements by Premillennialists led millions to think that on Midnight, December 31, 1999, biblical events would unfold the beginning of the End Times? Interesting, isn’t it, to notice how many LaHaye/Jenkins books are copyrighted with a date in the year 2000? Did they believe they would have been raptured and only unbelievers would be

buying their books? If so, then those who buy their books show themselves to be the unsaved and ungodly! Or did they not believe that their millennial madness had anything whatever to do with the year 2000? If this is the case, then their books are useless drivel that help no one know more about when time shall end after reading them than they knew before.

Left Behind exploits the same insecurity and ignorance that hundreds of “date-setters” have utilized before, though claiming to know better. LaHaye/Jenkins say, “while we are not certain it will occur in our lifetime, we have more reason to believe it might than any generation in the history of the church...”

“We are surrounded by so many obvious signs that one would have to be blind not to see them...So many signs exist today that you could write a book about them. In fact, I did, *The Beginning Of The End*, first published in 1972 and then again in 1991. Many changes in the twenty-seven years since that book’s first publication have only brought further confirmation that we are indeed living in ‘the times of the signs.’ Never in the history have so many legitimate signs of Christ’s return existed” (Pages 26-27, AWLITET?). LaHaye’s interpretations failed to correctly point to the generation that has died since he tried this ruse 27 years ago. God is his judge, for He taught that if what a prophet said did “not happen or come to pass” no one should listen to his fear-mongering again (Deuteronomy 18:19-22). LaHaye/Jenkins rightly claim, “Date setters are to be ignored or, even better, rebuked as false teachers” (page 23, AWLITET). Though LaHaye can say, “There is little doubt as to when this Tribulation occurs to how long it will last” (page 1374, TLPSB), and Premillennialists can prophetically set down the calendar from Rapture to Eternity, none of LaHaye’s group dares to give any detail or date that shows when the “church age” will end. **One is a false teacher who causes people to wrongly expect God to do something whether it is by twisting Scriptures to say what they do not teach (2 Peter 3:14-16) or setting dates outside the purview of Scripture**
(Continued on page 19)

WHAT WILL WE LEAVE BEHIND?

Allen Webster



If the Lord delays His coming, none of us will get out of this world alive. We have an appointment with death (Hebrews 9:27), when we hope to meet our angelic guide to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). Tear-dimmed eyes will last view our

casket, and lonely mourners will follow the trail of tears to the silent city of the dead where our bodies will wait for the resurrection morn (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

All desire to leave something worthwhile behind. We want our families left financially secure and to be remembered for making some contribution to society. From Methuselah, who, though he lived the longest, accomplished the least (Genesis 5:26-27), we learn that it is not the length of our lives that counts, but what we do with them. Jesus, though He lived only 33 years, made the most of them. So should we.

A Record Of Good Deeds: When they visit the funeral home, will our friends reminiscence about the good that we have done like Dorcas' friends did (Acts 9:36, 39)? Will the preacher's eulogy be long and full? Hopefully, they can remember our kindness to widows and orphans (James 1:27), the food we gave the hungry (Matthew 25:35), the clothes given to those cold, visits to the sick (Matthew 25:36), flowers to the bereaved (John 11:19), comfort for the hurting (Philemon 7) and encouragement we gave the downtrodden (Acts 9:27). When the Herods died, they must have cheered (Matthew 2:16; Acts 12:1). They were not remembered for their good deeds. But we wonder what was said at Barnabas' funeral. He left a trail of good deeds (Acts 4:36-37; 11:22-30; 13:2; 15:22-31). Let's do the same.

A Good Name: When we pass, will they say, "He was a good man" or "She was a fine

Christian?" "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches..." (Proverbs 22:1). We must be honest in our dealing (cf., Acts 5:1-2), fair with others (Romans 12:17), above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2, 7), and morally pure (Galatians 5:19-21). Joseph was a man who kept a good name, even under trying circumstances (Genesis 39:1-10). He was fondly remembered (Genesis 50:25-26; Exodus 13:19).

A Faithful Family: We will leave mourning family behind on that sad day, but will we leave a faithful one? Will each be on his way to heaven? We are not able to make decisions for them, but we will have a great influence on each, especially our children (Proverbs 22:6). Sarah left a godly man to mourn (Genesis 23:2); Abraham left faithful sons behind (Genesis 18:19; 25:8). Zebedee and Salome gave the world James and John; Lois taught Eunice who molded Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). If we would be such a family, we must start now, because the years may come when they will not listen (Ecclesiastes 12:1). No greater legacy can be left than faith in God and faithfulness to His church.

A Strong Church: Will our congregation have an empty seat, two less busy hands, two fewer listening ears, a silenced tongue, and two fewer bowed knees when we are gone? Will they be able to say "He really built up this church" or "She is irreplaceable because of her tireless work." Think what must have been said at Peter's funeral, when he laid down his battle-scarred armor, after service as an apostle and elder (Matthew 10:2; 1 Peter 5:1). What of Aquilla and Priscilla, who were always an asset to the church (Acts 18:26)? Did the Colossian church miss Philemon, Apphia and Archiphus (Philemon 2; Colossians 4:17)? Some of God's greatest New Testament servants were "just church members" who lived faithfully till death (Revelation 2:10). May they be able to say that at our funerals.

Saved Souls: When Paul went home, the

devil must have sighed with relief. He was a soul-saving man. Of all who have followed the Savior, what man was more tireless in reaching the lost than the peerless Paul (Romans 9:1-3; 10:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9:20-21; 2 Corinthians 11:23-33)? His grave was probably surrounded by his spiritual children (1 Timothy 1:2), and heaven will be more populated because of him (Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8). May there be people at our grave sides who can say, "I am a Christian because of him/her." Won't it be wonderful to meet one in heaven who says, "I am here because of you."

As that day draws near may we be able to quote Paul: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Let us strive to have a legacy worth leaving!—P.O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

THINGS NOT MENTIONED IN REVELATION 20:1-6

1. *IT DOES NOT MENTION THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.*
2. *IT DOES NOT MENTION A BODILY RESURRECTION.*
3. *IT DOES NOT MENTION A REIGN ON EARTH.*
4. *IT DOES NOT MENTION A LITERAL THRONE (OF DAVID).*
5. *IT DOES NOT MENTION JERUSALEM OF PALESTINE.*
6. *IT DOES NOT MENTION US.*
7. *IT DOES NOT MENTION CHRIST ON EARTH.*

CURSE PRONOUNCED ON ONE WHO ADDS TO WORDS OF THIS BOOK.

—From, *God's Prophetic Word*, by Foy E. Wallace, Jr. (p. 284)

ARE DEBATES STILL AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF TEACHING?

Dennis Gullledge

A decade ago I conducted written interviews with a number of veteran gospel preachers who had been preaching from 30-50 years or more. One of the questions I asked them was why has our brotherhood seen a decline in debating over the last thirty (now, forty) years or so? The overwhelming answer was similar to that of the late J. A. McNutt, who answered, "Some of our brethren were involved in debates where such an ugly spirit, and so much bitter wrangling occurred that such contests lost favor among the people. However, many notable victories for truth have been won in honorable controversy when conducted in the right spirit."

That debating, or public discussion, is an effective and Scriptural means of presenting truth and exposing error there can be no doubt. The apostle Paul said that he was "set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). Paul also said, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you" (Acts 22:1). Paul knew that it was right to defend his position and to do so in a public forum. Consider also, such passages as 1 Peter 3:15 and Jude 3.

In years gone by many noteworthy debates have occurred between Christians and the best antagonists that could be found among denominational churches. In recent years, however, it appears that what few debates are currently happening are taking place among brethren. Most controversies among brethren are probably best settled privately and with as little public display as possible. There are times, however, where debates between brethren are necessary. In Acts 15:1-7 the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem met for an open discussion of a controversial issue. It is hoped that in all debates between brethren today, that no un-Christlike or unbrotherly spirit is manifested that would in any way cast the Lord's church in a negative light before the world.

One issue that has generated considerable
(Continued on page 22)



Restoration Reachbacks
"Ask For The Old Paths" Jeremiah 6:16

THE MILLENNIAL HARBINGER

Earl West

In the spring of 1823 Alexander Campbell began publication of the Christian Baptist. The name was suggested by Walter Scott, together with Thomas Campbell. Scott felt that since at this time most of the work was being done among the Baptists, a title like the Christian Baptist would do much to put down prejudice among the very people that he hoped to reach. Alexander Campbell himself was in favor of calling the paper simply the Christian, but he yielded to the suggestion of Walter Scott and Thomas Campbell.

The Christian Baptist continually berated an attitude of warfare. It waged a relentless war against the kingdom of the clergy. In the early days the paper was largely the work of Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell. Scott wrote under the title of "Philip." He considered Alexander Campbell the Martin Luther of this new reformation and himself as the Philip Melancthon. This relationship was not only interesting, but very accurate also. Many years ago Martin Luther, comparing himself to Philip Melancthon, wrote the following:

I was born to fight with mobs and devils, and so my books are very stormy and warlike. I must remove trees and stumps, cut away thorns and thickets, and fill up quagmires. I am the rough woodsman who must blaze the way and clear the path. But Master Philip comes along gently and quietly, builds and plants, sows and waters, with joy, according to the gifts God has richly bestowed on him.

By the year 1829 Campbell had determined to cease the publication of the Christian Baptist.

His reasons for doing so seemed to be twofold. It is often suggested that Campbell yielded to the influence of friends who told him that he was incurring too much antagonism because of the fiery spirit which the Christian Baptist assumed. Then again the reason, which is more likely, for his dropping the Christian Baptist and starting another paper was the fact that Campbell was fearful that those who believed like himself would be given the sectarian name of "Christian Baptists." He did not want a group of people to arise which would be given this title, and so thought it best to have the Christian Baptist die and another paper begin.

On Monday, January 4, 1830, the first copy of the *Millennial Harbinger* was issued. The first volume consisted of over six hundred pages, and each number made about forty-eight pages. The cost was \$2.50 a year, except those who paid in advance, and to them the paper came for \$2.00. It was a monthly publication, and was to be put out on the first Monday of every month.

The name of the paper is particularly significant. What were Alexander Campbell's reasons for calling it the *Millennial Harbinger*? The answer to this question is found in a study of some of Campbell's remarks on this subject.

In his "Prospectus," Campbell makes some observations on this point. First, he tells us that the paper "shall have for its object the development and introduction of that political and religious state of society called the millennium, which will be the consummation of that ultimate amelioration of society proposed in the Christian Scriptures." From this it can be seen that Campbell's idea of the millennium would be the final perfection or improvement of society which is brought about by men's adherence to the teaching of the word of God. But how shall this be done? Campbell believed that all of the sectarian establishments known on the earth were in reality but hindrances to this end. He believed that the creeds and the confessions of faith had prevented men from having an accurate understanding of the Holy Scriptures. He believed that all political governments were unjust when contrasted with the justice which Christianity proposes. Therefore, it

would be seen that the millennium cannot come, or society in general cannot be brought to obedience of the Scriptures, until all sectarian churches were destroyed, creeds and confessions of faith overthrown, and the original gospel allowed to have its full and complete sway in the hearts of men.

Campbell could rightfully boast that there was no other organization proposed in the Christian world with the same design and embracing the same outline.

In the spring of 1840 the New England section of our country became extremely excited over the teachings of William Miller. From that time forward for the next four or five years thoughts of Miller were prevalent everywhere in religious circles. Some men began to cast questioning eyes at the *Millennial Harbinger* and to wonder about its emphasis upon the millennium. Campbell then wrote:

"We have often rather jeeringly been asked: 'Wherein consists the *millennial* characteristics of the *Harbinger*?' The querists imagine that a *millennial harbinger* must be always discussing or preaching millennial affairs. When we put to sea under this banner, we had the port of Primitive Christianity, in letter and in spirit, in profession and practice, in our eye; reasoning that all the millennium we could scripturally expect was not merely restoration of the Jerusalem church in all its moral and religious characters, but the extension of it through all nations and languages for one thousand years. To prepare the way for such a development of Christianity, several things are essential.

1. The annihilation of partyism.
2. The restoration of a pure speech.
3. The preaching of the original gospel.
4. The restoration of the Christian ordinances.
5. Larger measures of the Holy Spirit, as promised to those who seek for it in the appointed way."

Alexander Campbell goes on to suggest in this same article that he has kept the *Millennial Harbinger* clear from any theory of the millennium because of three reasons. The first reason was that he wanted to understand more fully the prophecies

before writing on them. The second reason was his reluctance to identify the cause of restoration with any theory of a millennium, for fear that men might lose sight of the restoration principles in the millennium theory. In the third place, Campbell suggested that he had not written on any theories, because he had too many other matters that he considered more important to write about.

From these points of consideration there are some particularly interesting things. Up to the spring of 1840 Campbell had been silent regarding many theories of a future thousand-year reign. His whole idea up to this time seems to be that there would come a time when the influence of the Scripture—in short, of Christianity—would be predominant on the earth, and this would be brought about when sectarianism was destroyed and the pure original gospel was proclaimed. Consequently, Campbell's entire attention was given to proclaiming the original gospel and destroying sectarian establishments. Because his paper was to be the announcer of these facts, Campbell then appropriately called it the *Millennial Harbinger*. —*Gospel Advocate* (March 10, 1949)

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Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

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Dennis Gullledge, Evangelist

THE SPIRIT OF EXPECTANCY

(Hebrews 9:28)
M. W. Kiser



1. The great sin of the Jewish nation is they looked for the Messiah, but because of their wrong conception they murdered him. Unbelief is still the great sin today.
2. The followers of Christ believe that He is coming

again (Revelation 22:7, 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Peter 3:10; James 5:7; 1 John 3:2).

3. There is no reason for fanaticism or date setting; but we have a reason for concern, study, and preparation (Matthew 24:36, 43-44; 25:1-13).
4. We cannot long for the second coming unless the event brings us assurance and benefit. Then it becomes "the day" left in human history.

I. WHY SHOULD WE HAVE THE SPIRIT OF EXPECTANCY?

- A. Because of the definite promise of His coming (John 14:1-3).
- B. Because of the purpose of His coming (Matthew 25:31-32; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- C. Because of the part we will have in His coming.
 1. We will glorify and admire Him (2 Thessalonians 1:10).
 2. We shall become like Him (1

John 3:2; Philippians 3:20-21).

3. We shall go to heaven with Him (John 14:3; Matthew 25:34).

II. WHAT WILL THE SPIRIT OF EXPECTANCY DO FOR US?

- A. It will give us encouragement—knowing the final victory over sin. Satan can pervade, but not prevail; discourage, but not defeat; tempt, but not triumph (1 Corinthians 15:24-25).
- B. It will give you the hope of freedom—over the flesh and its limitations, imperfections, weaknesses; and bring the attainment of perfection (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).
- C. It will give you encouragement—if you are down hearted, discouraged, and in sorrow (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
- D. It will cause you to live closer to Jesus, "When he shall come with trumpet sound, Oh may I then in Him be found, dressed...faultless..." (1 John 3:3).
- E. It will cause you to have a deeper interest in the worship and work of the church. All we do, we do with it in view! (1 Corinthians 11:26).

III. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER MATTERS WE OUGHT TO HAVE A SPIRIT OF EXPECTANCY ABOUT?

- A. For God to hear and answer our prayers (Matthew 21:22).
- B. To see results from the preaching of the gospel (Romans 10:17; Isaiah 55:10-11).
- C. Our lives to have an influence on leading others to Christ (Matthew 5:13-16).
- D. We will receive strength and direction from God's word (Psalm 119:105; John 8:32).
- E. That we will grow in Christ likeness by our worship (Ephesians 4:11-16).

1. I read once about an old peasant living in the mountains of Wales; in his old age and

declining health, every morning he would open his shutters toward the east to see if Jesus was coming. He was not a fanatic, he was ready! Otherwise he would have looked the other way, and it would not have been his waking thought. His Master did not come, but one day His messenger did! The same preparations sufficed for both, and his longing soul was satisfied.

2. Are you a person of expectancy? That God will keep His promises; and that Jesus is coming.
3. Titus 2:11-15 tells us how to begin and continue in the Christian life.
4. Luke 17:26-27, "Quickly" is a protest against the idea of procrastination. Are you like Felix, waiting for a more convenient season? —104 Calhoun Avenue, Sylacauga, AL 35150

WHAT ABOUT READING *LEFT BEHIND*?

Continued from page 13

(Matthew 24:36).

Don't be *Left Behind* in real Bible study but avoid "the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith" (1 Timothy 6:20-21).—125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

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HEART RELIGION

Bill Dillon

Since only a religion of the heart has value, let us see what the Bible includes as part of heart religion. According to the Holy Scriptures heart religion is:

1. **Heart-felt.** With the heart man loves (Matthew 22:37) and desires (Romans 10:1). Good feelings by themselves are not an indication that one is right with God but if one is right with God good feeling will result. Rejoicing (a feeling) comes after obedience (Acts 8:36-39). In religion we feel good because we are right, but we are not right with God just because we feel good.
2. **Heart-thought.** The heart thinks (Proverbs 23:7); understands (Matthew 13:15) and believes (Romans 10:10). True Christianity involves the intellect.
3. **Heart-acted.** True heart religion results in obedience to God's commands (Romans 6:16-17). This includes baptism into Christ (Romans 6:4).

There is a great difference in heart religion and "holler" religion. Is your religion from the heart?

DISPENSATIONALISM AND ZECHARIAH 14

Wayne Jackson



Zechariah 14 has no reference whatever to a millennial reign of Christ upon the earth.

Dispensationalists—those enamored with the notion that Christ will return to the earth to establish a political kingdom over which he will reign for 1,000 years—rely heavily upon Zechariah, chapter 14, as an important Old Testament element of the premillennial scheme. Dispensational writer Hobert E. Freeman characterizes this chapter as a description of “the destruction of Israel’s enemies, salvation of Jerusalem and the millennial reign of the Messiah over all the world from Zion.” He further states:

“The prophecy of Zechariah is to the Old Testament what the book of Revelation is to the New. It is the *Apocalypse* of the Old Testament which portrays God’s future dealings with His chosen people Israel...The book of Zechariah, especially chapter 14, stands as a continual corrective to all those theories which deny the literal, future restoration of Israel, after a period of chastening, in her own land, over whom the Messiah will reign in Zion” (334-335).

Dramatically, advocates of dispensational theology allege that Zechariah 14:1-3 contains a description of the approaching “battle of Armageddon,” which supposedly will be consummated by the descent of Christ “upon the mount of Olives” (vs. 4) to overthrow his enemies and to commence his millennial reign.

The truth of the matter is, Zechariah 14 has no reference whatever to a millennial reign of Christ upon the earth. The Bible indisputably teaches that the Second Coming of the Lord *will terminate all earthly affairs* (2 Peter 3:4, 10).

A Look at the Text

The prophet Zechariah foretells a coming “day of Jehovah” when the nations will be gathered against “Jerusalem” for a great battle. The horrors of the conflict are interrupted when the Lord intervenes and defends the city against the nations. The mount of Olives east of Jerusalem is rent asunder, providing a passageway of escape for the faithful. The enemies of God are punished with fearful plagues and henceforth Jerusalem dwells in safety, and from year to year, the people worship Jehovah who is “King over the whole earth.”

Concerning this exciting chapter, let us note the following:

1. How would one determine that this prophecy has to do with a “millennial reign” of Christ upon the earth? Did Jesus, during his earthly ministry, so interpret it? Did any inspired New Testament writer quote from Zechariah 14, giving it a “dispensational” interpretation? The answer is “No.” There is no evidence at all that would point this prophecy in the direction of premillennialism.

Actually, New Testament writers repeatedly stress that the prophetic thrust of the Old Testament was concerning the salvation of grace (1 Peter 1:10-11) which burst into bloom with the dawning of the gospel dispensation. Peter affirmed that “all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of *these days*” (Acts 3:24). The “these days” were the days of the Christian age. The dispensational view of Zechariah 14 is arbitrary and without evidential proof.

2. A fundamental problem with premillennial theology is its inability to discern the difference between the literal and figurative elements of the Scriptures. Much of the prophecy of Old Testament literature is couched in figurative jargon, and those who do not recognize this

principle are doomed to failure in their interpretation of the text. In his classic book, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Professor Milton Terry wrote: "A thorough interpretation of the prophetic portions of the holy Scripture is largely dependent upon a mastery of the principles and laws of figurative language, and of types and symbols" (313).

The Folly of Literalizing Zechariah 14

A careful study of Zechariah 14 will reveal that those who attempt to literalize the message of this chapter, as the premillennialists do, are pursuing a disastrous course of interpretation. Consider the following:

1. If this chapter refers to the literal return of Christ (i.e., the Second Coming) upon the mount of Olives, exactly who is it that will make that escape flight to the east when the mountain is cleft? It cannot be the wicked, for the Bible plainly teaches that they will be destroyed when the Lord returns (Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Moreover, it cannot be the righteous, for they will be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Who else, pray tell, is left?
2. Verse 8 speaks of living waters going forth from Jerusalem in summer and in winter. Since summer and winter will occur only as long as the earth remains (Genesis 8:22), and as the earth will not remain beyond the Coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:4, 10), it is obvious that the events of this verse cannot transpire after the literal return of Jesus—which supposedly is alluded to in verse 4.
3. Verse 12 tells of Jehovah smiting his enemies and their "flesh" being consumed. Again, this cannot refer to a period after the literal return of Christ; the Coming of the Lord will signal "the end," at which point the dead will be raised, and the living—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—will be changed from *flesh* to a new, spiritual essence. We will pass from corruption to incorruption, from mortality

to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:23-24; 51-53).

Consequences Resulting from the Dispensational View of Zechariah 14.

The dispensational view of Zechariah 14 strikes at the very heart of the nature of Christ's atoning work at the cross.

Verses 16 and 21 speak of those who go up to observe the feast of tabernacles, and who offer sacrifices. Again, dispensationalists literalize the language, asserting that Judaism, with all its carnality (cf. Hebrews 9:10) and animal blood, will be revived in the "millennial" age. A thoughtful writer focuses upon the weaknesses of this view:

"Are these interpreters ready to accept the restoration of the Old Testament feast with its offering of animal sacrifices? During the feast of tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, daily offerings of animals were made by fire, 199 animals of all kinds were offered, 'besides the continual burn-offering, and the meal offerings thereof, and the drink offerings thereof' (Numbers 29:12-38). Among these daily offerings was 'one he-goat for a sin-offering.' Jesus is our sin-offering, and if we go back to offering he-goats for sin-offerings we must reject Jesus as a sufficient offering for our sins" (Lanier, 633).

The Old Testament law, with its rivers of animal blood, was abolished at the cross (Ephesians 2:15-16), hence has been "taken" (*erken* – in the perfect tense, denoting the permanent abolition of the law of Moses) away for ever (Colossians 2:14).

Truly, dispensationalism is a Judaistic, materialistic, and infidelic system.

Conclusion

Whatever else the meaning of Zechariah 14 may be, it cannot be harmonized with premillennial theology. Two common views of this remarkable chapter, entertained by non-millennial

scholars, are as follows:

1. Some hold it to be a symbolic prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, together with a spread of the gospel throughout the Christian age thereafter (cf. Collins, 761-763; Wallace, 246-248).
2. The better view, in this writer's judgment, suggests that the language is a figurative depiction of the history of spiritual "Jerusalem" (the church), from the time of its commencement on the day of Pentecost through the Christian age (see Hengstenberg, II. 1155-1182; Laetsch, 493-506).
Woudstra had a nice summary of the matter. "From the mixed character of the imagery employed, referring now to cataclysmic upheavals, now to regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem, it seems to this writer that no such literal interpretation of the passages is intended. The prophecy has in view various aspects of the gospel age with particular emphasis on its conclusion" (377-378).

The millennialist view of Zechariah 14 is to be rejected summarily.

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—P.O. Box 55265, Stockton, CA 95205

ARE DEBATES STILL EFFECTIVE?

Continued from page 15

controversy in recent years is the question of local churches withdrawing fellowship from other local (apostate) churches. This is a question that perhaps few of us have looked into very deeply, and are not sure just how we should feel about it in light of New Testament teaching. There are strong feelings and good, doctrinally sound brethren on both sides of this issue.

A debate on the question of congregational withdrawal of fellowship has been arranged between Holger Neubauer and John T. Polk, II. The particulars are given below. Please pray for this effort that the truth will be spoken in brotherly love (Ephesians 4:15), and that the truth will be obeyed by all who come under the influence of this discussion.—Dennis Gulledge, Co-editor.

RELIGIOUS PUBLIC DEBATE

May 3 & 4, 2001

7:00 PM Nightly

At Tennessee Bible College

Cookeville, Tennessee

Propositions for discussion are as follows:

RESOLVED: The Scriptures teach that local churches must withdraw from apostate churches.

Affirm: Holger Neubauer

Deny: John T. Polk, II

RESOLVED: The Scriptures teach that fellowship exists between churches of Christ only upon the basis of common or corresponding works which obey the Word of God.

Affirm: John T. Polk, II

Deny: Holger Neubauer

Holger Neubauer is Tennessee Bible College Assistant to the President and gospel preacher for 17 years.

John T. Polk, II is a gospel preacher for 37 years and one of the elders of the Dover church of Christ in Dover, Tennessee.

Christ will return to earth prior to the millennium; that he will, when he returns, inaugurate the millennial reign in Jerusalem.

Dispensational Premillennialism is by far the most widely accepted view among people today who espouse millennial ideas. Since the late 1800's the exponents of this view went beyond typical (historical) premillennialism. The new premillennialism came to the United States about 1875 after thriving in England among the Plymouth Brethren, a religious body originated by J. N. Darby in 1830. Darby named the new dogma *dispensationalism* because the theory called for a division of history into dispensations. This is the view that is freely advanced by televangelists, charismatic preachers, self-styled prophets and popular religious authors of today (See *Interesting Inquiries*, by John T. Polk, II).

The Basic Format of Dispensational Premillennialism

Although all premillennialists do not agree on all the points of their theories, here is the basic format of the dispensational view:

1. Jesus Christ came into this world in order to fulfill Old Testament prophecies and to establish an earthly kingdom.
2. The divine plan, however, was thwarted in Jesus' unanticipated rejection by his subjects, and his crucifixion.
3. The kingdom prophecies were then put on hold, i.e., since they were not fulfilled, Jesus is supposed to return, at which time he will establish the kingdom as he had originally planned, but had failed initially in so doing.
4. The Lord set up the church as a substitute for the kingdom due to his rejection by the Jews.
5. The return of Jesus will be both secret and silent. This is called the "Rapture," when he will come for his saints (See my editorial, *Will You Be "Left Behind"?*—*What About the Rapture?*, DG). He is to snatch the sainted living and dead away in a rapturous

disappearing act, but, for those who are "left behind," life will go on as usual. The "Raptured" are to be with the Lord somewhere for seven years.

6. This seven years will mark the "Tribulation" with a world populated entirely by unbelievers. The first half of this period is to see a revival of the Jewish nation and their repossession of the "Holy Land." The last three and one half years is to be a period of "Great Tribulation," such as the world has never seen.
7. Jesus is to return again at the end of the Tribulation, and, in the Battle of Armageddon, eliminate his enemies so that his millennial reign may begin with a world populated entirely of believers. This is to be the "Second Coming" when the Lord comes *with* his saints. At this point the long awaited "King of the Jews" now assumes his rightful place on David's throne where he will begin his millennial reign.
8. At the end of the thousand years Jesus is supposed to deliver up the kingdom to God; there will be the judgment and then eternity.

The danger of the dispensational theory and the *Left Behind* theology is that they falsify both the promises of God in the Old Testament and the preaching of Jesus Christ. Such denies that Christ is currently reigning as King of kings on God's right hand (1 Timothy 6:15; 1 Peter 3:22). It also perpetuates the same materialistic view of the kingdom that led the Jews to crucify Christ.

Most of the articles in this issue of *Gospel Gleaner* will touch on areas relating to millennialism with particular attention the *Left Behind* series of books. We will closely examine what the Bible teaches on these matters, with the hope that you will study these things by the Scriptures to see whether or not they are true.—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72013

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ENJOYS GOSPEL GLEANER

I enjoy your publication very much, it is excellent. Brothers Kiser, Polk, Powell and Miller have all visited at Green Plain. Brother Kiser preached for us at Green Plain several years. I am a member of the Green Plain congregation at Hazel, Kentucky. Faustine Walker, Murray, KY.

AMONG THE BEST

Although I realize that the *Gospel Gleaner* is mailed free of charge to those who request it, I also realize that it costs money to produce and mail it. Therefore, as I request to be put on your mailing list, I am sending a contribution of \$20 to assist in your good work. In my judgment, it is among the best papers published in the brotherhood, and I wish more churches would do what you are doing instead of leaving the primary job to publishing houses that are under the control of no congregation. T. Pierce Brown, Cookeville, TN.

WELL DONE AND BALANCED

I would enjoy receiving your paper, *Gospel Gleaner*. The paper is done well. The articles are good and balanced and the appearance is first rate. John Waddey, Sun City West, AZ.

PASSING OUT ISSUES OF GG

I picked up some copies of *GG* at the Needmore (TN) congregation last night. This is the first time that I have seen your publication. I like what I see in these 3 issues. We have been looking for a good publication to pass out on Sunday. *GG* would be

excellent. Is it possible to have a bundle sent to the church address each month? We would need about 60. I preached at Cullendale congregation in Camden up until the end of 97. I wish we had got to meet while I was there. Thanks. Garry Stanton, Cadiz, KY.

SAW US ON THE WEB

I would greatly appreciate receiving your publication *Gospel Gleaner*. Please, if you are willing, add the addresses listed below to your mailing list. I discovered your publication through the website for *Seek The Old Paths*, and I am eager to receive a good gospel publication that does not cower from proclaiming the truth. Thank you and God bless you as you continue the Lord's work. Christopher Durbin, Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, TN.

Please enter my name and address on your mailing list. I found the name of your publication on a list of free subscriptions on the internet in a brotherhood link. Vickie Apple, Moore, OK.

I receive the *Gospel Gleaner* and was glad to find out that you are on the internet. I have *Gospel Gleaner* listed on our personal web page under Christian Publications. Would like for you to visit our homepage, let me hear from you, <http://personal.vallnet.com/kyarbrou>. Kenneth or Melanie Yarbrough, kyarbrough@vallnet.com.

LOVES READING GG

I've been reading the *Gospel Gleaner*. I found it to be very interesting and truthful news. I have loved reading it and I wish to be on the mailing list. I am also a member of the Glendale Church of Christ at Newbern, Tennessee. One of the writers in this copy of the *Gospel Gleaner* is Mike Kiser. I know him, he is a very good and strong preacher. All of the articles in this edition are very strong and sound preaching. Hopefully I can get put on your mailing list. Keep up the good work. Floyd Jowers & Family, Newbern, TN.

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Volume 17

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CURRENT CHALLENGES TO BROTHERHOOD PEACE

Edwin S. Jones

Among us, in certain circles, the rallying cry for the church has apparently become, "the show must go on." The first displays of this entertainment emphasis are generally most evident in worship services. The show time infatuation, however, is not limited to worship. The spirit of our age has often largely become the spirit of many congregations. Peace among us has, therefore, been profoundly disturbed by an emotion-controlled agenda that moves increasingly further from a biblical orientation.

In the worship arena, current challenges find expression in such things as praise teams, flirting with or actually embracing instrumental accompaniment, "special" singing productions that depart from congregational singing, and drama. It would seem that in these and similar challenges, production values rule while biblical substance is lost. Audio and visual special effects become the focal point; diligent study of the Scriptures is rejected, reduced to an obligatory filler. Such things as this should not be allowed to rob us of a worship that is in both spirit and truth (John 4:24).

Worship is not to be replaced by

entertainment. The glitz and glamour that so characterizes our present culture is not the model of the church. Scripture is far from unclear when it gives simple yet powerful pattern of congregational singing (Ephesians 5:19), practical prayers (1 Timothy 2:1-8), sound preaching (2 Timothy 4:1-2), purposeful giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and introspective, thankful communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-28) as the way of Christ in worship.

Avenues of worship are not, however, the only place the brethren are being troubled. The role of men in worship leadership is also frequently resulting in an overthrow of peace in the body. Praise teams allow women to share leadership of the song service. Women are, at times, now present up front at the Lord's table. While on most such occasions they do not lead in prayer, their presence has blurred distinctions between male and female roles in public worship. Classes composed of both men and women are being taught by women. In some places, the pulpit has found itself occupied by women doing what could only be called preaching. Such practices

(Continued on page 23)



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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

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS

Dennis Gulledge

There are four events that have changed the history of the world. First, the entrance of sin into the world. Second, the birth of Jesus Christ. Third, the Pentecost day marking the establishment of the Lord's church in Acts 2. Fourth, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

People in many different situations can profit from a study of Saul's conversion to Christ. Some people believe on Christ, but are confused as to what is involved in conversion. Some think that the Lord has appeared to them as he did to Saul in his conversion. Others think that the Lord has spoken to them as he did to Saul on the Damascus road.

Everything in Saul's life was calculated against his becoming a Christian. He was reared a Pharisee (Acts 26:5). He had no social ties among Christians to influence him (Acts 9:26). He was steeped in the Jewish religion (Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:5-6). He was an avowed enemy of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:9; Philippians 3:6). His heart was not "pricked" after hearing a gospel sermon (Acts 2:37), nor was he seeking salvation at the time of his conversion. Instead, he was actively engaged in the work of eliminating the Way (Acts 22:4).

There are three accounts of Saul's conversion in the book of Acts: Luke's account (Acts 9:1-19); Paul's account in a speech to Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 22:1-16); Paul's account in a speech before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-20). In 1 Timothy 1:12-16, Paul gives another account of his conversion. He points out that the Lord made him a "pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." One would go to Acts 9, 22 and 26 to read that pattern. The fifth account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is found in Philippians 3:3-6.

Saul's Early Life

Saul was "a Jew, born in Tarsus" (Acts 22:3). According to race and religion he was a Jew and a Pharisee, a sect of the Jewish religion (Acts 26:4-5). William M. Ramsey explores what must have been the effect of Saul's conversion upon his own family:

...[w]e must infer that the spirit of his family was strongly Pharisaic. The whole history of the Jews shows what was likely to be the feeling among his parents and brothers and sisters, when he not merely became a Christian, but went to the Gentiles. Their



pride was outraged; and we should naturally expect that such a family would regard Paul as an apostate, a foe to God and the chosen race, and a disgrace to the family; his own relatives might be expected to be his most bitter enemies.¹

Saul was very religious. As he later said of himself, he was a Jew and "very zealous toward God" (Acts 22:3). He was a Hebrew by decent and education—"an Hebrew of Hebrews" (Philippians 3:5). That is, he was as bigoted and ambitious as any religionist of his or any other day. One must infer from this that a person might be religious and not be a Christian, but that one cannot be a Christian without being religious. In fact, one might be "religious" in some ways and still feel that something is missing that God would have him to do. Thankfully, the apostle was able to come to the end of his life without any regrets (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Saul was a persecutor of the churches of Christ (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1; Philippians 3:6). He stood by and held the garments of those who stoned Stephen to death (Acts 7:58; 22:20). He searched for Christians meeting in the Jewish synagogues in order to beat and imprison them (Acts 22:19). Why would Saul seek out the synagogues on his campaign of persecution? The first place these early gospel preachers went was into the Jewish synagogues (Mark 13:9). There they found Jews who believed the Old Testament and looked for the coming Messiah. Paul would later follow the example of these early evangelists by likewise seeking out the synagogues as fertile fields for the gospel (Acts 9:20; 13:14).

Saul persecuted Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-3). Not content to punish these people merely in Jerusalem, he went to Damascus with authority from the chief priest to persecute them in that city as well (Acts 9:1-2). He was willing to go wherever his career of persecution would take him. He joined wholeheartedly in restraining Christianity any way that he could. You would not think him a likely candidate for conversion to Christ, but our ways are not God's ways (Isaiah 55:7-8). Saul was a man endowed with great talents and he would, for good or evil, exert a vast influence upon mankind.

What could be done to convert a man like Saul into a disciple of Jesus Christ? In an effort to answer this question it is appropriate to ask another: How were other conversions made? The citizens of Samaria heard Philip "preach Christ" to them (Acts 8:5). The Ethiopian treasurer heard the same evangelist preach Jesus (Acts 8:35). Cornelius sent for Peter to hear words from him whereby by he might be saved (Acts 10:5-6; 11:13-14). Lydia of Thiatira heard Paul as he and Silas addressed the women gathered outside the city of Philippi on the Sabbath (Acts 16:13-14). The jail keeper at Philippi heard the gospel from Paul and Silas (Acts 16:30-32). These and others were brought to Christ by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

What about Saul? Would you send a preacher to him? These were the very ones Saul wanted to eliminate (Acts 22:4). It would require something drastic to get Saul's attention. The preacher, Ananias, would come later (Acts 9:10). Even Ananias protested against the Lord's commissioning him to go speak to Saul, saying, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem" (Acts 9:13).

Jesus Christ himself appeared to Saul (Acts 9:3-6). A *light* was seen: "And as he journeyed, he came near to Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven" (Vs. 3, Acts 22:6). A *voice* was heard: "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Vss. 4-5). A *change* was made: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Vs. 6).

Will Jesus appear to people today the way he did to Saul? Despite modern day claims of personal sightings, the answer is no. It was essential as a qualification of an apostle that he had seen and conversed with the Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 26:16-18). This was the final post-resurrection appearance of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:5-9). James D. Bales noted, "Christ promised to appear to Saul in some additional matters (Acts 26:16), but there is no scriptural evidence that anybody else had

such a face to face encounter after Saul.”² Albert Barnes has correctly said, “Even on the most momentous questions of our existence, on the truth most important to be known...we are to lay aside all expectations of a voice from heaven; of a vision; of a dream; of the sending of an angel to instruct us, to warn us, to point out the path of duty, to teach us what to do.”³

In his personal encounter with Saul Jesus did not speak peace to the future apostle’s soul. Many denominational theologians assume otherwise. One seminary professor of church history wrote, “...Jesus came to him and taught him a message of forgiveness and salvation through faith.”⁴ On the contrary, Ananias taught Saul the “message of forgiveness and salvation” through obedient faith. Jesus put him into contact with the preacher who would teach him the gospel. I have never heard anyone, who felt that the Lord had spoken peace to them, say that Jesus put them into contact with a Christian who would teach them what to do to be saved as did Saul. Why not? Teaching so as to convert others is God’s work through Christians (James 5:19-20).

Saul’s Obedience to the Heavenly Vision (Acts 26:19)

It is clear that Jesus did not appear to Saul in order to save him at that very moment. A proper understanding and application of Saul’s conversion to Christ will not force it into setting a precedent for divine appearances that are neither promised by Jesus nor proved by the claimant. There is no doubt that God could address us individually and indicate to us his will in what he would have us to do to be saved. The question is not how *could* God effect this end result, but how *does* he do so. Saul was clearly sent into Damascus to learn from the voice of a gospel preacher what to do to be saved (Acts 9:6). Why did deity bring the preacher and sinner together? Because the gospel has been committed into the hands of men for teaching (2 Corinthians 4:7).

We are not privy to all that Ananias said to Saul, although we do know that he instructed him

to be immersed and wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Leading up to the final instruction to be immersed for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38), it is probable that Ananias tutored Saul somewhat along the following lines. First, as God calls upon all sinful men to repent and to “forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts” (Isaiah 55:7), it is reasonable that Saul was told that he must abandon his purposes of persecution (Acts 17:30). Second, since Saul was trying to make his way to heaven without a Savior, having denied all the proofs of Jesus Christ and his resurrection, it is likely that Ananias taught him of that Redeemer whom he would later make known to the world (Acts 16:31). Third, all that remained was for the redeeming blood of the Lamb of God to wash his sins away, which he did in baptism (1 Peter 3:21).

Saul became a Christian under the provisions of the great commission, the same way all people are saved (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). Saul’s conversion to Christ is an example of the greatness of God’s mercy toward sinful men (Titus 3:3-5). Paul viewed himself as the “chief of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:12-15). With Saul’s example before us no one can reasonably question the will and power of God to save him, whatever his sins may be (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 7:25).—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103.

ENDNOTES

¹ Ramsey, William M., *St. Paul The Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), 35-36.

² James D. Bales, *Saul: From Persecutor to Persecuted* (Shreveport, Louisiana: Lambert Book House, 1975), 80.

³ Albert Barnes, *Scenes and Incidents in the life of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia: Zeigler, McCurdy & Co., 1869), 69.

⁴ James D. Smith, III, “Boundary Breaker” *Christian History*, Issue 47 (Vol. XIV, No. 3), 10.

THE EDITORIAL TORCH IS PASSED

In January 1985 brethren Bill Dillon and Ronnie Whittemore began a new quarterly paper called *Gospel Gleaner*. It originated from Kevil, Kentucky, where brother Whittemore was then preaching. The operational base of the paper has moved since that time, and in 1995 it came to Mabelvale, Arkansas and I became the new co-editor, along with Bill Dillon. I felt it an honor to be asked to step up to that position, having served as a staff-writer since the paper's beginning.

Bill Dillon wishes to step down from the co-editor's position. Once again a signal honor is conferred upon me as he has asked me to assume the sole editorship of the paper. I have consented. My agreement to edit *Gospel Gleaner* is with the understanding that brother Dillon will have an open door to return as co-editor any time he wishes. He and I have shared an amicable working relationship for over sixteen years, and that partnership stands ready to be renewed when and if that time should come.

The reason for brother Dillon's desire to step back from this position is simply related to his current work load. He has become increasingly involved in preaching the gospel in Ghana, West Africa. The Ghana work has become a very time consuming enterprise. His many other responsibilities as evangelist for the College and North church in Mountain Home, Arkansas have brought him to the point of needing to reduce his obligations. For these reasons he has asked me to edit the paper.

I have added Bill Dillon to our list of staff writers commencing with this issue. Articles by him will be published as they are contributed and not necessarily on a regular basis. I pledge to do my best to keep *Gospel Gleaner* on the same course of spiritual balance that it has pursued since its birth. We will continue to balance both the positive and negative aspects of teaching the gospel. We will continue to let our desire to please our Savior be our polar star. We will not serve to please any man or group of men. Please pray for us

that we will advance the Lord's cause in more effective ways.—*Dennis Gullledge, editor.*

WHY SHOULD YOU BE A CHRISTIAN?

Carroll Sites

For forty years I have been teaching, encouraging, and trying to motivate people to become a Christian. Why? Why should You be a Christian?

- ✓ **BECAUSE OF YOUR PAST!** We have all sinned—**Romans 3:23**. We must have forgiveness if we want to go to Heaven when we leave this life. Christians have forgiveness in Christ as they walk in the light.
- ✓ **BECAUSE OF YOUR PRESENT!** You have a life to live—**James 4:13-15**. How do you want to live it? Do you desire to be an asset or liability to your family—to your community—to society? You need a purpose in life. Regardless of how long you live, you need to be a Christian every day. It is the best way of life.
- ✓ **BECAUSE TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!** Now is the time to begin to “walk the walk” and “talk the talk”—**2 Corinthians 6:1-2**. Now is the time to begin molding your life for eternity. Now is the time to begin worshipping the God who made you and gave you life. Now is the time to begin serving the Christ who died for you. Now is the time.
- ✓ **BECAUSE OF YOUR FUTURE!** Life must end for us all—**Hebrews 9:27**. We must die. We will all be resurrected. We must all meet God in judgment. We will want to be saved at the judgment. So, we need to be a Christian.

Christians are not square pegs in a round hole. Christians are round pegs in a round hole. Those in sin are the “odd-balls.” God never created us to be sinners. It is the right thing to be a Christian. Consider it carefully.—P.O. Box 501 Higden, AR 72067

DOES THE BIBLE UPHOLD EVOLUTION?

John T. Polk, II



Does the Bible teach anything that upholds "Evolution"? I have read where some people say it does, but others say it doesn't.

No, the Bible teaches completely contrary to the doctrine of "Evolution."

Evolution, the U.S. Government's official "godless-religious" doctrine of creation, is espoused in tax-payer-subsidized public schools, textbooks, universities, and museums, and was popularized in 1859 by Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. It is a totally false explanation of the creation of life on Earth completely by "natural causes" and thus without any regard for a Divine Creator. It provides no room for God, miracles, Jesus Christ, souls, sins, and salvation. To the people who mistakenly say that one can believe the Bible and Evolution, I quote Darwin who said, "I did not then [while a college boy, jtpii] in the least doubt the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible" (*Autobiography*). But after his book's popularity "Charles Darwin gradually lost his faith in God."¹ Today, with movies, toys and so called "scientific" television programs ubiquitously identifying dinosaurs with a "Jurassic era" of Evolution, children are not allowed to forget the fable of creation they have been taught in school.

There is not one scientific nor scriptural fact that supports, demonstrates or encourages evolutionary doctrine.

➔ Evolution assumes matter was already in existence, but it suddenly exploded in a "big bang" but no scientific fact permits one to believe that matter is eternal! Instead, the second law of thermodynamics (entropy) demonstrates a continual wearing down, or disorganization, of all physical inter-action. All matter had to have a "beginning," and the Bible argues this from its very first verse! "In the beginning God created [Hebrew, "bring into existence from nothing"] the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Also, Hebrews 11:3 shows that what is "seen" (matter) did not come from itself. Life has never come from non-living matter in either laboratory experiments or observation in life, yet this is a cornerstone "fact" of Evolution. There is absolutely no scientific data upon which to base even a theory that life could come from non-life, so Evolutionists keep fabricating huge quantities of time (again, without any scientific fact or rational reasoning) evidently hoping to obscure this point! No amount of time could elapse that would produce something alive from non-living material.

➔ Evolution teaches that mankind descended from apes, and a principle termed "natural selection" accounts for the differences between the two, but there is no fossil, DNA, or cloning fact to prove it! Darwin taught, "Prof. Huxley, in the opinion of most competent judges, has conclusively shewn [sic, jtpii] that in every visible character man differs less from the higher apes, than these do from the lower members of the same order of Primates..."

"The conclusion that man is the co-descendant with other species of some ancient, lower, and extinct form, is not in any degree new..."²

Huxley said, "...without question, the mode of origin, and the early stages of the development of man, are identical with those of the animals immediately below him in the scale: without a doubt in these respects, he is far nearer to apes than the apes are to the dog."³

1. The Bible says, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another

flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds" (1 Corinthians 15:39). No amount of "gene-splicing" or transplants, without being artificially supported to survive, is able to overcome this scientific and Biblical fact. No fossil has ever been discovered which shows that humans descended from or were in the lineage of any animal, fish, or bird. In fact, there would be no fossil record (vast deposits of suddenly deceased and preserved remains) without some cataclysm capable of causing such deposits. The world-wide flood in Noah's day is a perfectly adequate cause for fossil formation (Genesis 6-9).

2. The Bible says "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). From among all the animals, "for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:20). The human body was "formed" from "the dust of the ground" and *National Aeronautic and Space Administration's* (NASA) *Ames Research Center*, after extensive laboratory testing, revealed that every element in the human body is found in soil!⁴ If Evolution is true, then man would not have developed things "non-essential" to his survival, i.e., soul, sins, salvation, worship of God, or perfection as in Jesus Christ; for man would only be a more highly developed ape, but still merely an animal. Thus, to kill and eat humans is no different whether done by a human or an animal. [It never ceases to amaze this writer how public schools can program children's minds to believe everyone is merely an animal yet react with shock and horror at the carnage of "school shootings" that are committed with "hunting rifles!" If murderers are to be condemned it is because men are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27; 9:6), not because of Evolution! Those who glorify, rationalize, or "normalize" things like murder or cannibalism (or both as in "Silence of the Lambs" and its sequel) cannot believe in Bible Creation.] Evolution's "god" is eternal matter and its laws of "natural selection" and "survival of the

fittest" have never been demonstrated to be scientifically accurate. Instead of "survival of the fittest," which in humans causes hatred and violence, Jesus Christ has taught "salvation of the weak" (Matthew 7:12; 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10), and "repentance of the meek" (Luke 6:27-36; 24:46-47).

- ➔ Evolutionists, claiming to trace mitochondrial DNA up its human family tree an estimated 200,000 years, have concluded "the oldest female ancestor of living humans [was, jtpii]—an African woman quickly dubbed Eve..."

"Indeed, there have been many Adams and many Eves. The genetic record reflects only those whose offspring survived and reproduced... 'It's rather distressing to find that Eve could not be the wife of Adam,' says Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, a professor emeritus at Stanford University and pioneer of population genetics."⁵ This supposed "new discovery" is a more detailed look at data, but it is the same prejudiced Evolutionary conclusion that Darwin had. He said, "It is therefore probable that Africa was formerly inhabited by extinct apes closely allied to the gorilla and chimpanzee; and as these two species are now man's nearest allies, it is somewhat more probable that our early progenitors lived on the African continent than elsewhere."⁶ The Bible teaches that Eve was made from a rib of Adam (Genesis 2:22-23) and was "the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20). One rib, one woman, one mother of humanity is all there could be. But Evolutionists cannot admit the Bible is right and therefore, stealing the concept of an "Eve" from the Bible, they concoct their own "Eves" none of whom, they say, could have been "married" to the one Adam (Genesis 2:24). The Bible teaches that all humans came from the same parents, Adam & Eve, and all humans after the Flood began through Noah's three sons and their wives (Genesis 9:18-19). Scientific and Biblical fact prove all "races" have "one blood" (Acts 17:26) and that external variations in appearance mean little, if anything. It is Evolution which places emphasis upon physical "differences" between humans in determining who appears to be closer to the "primitive" relative than

the others. "German master race-ists," Nietzsche and Adolf Hitler, were Evolutionists!

❶ Evolutionists throw "guess-timates" of millions and billions of years as though they were accurately arrived at, but one fossil fact proves them all wrong and the Bible all right. The fossil records show animals existing along with humans, exactly what the Bible creation account records! Within the same week that the Earth was created, animals and humans were made (Genesis 1). According to the Bible, there has never been an extended period of time (such as those Evolution requires) when earth was not occupied by both animals and humans! There is no "pre-historic" anything, for humans have been on earth with communication skills as long as Earth has been in existence.

The arrogance and prejudice of Evolutionists is seen in their dogmatic claim that, whether or not the facts support the conclusion of Evolution, they will not give it up as their doctrine. In a religion, this would be termed "blind faith," or "a leap in the dark." Charles Darwin said it is like this: "The main conclusion here arrived at, and now held by many naturalists who are well competent to form a sound judgment, is that man is descended from some less highly organized form. The grounds upon which this conclusion rests will never be shaken, for the close similarity between man and the lower animals in embryonic development, as well as in innumerable points of structure and constitution, both of high and of the most trifling importance—the rudiments which he retains, and the abnormal reversions to which he is occasionally liable—are facts which cannot be disputed."⁷ The choice between God and Darwin is whether one is in the image of animals or God, and therefore whether one is an animal or can be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

Not only is Evolution an unscientific approach to Creation, but it is an idolatrous religious belief that exchanges "the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 1:25).

It is reprehensible for evolutionists to claim

to be "scientific" or for them to claim to know that the Bible cannot be right—they "are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). As I did in 1996 (*Gospel Gleaner*, Volume 12, Number 4) I reissue the following challenge to debate, either orally or in print, some qualified evolutionist on the following proposition:

"RESOLVED, the Creation account in Genesis 1-3 is consistent with all scientific fact and Biblical faith." Affirm: John T. Polk II

Deny: _____.—125 The Trace,
Dover, TN 37058

¹ PP58, 77, *Evolution the Great Debate*, by Vernon Blackmore and Andrew Page, Lion Publishing Corp., 1705 Hubbard Ave., Batavia, IL 60510, copyright 1989.

² "Introduction," Page 2, *The Descent of Man* by Charles Darwin, D. Appleton and Company, New York, Authorized Edition, Revised and Augmented, complete in one volume, 1896.

³ *ibid.*, Part 1, Chapter 1, Page 11.

⁴ *Readers Digest*, November 1982.

⁵ "Where We Come From," cover story (1/29/01), *U.S. News & World Report* magazine.

⁶ *ibid.*, Part 1, Chapter VI, Page 155.

⁷ *ibid.*, Part III, Chapter XXI, Page 606-607.

MOUNTAIN HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST COLLEGE & NORTH STREETS

P. O. BOX 880

MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72654

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (870) 425-4330

Office Fax (870) 425-8118

E-Mail: church@centurytel.net

Bill Dillon, Evangelist

FLOWERS FOR THE LIVING

Guy F. Hester



On the occasion of the funeral of a loved one or friend we customarily place flowers around the coffin and over the grave site with them after they are buried. This is all well and good and is appreciated by the family members, but the deceased

knows nothing about it. How much better it would have been if we had given them the flowers while they lived.

Closed eyes cannot see the pretty flowers,
Cold hands cannot hold them you know,
Breath that is stilled cannot gather the sweet
breezes that from them blow.

Death is a sleep beyond dreaming,
Its children of earth doth endow,
So give your flowers to the living,
Give them the flowers now.
Someday you'll stand by a coffin,
And stroke a cold lifeless brow,
Don't waste these precious moments,
But give them the flowers now.

Each day that we live, we have the opportunity of bestowing flowers upon someone in need. The apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This admonition would cover a broad range of services we might render. There is always a brother or a neighbor who needs

encouragement. And, giving encouragement to one who is disheartened is just as much our Christian duty as reproving the disorderly. We read in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." Just before Paul wrote these words, he had written how that we should edify and encourage one another as fellow-members of the body of Christ. Notice verses 11-13, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake. And be at peace among yourselves."

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were as quick to edify and commend as we are to criticize and condemn? Why should we wait until someone dies to express how we felt about them? To use an old but very beautiful expression, "Let us give them our roses while they live!" This would apply to all those who have meant something to our lives. Mother and Dad, if we are fortunate enough to have them still living. Elders in the church. Former teachers and preachers. Or, perhaps, other friends who have helped us to take courage and make the right choices in life. If we will stop and think, each of us is indebted to so very many. Don't wait until they die, express appreciation while they are still living! The Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3). If there is anything that will "make my blood boil," it is to hear children speak in a disrespectful manner to their parents, especially their mothers, who went right into the jaws of death to bring them into this world. Someday, young people, you will stand by the coffin and remember when it is too late to say, "I'm sorry." When parents are old and unable to

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AN INTERVIEW WITH PERRY B. COTHAM

Dennis Gulledge

I was born January 5, 1912 near Murray, Kentucky. My parents were Ben and Nannie (Boyd) Cotham, members of the church at Antioch church of Christ, south of Farmington. The church still meets there and is now about 165 years old. We attended every Lord's Day. My mother died when I was in the 8th grade. We lived on a farm and I learned early in life what hard work is all about. For a while I helped my father take care of two younger brothers. Antioch had good preachers for gospel meetings each year beginning the third Sunday in July. We also had preaching once a month by some good preacher. In my early years I heard such men as Ira and Boone Douthitt, John B. Hardeman (who conducted my mother's and father's funerals), Jewell W. Norman (a distant cousin of mine), Fred W. Chunn (who grew up in the Antioch church) and A. G. Freed. When the digressive movement swept the states of Kentucky and Tennessee, my home congregation never did use the instrument, although most of the city churches did. The church had good men as elders.

I was baptized by Ira Douthitt in July, 1927, along with James W. Shockley, who later also became a gospel preacher. The next summer Jewell Norman asked me to go with him to Illinois for a mission meeting. He said I could lead the singing. I had never done that before. I practiced on a few old songs and went with him. The house where we put up for a few nights was infested with bed bugs. One night I tried to sleep sitting in a chair and all the while knocking bugs off of Jewell's face. The next morning I told Jewell I could stay there no longer. So we went to a hotel. I

went to a doctor and got some medicine for my bites. However, we continued on with the meeting. This did not deter me from wanting to be a gospel preacher. My mother had read to me the Bible and Bible stories from my earliest remembrance. While I was young I preached from a buggy to some of the children in the neighborhood and baptized sticks.

The fall of 1929 I entered Freed-Hardeman College, a junior college (now Freed-Hardeman University). I made the trip from Mayfield, Kentucky on the train. I had never been on the train before. I soon learned to love and appreciate all of my teachers and the student body. Hugo and Lois McCord, Adron Doran and J. W. McNutt were some of my classmates. We were a closely knit group of students. After FHC days I enrolled in Murray State University and graduated in June, 1934, with a B. A. Degree.

How long have you been preaching? I have always wanted to preach as long as I can remember. I began preaching after I entered Freed-Hardeman. So I have been preaching for over seventy-one years. I have been in full-time evangelistic work (not "local work") for the past thirty years. This work has taken me into all of the fifty states of America and into all the inhabited continents of the world (over sixty nations). During my ministry, I have written and distributed fourteen different tracts. These have also been translated and printed in a number of different languages. In 1993 I made two trips to Kiev, Ukraine (part of the former Soviet Union) to preach and also teach in the Kiev Polytechnic Bible Institute. Some of my tracts are being now translated and printed in Russian. I have made ten preaching trips to India and during these visits hundreds have been baptized. My tracts are widely distributed in that nation in various dialects.

My first full-time local work was in Shawnee, Oklahoma, beginning in October 1934. Then to Oklahoma City, Wewoka, and Duncan, all in Oklahoma. I have worked also in Paris, Grand Prairie, and Big Spring, all in the state of Texas. While in Shawnee and Paris I did much preaching also on the radio, and in Grand Prairie a new building was constructed, and in Big Spring we

helped the work in Brazil. While in Shawnee I married Teresa Overby, June 25, 1936. Her father was a preacher. We have three children.

Can you recall the circumstances of your first sermon? Shortly after I enrolled in FHC I was asked to speak on a Wednesday night service. At that time the church was meeting in the administration building (the church building had been partially destroyed by fire). I talked on *Abraham, a Man of Great Faith*. I was scared half to death speaking before N. B. Hardeman, L. L. Brigance, C. P. Roland and other teachers and their families, plus the members and the students.

However, after I had finished brother Hardeman arose and said many nice compliments about my talk. That made me feel much better. Soon thereafter I was out preaching in near-by country churches, whenever I had an opportunity. The pay was very little, some pocket change. The stock market crash came in October that year. Times were very hard. But I was happy just to get the experience of preaching. Once I went to Shiloh National Battleground, spent the night with the Emmons family, and preached for the church on Sunday. While a student in Murray State, I preached on Sundays and conducted Gospel Meetings. My first meeting was in Athens, Ohio for five weeks.

How do you think the emphasis in preaching has changed since you began? Has the change been for better or worse? The emphasis has changed from the fundamentals of the New Testament church wherein the distinction between the Lord's church and denominationalism was clearly drawn and many people were converted to simple New Testament Christianity to a more or less general attitude that all sincere, religious people are Christians and the church of our Lord is just another denomination. Due to this type of preaching the church has not been growing as it did some 75 to 50 years ago. Of course, there is a need for Christians to be taught the importance of living the Christian life and adding the Christian graces, but the lack of preaching on other basic principles of the faith has weakened, and continues to weaken, the glorious plea for a return to "the Old Paths," as given by the pioneers

of the gospel. Then, the Lord's church was recognized as the fastest growing religious body in America. The brotherhood needs to return to the type of preaching that was done many years ago. If our young people are not taught the truths of New Testament Christianity, we will go again into digression.

Name three preachers of the past or present and tell how they influenced you the most in your preaching. Jewell W. Norman and I. A. Douthitt influenced me the most in my younger days by their example of good preaching and their personal dedication. N. B. Hardeman had great influence in my life. He was a great teacher of the Bible and a wonderful speaker.

You have held a number of debates over the years. Which one is your most memorable, and why? I would mention the one with Mr. Billy Davis, of Macon, Georgia, on the Godhead and Miracles Today, held at Swainsboro, Georgia, in December, 1986, in the high school auditorium. Shortly after the debate the Pentecostal church closed up and the local preacher, who served as one of the moderators, moved out of town. Mr. Davis promised to have another debate, this time in Texas, but he would never respond to any calls or answer any letters. So no further debate was held. But I have always enjoyed having a debate, and have tried to conduct myself in a proper manner. Three of my debates have been printed in book form, but only one remains in print.

It seems that our brotherhood has seen a decline in debating over the past thirty years, or so. Do you agree that this is true, and if so, to what would you attribute the decrease in the number of public discussions? I would agree that there has been a decline in debating in the past few years, largely due to the fact that preachers are not exposing religious errors in their preaching as was formerly done. We have lost interest in trying to convert people from the denominational world. Some preachers are not studying the religious errors and how to meet them, and many members of the church do not want debates. A few may have been conducted in the wrong spirit and this has hurt debating.

(Continued on page 13)

“EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN OF WATER” (JOHN 3:5) Part 1

William Boyd

A denominational preacher said to me, “Belief is necessary because Mark 16:16 says, ‘He that believeth not shall be damned;’ and repentance is necessary because Luke 13:3 says, ‘Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish;’ and confession is necessary because Matthew 10:33 says, ‘whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven;’ but nowhere is there a statement of that kind about baptism.” I referred him to John 3:5: “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

I heard a radio preacher stress the necessity of the new birth. He preached that the word “except” in John 3:3 means “no other way.” He said one of the most important questions in the Bible was in John 3:4, namely, “How can a man be born again?” So far so good, but in giving the answer to that question he skipped eleven verses and landed 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.” He skipped eleven verses because he believed in salvation by faith only. He jumped none too soon. In the very next verse, John 3:5, Jesus answered Nicodemus saying, “Verily, Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” If I believed what that radio preacher believed I would want to skip this verse also.

All who reject “baptism for the remission of sins” struggle with the meaning of “water” in John 3:5. A man once asked N. B. Hardeman what “water” meant in John 3:5 and Hardeman replied that it meant buttermilk! After the man expressed his surprise, Hardeman explained that if it did not mean “water” then it could just as easily mean “buttermilk” as anything else.

Some teach that “born of water” means the physical birth from the womb. Nicodemus had just referred to the physical birth himself saying, “Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” The physical birth theorist would have Jesus saying, “Except a man be born of the womb, or born of woman, he cannot enter the kingdom.” Before the “faith only” crowd think they found their out they should ask themselves, why didn’t Jesus just say that? Is it harder to say “born of the womb” or “born of woman” than it is to say “born of water?” It was easy enough for Jesus to say “born of the flesh” in verse six; why did he not say that in verse five? Why would Jesus employ strange ambiguous terminology for a common birth? If this is not baptism, there would be no reason to bring up “water” at all.

There is reason to believe Nicodemus understood the meaning of “born of water.” All Jerusalem knew John the Baptist was baptizing with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and all had heard him preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 3:1-6; Mark 1:2-5). In John 1:26 John said, “I baptize with water...” In John 1:31 he said, “I come baptizing with water...” In John 1:33 he said, “he that sent me to baptize with water...” John made it clear that he baptized in water to prepare a people for the coming kingdom. Nicodemus knew John’s preaching and he knew John’s baptism and he would not have stumbled over the words “born of water” to “enter the kingdom.”

Alfred Edersheim, in his classic work *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, wrote an appendix on “The Baptism of Proselytes” (Appendix XII). Proselytes were Gentile converts to the Jewish faith. It became a practice of the Jews to baptize proselytes as an act of initiation into Jewry. In his appendix Edersheim gives

evidence that Jewish Proselyte baptism had been practiced from the time of Hillel and Shammai, that is, from before the time of Christ. Ancient Jewish records document the traditions of the Jews, and Edersheim, familiar with these traditions, finds a description of proselyte baptism as follows, "As he stepped out of these waters he was considered as 'born anew'—in the language of the Rabbis, as if he were 'a little child just born,' ...as 'a child of one day.'" Baptism and the new birth would have new meaning in Christ, but there is evidence that the language Jesus used would not have been foreign to Nicodemus.

William Wall of the Church of England wrote a two volume *History of Infant Baptism* in the early eighteenth century. To honor Mr. Wall and his work the lower house of clergy assembled in convention and passed a vote, "that the thanks of this house be given to Mr. Wall for the *learned and excellent book* he hath lately written concerning infant baptism." In this book Mr. Wall said that John Calvin was the first to ever deny that "water" in John 3:5 did not mean baptism, and that John Calvin himself admitted that this was a "new interpretation." (*History of Infant Baptism*, Volume 1, Page 92—From *Shepherd's Handbook on Baptism*, Second Edition, Pages 336 & 507).

Henry Alford was part of the Revision Committee that produced the *English Revised Version* of 1881. He identified "born of water" as "the token or outward sign of baptism" and "born of the Spirit" as "inward grace" and then said, "All attempts to get rid of these two plain facts have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped." (*Greek Testament*, Note on John 3:5; Volume I, page 714, From *Shepherd's Handbook on Baptism*, Second Edition, Pages 321 & 464).

Quotations from scholars of this caliber can be multiplied, and the ancients, including Origen, Augustine, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Ambrose testify together that "born of water" means "baptism." But it is not necessary to spend long hours in old libraries of ancient documents to discern our Lord's meaning. The Bible is its own best interpreter, and numerous passages affirm the

ancient doctrine that baptism in water, in accordance with the teachings of the Spirit, is essential to the new birth and subsequent citizenship in the kingdom of God. Part two of this article will be a look at parallel passages.—12900 Southridge Drive, Little Rock, AR 72223

AN INTERVIEW WITH PERRY B. COTHAM

Continued from page 11

What special word of advice would you like to pass on to young preachers who may read this interview? I would encourage the young preachers to study the Bible more than books by sectarian scholars who write about the Bible. Buy good old books of the brotherhood and study them, especially all the old debate books that is possible. It is not necessary to have a large library and never use the books, but have a few good, valuable books and study them carefully along with the Bible. Too, do all the preaching you can; hold meetings, mission meetings, pay or no pay. One cannot learn to preach without preaching, anymore than one can learn how to swim without getting into the water and practicing. One should not preach for pay; he gets paid for preaching, but always, "Preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 Peter 4:11). We should never lose sight of the fact that God's power to save is in the gospel. So, preach the gospel with conviction and for the love of lost souls.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Restoration Reachbacks* is usually a column where we run an article written by one of our brethren of years gone by. This time I have chosen to include an interview that I did with brother Perry B. Cotham in 1993. Brother Cotham preached his first sermon nearly 72 years ago. I have brought some of the information up-to-date to reflect this fact. He is still preaching in gospel meetings today! Perry B. Cotham is a monument to faithfulness and longevity as a gospel preacher. May God bless him with many more!—Dennis Gullledge, Editor.



POMPEY AND THE JEWS

Max R. Miller



Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, or Pompey the Great (106-48 B.C.) was one of the most distinguished of many of the great Roman soldiers and statesmen. His military exercise, his eloquent and persuasive oratory and his

strict honor and personal integrity marked him as a man destined to success and to be joyously received by the people.

Pompey had a meteoric rise to fame and glory. He was a general of the Army at the age of twenty-three. He was amoral, a pagan far removed from Divine law. He married five times, casting aside a wife, or taking a wife, purely as political expediency demanded. He warred against nations from political motivation and often for the booty of victory. It was his vanity that finally drove him to assault Julius Caesar at Pharsalus and meet defeat—a defeat he expected.

Pompey had a day with the Jews. It was little more than an insignificant incident in the long and bloody career of the noble Roman. To the Jews, Pompey's invasion was an insult to them and their God and the end of Israel's independence. One turns to the Apocryphal *The Books of the Maccabees* and Josephus' *The Wars of the Jews* and his *Antiquities of the Jews* for the most complete record of the fall of Judah. Josephus, Jewish historian, records the assault, the siege itself, and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

Israel had returned to their homeland after seventy years of Babylonian bondage. Under

Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, a new nation was formed. The Temple was rebuilt, the law was restored to the people and national glory was in the offing. But—again an alien nation, Syria, floods her borders and subjugates the land. But there were saviors in Israel. The Maccabees arose to meet the Syrian's threats and secure freedom and liberty to Israel. The age of the Maccabees was the most brilliant political period for Judah since the days of David and Solomon.

Antiochus Epiphanes IV, Seleucid, king of the Hellenistic Syrian kingdom reigned (175-164 B.C.), encouraged Greek culture and sought to impose it in his domain. In this, his purpose was to destroy the religion of the Jews. He sent pagan priests to the village of Modin to offer polluting sacrifices on the altar of God. The old priest Maccabeus Mattathias arose on this occasion, slew the first apostate Jew that dared approach the idolatrous altar, and then, turning upon the king's commissioner, dispatched him and all his attendants. Then he and his family fled to the hills and began a long and bloody war with superior forces of the Syrians. This was the beginning of the Wars of the Maccabees.

Mattathias had five sons who, with their followers, came to be known as the Maccabees. One after another they led Israel in her struggles for independence. First old Mattathias, then Judas, Jonathan, and finally Simon the Jewel (167-135 B. C.), each gives their life for the cause of Judah. On Simon's assassination his son John Hyrcanus succeeded him. He then passed the rulership to his Hellenistic son, Aristobulus (104-103 B. C.) who was the first member of the Hasmonaeen family to take the title "king." Aristobulus' widow, Salome Alexandra, then married Aristobulus' half-brother, Alexander Jannaeus, thus enabling him to take his late brother's place as king and high priest. Under this cruel and treacherous ruler Judah had, when he died in 76 B.C., won control of the territories claimed in earlier days by the twelve tribes of Israel. At his death, he bequeathed his kingdom not to a son but to his wife, Salome Alexandra, who began to reign in her sixty-fourth year and reigned well until her death nine years later.

Salome had borne two sons to Alexander

Jannaeus, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. Alexander names Aristobulus, the younger of the two, as heir apparent to his throne. After Alexander's death Salome appointed Hyrcanus the high priest. Aristobulus becomes a strong right arm in the administration of the Queen's affairs. He, on prodding of certain factions in Judah, pressured Salome to surrender to him the regal power of the kingdom. Hyrcanus was the legal heir to the throne. Aristobulus feared the mild Hyrcanus could not withstand the intimidation's of the Pharisees. Aristobulus began to gather support from men of prominence and power throughout Judah.

With the queen's death, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus warred with each other. Hyrcanus soon surrendered to him the kingship of the nation. After a time, a rich and influential Idumean, Antipater, a friend of Hyrcanus and at the same time at enmity with Aristobulus, persuaded Hyrcanus that his brother sought his life and that he should go with him to Aretas, the king of Arabia, for assistance in overcoming Aristobulus. The newly formed alliance proceeded against Aristobulus and quickly reduced his forces with Aristobulus shutting himself in the Temple with only the priests and a few others for support. In this time (c. 66-65 B.C.) Asia Minor and Armenia had submitted to Pompey and Roman rule. The last remnant of Seleucid power had collapsed in Syria. Pompey sends his lieutenant, Scaurus, to secure the area and add it to Rome's spreading empire. Scaurus, arriving in Damascus, learns of civil strife at Jerusalem and inquires as how he may take advantage of it for Rome's glory.

Both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, neither being able to stabilize their power and position, seek the favors of Scaurus. Scaurus favored Aristobulus, took his tribute money, and expelled Aretas and his Arabian soldiers from Judaea. Quickly Aristobulus gathered an army and marched on the retreating army of Aretas. The balance of power between the brothers had shifted again.

Pompey came to Damascus. Each of the brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, appeared before Pompey, seeking his favors. The

irreconcilable brothers were told to live in quietness until he came into Judaea and then would he make his judgments of their affairs. Aristobulus, impatient, musters an army and marched into Judaea. Pompey was angered by the obstinate disposition of Aristobulus and put him in prison. Aristobulus' party within the walled city of Jerusalem chose to close the gates to Pompey and resist him. However, the party of Hyrcanus favored Pompey's intercession and opened the city to him as well as the king's palace. Pompey, with little difficulty, gained the lower city. He lay siege to the Temple. The siege proceeded with patience. Earthworks were raised; a path was laid to bring in battering rams from Tyre. Pompey took exceptional advantages of the Jewish custom of keeping the Sabbath day holy. With "the ox in the ditch," Israel rested on the seventh day and Rome built the assault approach to the city. The battering machine quickly broke open the great towers and a portion of the fortifications. Roman legionaries pour through the breach. A great slaughter followed with the Romans killing many and also Jews, in panic, falling on one another. Some of the Jews committed suicide by jumping from the walls and towers. Others fled to their houses and burned them and themselves. Josephus credits 12,000 Jews to the Roman sword and spear. The Temple fell on a Sabbath day while the priests faithfully performed their services, being distracted not at all by heathen Gentiles or by the blood dripping swords by which they would soon perish. Again, the streets of Jerusalem swirled in the blood of her citizens—and that not for the last time.

Pompey surveys his conquest: another city in a far off place; the dead and dying litter the ground; heroic deeds done by both defender and assailant, again he experiences the stillness and quietness that follows the clash of battle. Pompey's gaze rested on the Holy Temple. His curiosity led him to enter into the very Holy of Holies where no Gentile had ever stood. He was impressed by its simplicity. There were no icons of either gods, spirits or angels. There was the golden table for the shewbread, the candlestick, vessels for sacred services, spices and two thousand

(Continued on page 17)

PREACH AND TEACH

T. Pierce Brown



The following statements are made in a bulletin by one who claims to be a part of the body of Christ: "There is no biblical evidence that anyone ever preached the Gospel to those who had already received it. Preaching is always

associated with evangelism in that it inducts one into the family. On the other hand, teaching is associated with doctrine and nourishes those who have been inducted." He further says, "The Gospel is good and it is news. A message that has already been delivered and accepted may still be good, but it cannot be news. To preach the gospel to believers is impossible."

We believe him to be in error in practically every statement. It is true that the word "preaching" and "teaching" come from different Greek words. Not all preaching is teaching, and certainly not all teaching is preaching, but any person that implies that a person cannot preach and teach at the same time disregards both the Bible and common sense. One of the words that is translated "preach" is *euaggelizo*, which means to declare good tidings. Whether it is new in the sense that it has not been heard before is not involved in the definition. In both the Septuagint and the New Testament it simply refers to announcing glad tidings. It is difficult to imagine a person claiming that the precious story of the gospel of Christ ceases to be glad tidings just because I have accepted it or heard it before. To claim that it ceases to be "news" because to us "news" is something we have not heard before is almost funny.

Whether it is practical or proper to continue to proclaim the gospel over and over to those who have already accepted it is another question. But the idea that the gospel is not doctrine is absurd. Doctrine simply means "teaching," and includes

everything that is being taught, whether one is teaching a person how to become a Christian or how to continue living the Christian life. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he indicated that someone had been teaching or preaching a perverted gospel. Our erring author says that it is acceptable to remind believers of the gospel when portions of it are being denied, but you can't preach it to them. But Paul indicates that someone may preach to those who are Christians a false gospel or the true gospel.

As far as we know, no one denies that the primary job of the evangelist who spoke and brought the glad tidings of salvation to the lost was to preach to them about how to be saved from their sins. But to imply that when they preached, they were not teaching doctrine indicates a strange degree of blindness. In Acts 5:28 we find, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, (doctrine, KJV) and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Surely any intelligent examination of the facts would lead one to the conclusion that when they were preaching the gospel they were filling Jerusalem with their doctrine (as the Authorized Version puts it).

If you have a vivid imagination, you might be able to imagine a scene like this: Peter is standing there preaching the gospel to a group of unbelieving Jews. James and John walk in. You ask them, "What is Peter doing?" They reply, "He was preaching the gospel, but now that we are here, it is impossible for him to continue doing that. We have already accepted that gospel, so he can only remind us, for it is impossible for a person to herald glad tidings to anyone who has believed them." How a person ever dreamed up such an idea is hard to comprehend.

In 1 Thessalonians 3:6, we find, "Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to

see us, even as we also to see you.” These glad tidings were not the gospel of Christ, but they were glad tidings, the same word that is translated “gospel” so many times. Timothy proclaimed unto them glad tidings. In such passages as Mark 5:20, we find, “And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men marveled.” He was heralding good tidings. Do you suppose he would be able to tell anyone the second time those good tidings, in case they believed him the first time?

When we find Acts 15:21, “For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath,” are we to conclude that it was possible to herald publicly information about Moses to those who had accepted him, but impossible to do the same thing with Christ?

When Paul said in Romans 2:21, “Thou that preachest a man should not steal, does thou steal,” are we to understand that Paul was not really preaching, for it is doctrine to say that a man should not steal, so he could not preach it, but could teach it?

Our editor says, “Pulpit preaching was unknown during the early stages of the redeemed community. Delivering sermons was unheard of.” Does that mean that when Peter stood up on the first Pentecost and began preaching, it would have been unscriptural or anti-scriptural if he had, like Ezra, stood behind a pulpit (Nehemiah 8:4). Does that mean that it is improper to say that Peter “delivered a sermon” on that occasion? Just because the present English expression “deliver a sermon” is not found in the Bible, does this mean that when the Apostles delivered the message of God in a public discourse, it should not be called a sermon? And if we did make the terrible error of calling it a sermon, we must not say that they delivered it? If this is not “straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel,” it would be hard to find something that would be. Yet this little bulletin is being received and approved all over the country by persons who claim to be a part of the body of Christ.—1068 Mitchell Avenue, Cookeville, TN 38501

POMPEY AND THE JEWS

Continued from page 15

talents of money. Pompey touched nothing and defiled only the ground on which he stood. He went away wondering at a religion which had no visible God.

Pompey proved himself to be a gracious conqueror and reconciled the people to himself more so by benevolence than by terror. The day after the Temple fell into his hands, he provided means for its purification and established Hyrcanus as the high priest. Jerusalem, once again, in 63 B.C., had fallen to her enemy.

The discord between the brothers Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II cost the suffering Hebrews much more than 12,000 dead. Pompey exacted an immediate indemnity of 100,000 talents (\$36,000,000). All the conquests of the Hasmoneans were transferred from the Judaeans to Rome. The independent monarchy was ended, and Judea became a part of the Roman province of her age-old enemy, Syria. Aristobulus and his family soon found themselves captives, marching in Pompey's victory parade at Rome.

Pompey had brought an end to the glory of Israel. Her glory was never in herself but had always been in God. Now, for future glory, she must await her King, the Christ of God. He would give her glory eternal. But, alas, “He came unto his own, and His own received Him not.” He was despised and rejected and the glory of God in Israel departed from them forever. “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:38).—10726 Hwy. 59 W., Burlison, TN 38015

THINK ABOUT IT

*If a matter is not serious enough to pray about,
then it is not serious enough to worry about—
and if it is serious enough to pray about,
and we have prayed about it,
then there is no need to worry about it.*

DID CHRIST DIE IN VAIN?

(Hebrews 9:28)

M. W. Kiser



This word "vain" means that if certain things be so, then Christ died groundlessly, without a cause, uselessly. We are not unaware of useless deaths. We constantly see the reports of those who are victims of crimes, drunkenness, and terrorism.

The death of Christ is the central point of our preaching.

1. The fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 53).
2. A fact of the gospel mentioned some 176 times (1 Corinthians 15:3).
3. An event essential to our salvation (Hebrews 2:9). If certain modern ideas be true, then Christ died in vain. What are some of them?

I. IF THE LAW OF MOSES IS STILL BINDING ON MEN TODAY.

- A. There are many who have insisted on this idea down through the years.
 1. The Judaizers of the first century (Galatians 4:21; Colossians 2:11, 16).
 2. The sabbatarians make this same contention even today.
- B. The law of Moses was removed by the death of Christ.
 1. This is a clear affirmation of Holy Writ (Colossians 2:14).
 2. The end was in view when it was

given (Galatians 3:19; Matthew 5:17).

3. The Ten Commandments were a part of the law (2 Corinthians 3:7; Romans 7:4f).
- C. The book of Galatians is a death blow to this idea of the law remaining (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:4; 2:21).

II. IF ALL GOD REQUIRES OF MAN IS TO BE MORALLY GOOD.

- A. Men lived good moral lives before Jesus died (Matthew 19:16-21; Romans 3:23).
- B. Moral goodness is essential, but not sufficient (Acts 10:1-4; 11:14).
- C. By grace we are saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 10:34-35).

III. IF WATER BAPTISM IS NON-ESSENTIAL TO MAN'S SALVATION.

- A. Blood and Salvation are connected together (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
- B. Blood and Baptism are connected together (John 19:34; Romans 6:3-4; Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5).

IV. IF ONE CHURCH IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER.

- A. Preachers (?) are guilty of ridiculing the New Testament church with this idea.
- B. Jesus Christ died that the church might exist (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:23-27).
- C. There are no Biblical grounds to say that denominationalism is right
 1. Jesus died to reconcile men to God in ONE body (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4).
 2. He fervently prayed for the unity of his followers (John 17:20-21).
 3. Unity is a divine, apostolic plea (1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3-6).

V. IF THERE IS TO BE NO
RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

A. There have always been those who deny the future resurrection.

1. A basic doctrine of the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23).
2. Some in the early church (1 Corinthians 15:12; 2 Timothy 2:18).

B. There are two witnesses which cannot be silenced.

1. The empty tomb of Christ (John 11:25; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23).
2. How do we account for the faith and persecution of the apostles?

C. Some basic Bible truths concerning the final resurrection:

1. Christ's resurrection is our hope (1 Corinthians 15:14).
2. It is a source of comfort to us (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
3. It is the goal we saints are striving for (Philippians 3:11). Not something all men will gladly welcome! (John 5:28-29; Daniel 12:2).

One more thing. If you die lost, then for you Christ died in vain! Some will be lost; but this is not God's will (Romans 5:8; John 10:10; 1 John 2:2).

—104 Calhoun Avenue, Sylacauga, AL 35150

**CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING
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Pat Baumunk	
Farmington, MI.....	100.00
J. Robert Brooks	
Cartersville, GA.....	10.00
Eva Johnson	
LaFayette, GA.....	25.00
Walter & Eathel Buckley	
Maynard, AR.....	25.00
Glenn & Shirley Jobe	
Schaumburg, IL.....	10.00
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Bethlehem Church of Christ	
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Wards Chapel Church of Christ	
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Arlington Church of Christ	
McMinnville, TN.....	75.00
Mabelvale Church of Christ	
Mabelvale, AR.....	1,250.00
Mountain Home Church of Christ	
Mountain Home, AR.....	1,450.00

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AS A DEBATER

Campbell was decidedly the fairest man in debate I ever saw, as fair as you can possibly conceive. He never fought for victory, like Dr. Johnson. He seemed to be always fighting for the truth, or what he believed to be the truth. In this he differed from other men. He never misrepresented his case nor that of his opponent; never tried to hide a weak point; never quibbled. He would have made a very poor lawyer, in the ordinary understanding of the term lawyer. Like his great friend, Henry Clay, he excelled in the clear statement of the case at issue. No dodging with him. He came right out fairly and squarely. He was what used to be called, in good old times, "flat-footed." Rather than force a victory by underhand or ignoble means, he preferred to encounter defeat. But whenever he fell, he fell like the Cavalier Bayard, with honor and a clear conscience.—(*John B. Purcell on the Campbell-Purcell debate on Roman Catholicism, 1837.*)

IS PREACHING A WASTE OF TIME?

Allen Webster



There are five million sermons preached in America each year. The unparalleled opportunity of the pulpit to reach the minds of men is remarkable. Yet the world would be better off if most sermons were never heard. This is not said to

discredit preaching for "it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21), but to emphasize the danger of false preaching (Galatians 1:9; James 3:1). Jesus warned that there are many false prophets in the world (Matthew 7:15). Thus, many of those five million sermons do not contain God's truth. Many who say they speak for God do not know God (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). One who does not understand what God intends to happen during preaching will be unsuccessful at accomplishing it. That some are confused about why they preach is evident by how they preach. The purpose is not to amuse audiences, discuss political issues, gain a personal following, or manipulate people for monetary reward. What does preaching accomplish?

PREACHING CONVERTS THE LOST (Acts 3:19). This is the great purpose of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21). Sinners who are lost and plunging headlong toward the fire with no extinguisher need to know of God's love (John 3:16), Christ's sacrifice (Matthew 20:28), and the Spirit's plan of salvation (John 8:24; Acts 2:38). There is an element of persuasion in preaching. It is said that Peter "with many other words did...testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Good preaching "pounds on closed hearts until they open to change." Salvation is already "bought and paid for" but preaching makes it possible to get it in the hands of those who need it. In 1901 at a Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, an assailant shot President William McKinley. He

was taken to emergency surgery but the bullet that had slashed through his stomach and lodged in his back could not be found. He was moved to a private room and died a week later. Had surgeons been able to trace the path, locate, and remove the bullet, he might have lived. It is interesting that on display at the Exposition was a revolutionary new device called an "x-ray" machine. Though the life-saving device was near, he died. Wouldn't you have liked to be able to walk into President McKinley's room and tell him you knew how to save his life? Preachers have the exciting privilege to tell men that there is a life-saving remedy—the Gospel!

PREACHING CONVICTS THE ERRING (2 Timothy 4:2). Those who were once enlightened and have left the Lord need to be rebuked of sin. Since the latter end is worse than the first (2 Peter 2:20-22), and since many stripes await those who fail to repent (Luke 12:47), preachers strongly desire to convince the erring to return before they pass from the scenes of this world unprepared (Luke 15:20; Matthew 25:46). These efforts are not always warmly received. Alcibiades, the brilliant but spoiled darling of Athens, used to say to Socrates, "Socrates, I hate you, because every time I meet you, you make me see what I am." The first essential to get one to repent is to compel a man to see himself as he is. This is what Paul had in mind when he commanded preachers to "reprove" (2 Timothy 4:2; Colossians 1:28-29; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 5:14). Reprove (*elegcho*) is a strong word that means "to convict, refute; generally with a suggestion of shame of the persons convicted; to bring to the light, expose; find fault with, call to account, demand an explanation; chasten, punish." Those who fall away need to be shown how serious a crime they are committing against Christ and how perilous is their immediate predicament. This is not easy for tenderhearted preachers to do, but it is vital. Epictetus drew a contrast between the false philosopher, who is out for popularity, and the real

philosopher, whose aim is the good of his hearers. The first deals in flattery and panders to self-esteem. The second says: "Come and be told that you are in a bad way." "The philosopher's lecture," he said, "is a surgery; when you go away you ought to have felt not pleasure, but pain." But like successful surgery, one is better off enduring the pain for the benefit. Preachers get to be involved in the healing process.

PREACHING COMFORTS THE FAITHFUL (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Good preaching edifies faithful members. One old preacher saw his job as to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Preachers must "exhort" (*parakaleo*) which literally means, "to call to one's side, to encourage and strengthen by consolation." It is not easy to walk the strait and narrow way (Matthew 7:13-14). This world's problems can drive a man to despair and take the heart and hope out of him. Preaching helps put it back. Paul wrote "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Good preaching can also help those faithful Christians who lack confidence in the hope of their salvation. John wrote, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life...And this is the confidence that we have in him..." (1 John 5:13-14). Preachers enjoy doing what Paul said, "...comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

PREACHING CREATES FAITH IN THE YOUNG. Young people growing up need to learn the Bible. The Psalmist instructed, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalm 119:9). By teaching, preachers help strengthen them before they have to face life's hard side on their own. Later they can say of God's commands, "All these have I kept from my youth up" (Matthew 19:20). Some parents make a mistake by insisting that their children do well in public school, but failing to demand (or even encourage) them to do well in Bible School. Some fathers know their son's batting average and points per game, but never take time to learn what they're studying in Bible School. That sends a wrong message that

intelligent children rarely miss. The soul's training is the most important part of the early years and preachers have the great privilege of assisting parents in molding young minds.

PREACHING CORRECTS ERROR. Error will not go away on its own. It started in Eden and will remain as long as the world stands. The truth must be taught (John 8:32), and one cannot teach truth without exposing error (Jude 3). We are known as much by what we condemn as what we condone (cf., Matthew 12:30). Preachers get to help lead men from darkness to light.

During the height of the Roman Empire, there were two great orators—Cicero and Demosthenes. It is said that when Cicero spoke, the people said, "What a magnificent oration," but when Demosthenes spoke, the people said, "Let's go fight." We know Cicero, but where is Demosthenes?!—P.O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

MABELVALE CHURCH OF CHRIST
10820 MABELVALE WEST ROAD
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MABELVALE, AR 72103

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

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Dennis Gullledge, Evangelist

A parent's life is a child's guidebook.

A child may not inherit his parents' talent
 but he will absorb their values.

THE BAPTISTRY BEHIND OLD CHAPEL HALL

Sam E. Hester

The building on Crook and Second was outgrown by 1933 and the church began to meet in Chapel Hall at Freed-Hardeman College.

During this time the church needed a place to baptize people. An outside baptistry was apparently built about 1933 by the order of N. B. Hardeman, President of Freed-Hardeman at the time. The structure was used from 1933 to 1949.

The remains of the baptistry are still below the ground behind the Old Main Administration

Building at Freed-Hardeman University. The baptistry is located near the Japanese Tulip between the Old Main Administration and the Education Center buildings. The structure itself is an eight by four foot long, two-brick thick cement structure with steps on the inside leading down into the inside. It was always below ground when it was being used, the top of the walls being level with the surface of the earth. A large metal cover was kept on top of it except when it was being used.



Several people still living remember the use of the baptistry. Doris Maness, Director of Financial Aid at Freed-Hardeman University, remembers being baptized in the baptistry as a young girl. As a young man Lee Grantham remembers his brother and his brother's wife being baptized there. Several, including people like Norman Hogan and E. Claude Gardner who were here as students at that time, have told of those they remember being baptized there, including local residents and Freed-Hardeman University students, those who are deceased and those who are still living.

They told of Dick Hardeman, Joe Hardeman Foy, Earle West, Charles Way, James McClendon, Aline Lowrance, Lanie B. and Gladys O. Moore, Loyd and Marie Kennedy, Lois Rhodes and her brother Donald Smith, Julia McAdams Sanford, Avis Creasy Scott, Martha Casey

and many others being baptized there. Before his death, C. P. Roland recalled several being baptized in the old baptistry, including three of his sons, Charles, Mack and Ike Roland.—Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, TN 38340-2399

Editor's Note: *The above photo is that of a group of young Freed-Hardeman College preacher students gathered around the baptistry preparing for a baptism in September, 1945.—Dennis Gullledge, Editor.*

A FIFTY YEAR-OLD DECISION

People do not accidentally attend worship services without missing one worship service for twenty years. They must have planned always to attend. So after I obeyed the gospel, I read of an older brother who had not missed going to worship a single Sunday in 41 years. That story caused me to resolve and to purpose in my heart that I would never miss the worship on a single Lord's Day as long as I lived, if possible to attend. I have missed four Sundays in over fifty years, and this was because of illness. Once I made that decision, the question has not come up as to whether I would attend church services or not. In fact, I did not decide last Lord's Day to go to worship, nor the Sunday before. That decision was made more than fifty years ago. It is a sin for any member to miss the worship unless he is unable to attend. The very nature of our religion is such that those who feel this is a burden need to be converted.—Gus Nichols (1892-1975).

lead one to wonder how 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:24 are interpreted by some among us?

As if these practices were not alarming enough, the very viability of the Restoration Principle is also under attack. We are told in mocking fashion that the idea of restoring the church of the first century is unenlightened and unsupported by Scripture. "Which church would we choose to restore?" is the foolish question posed to apparently uninformed audiences to evoke laughter over an absurdity no one actually believes. The Restoration Principle is about restoring the mature church Jesus built in the first century and not at all about replicating any particular earthly congregation. A restoration mentality is, in fact, demanded because the church cannot have an authorized existence apart from following her builder, Jesus (Matthew 16:18; 28:20; Colossians 3:17; Matthew 7:21-23). If the Bible isn't the place to go to learn what Jesus build when He built the church, just where are we to go? And, if there is no pattern for the church, how can the church have an identity at all?

Hand in hand with unsettling trends that reject the concept of restoration is a growing desire to fellowship with denominations. Clearly, spending time with denominational people is required if we are to create opportunities to teach the way of the Lord more perfectly. Such needful associations do not mean, however, that we are to conduct ourselves as though all is well—all is not well! Denominationalism is wrong (1 Corinthians 1:10; John 17:21-23).

If we promote religious divisions when God wants unity, we are not sharing with God, but with Satan.—6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-3411

do for themselves and the children, whom they have sacrificed so much to raise, stand by and do little or nothing, will one day have occasion to regret it, perhaps eternally. Over the years I have noticed that, as a rule, the ones who take it the hardest at the funeral of a mother or father are the ones who have paid them the least attention in life.

Husbands and wives, the time will come when one of you will stand by the lifeless form of the other and speak kind and loving words that their ears will not hear. But you can speak those words now! Why wait when they are hungering now to hear you say, "I love you!" Husbands, how long has it been since you told your wife how pretty she is? "Flowers from the garden will wilt and fade but the flowers of kindness she'll carry to the grave." Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). Again, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Colossians 3:19). Wives, a bouquet of kindness will go a long way in getting your husbands to give you the attention that you want and deserve.

We are living in a frustration-ridden, problem-laden world. There are opportunities on every hand to reach out and expend a helping hand or to show sincere interest in those struggling under a heavy load. One of the greatest gifts you will ever be able to give in this life is understanding or "moral support" to one who may be carrying a heavy load or struggling with some difficult problem.

These, then, are just a few of the multitude of opportunities that come our way daily to give flowers to the living. May they serve to remind us of the importance of making the most of the opportunities which come our way every day that we might truly "redeem the time" and use each day as fully as possible to God's glory.—1925 County Highway 59, Haleyville, AL 35565



ENJOYED MILLER'S ARTICLES

I was privileged to read a copy of *Gospel Gleaner* - Vol. 17 which I thoroughly enjoyed. Of special interest to me was the article on "The Five Ancient Empires: Rome And The Roman Empire," by Max R. Miller. This was the last in a series of five. I would so much appreciate having copies of the first four if possible. Thank You. Mrs. Virginia Burnett, Union City, TN.

KEEP GG'S FOR LATER REFERENCE

We all enjoy the paper very much. Keep up the good work. Could we each have a copy instead of passing them around. We like to keep ours for later reference. Claude H. Reese, Salado, AR.

ARTICLES OUTSTANDING

I recently received a copy of the April-June 2000 *Gospel Gleaner*. The articles were outstanding. It was also good to learn of your successful lectures. May God bless your work. James Meadows, Knoxville, TN.

READ US ONLINE

I was recently presented with a copy of your paper. As a Gospel preacher, brotherhood periodicals are invaluable. I certainly enjoyed the articles contained within your pages. May I please be added to your mailing list? I hope to be able to make the debate at Tennessee Bible College. I read your article (online) regarding the identification of false teachers. MARVELOUS! Perhaps you can enlighten some of the folks in my hometown region, near Cookeville, to what true brotherhood spirit is. Again, thank you for the

great job you are doing in print. May God bless your efforts. Clint Etherton, Pikeville, TN.

GREAT WORK

Thank you for your great work with the *Gospel Gleaner*. I know the Lord will multiply the good that comes from it. Could you send me a copy of Guy Hester's 1st article on "We're Marching To Zion." I have the 2nd one. He held meetings for us at Iuka, MS and we gain a great deal from his lessons. Thank you. Perry Taylor, Florence, AL.

GOING ALL OVER THE WORLD

I have a copy of *Gospel Gleaner* from James D. Cox of Southern California School of Evangelism (the instructor). I have enjoyed it, the articles were extremely professionally written. Therefore, I am hereby asking you to add my name to your mailing list of the *Gospel Gleaner*. I shall be most grateful if you add my name to your mailing list. May Almighty God be with you all the times. Lovemore H.B. Thangwi, Malawi, C. Africa. *This is one of my students who took my elders and deacons correspondence course. He finished with good grades. The Gospel Gleaner is being sent all over the world. Thank you for sending them each publication to me. Hope you are equipped to send to people like this. James D. Cox.*

INTRODUCED TO GG BY A FRIEND

I was recently introduced to *Gospel Gleaner* by John T. Polk, II, a friend of long standing. Although I knew of your paper, I had never read an issue. Carroll P. Bennett, Camden, AR.

PERMISSION TO USE HESTER ARTICLE

Yes, you may use the article. Thanks for requesting and wanting to use it. I appreciate your work and you. God bless you in this greater responsibility in the *Gleaner*. Enjoyed the issue you sent. I would like to receive it. Sam E. Hester, Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson. TN.

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